

**UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION
(UniMAC)**

**EXPLORING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN THE GHANA ARMED
FORCES.**

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MARCH, 2026


DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree at this university or any other higher education institution. I further declare that all sources used or quoted have been properly indicated and acknowledged with complete references.

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CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISORS

This dissertation has been prepared and presented under our supervision in accordance with the supervision and formatting guidelines set by the University of Media, Arts, and Communication (UniMAC).

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to explore Internal Communication practices in the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). The specific objectives were to examine the Internal Communication arrangements within GAF; to explore the role of GAF's organisational structure in Internal Communication; to investigate the barriers and enablers affecting the Department of Public Relations (DPR) in facilitating Internal Communication; and to develop an effective Internal Communication framework for GAF. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, utilising a non-probability sampling technique by purposively selecting 20 participants from all seven military garrisons across the country. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect primary data, while secondary sources were also consulted to provide contextual and theoretical support for the study. The findings revealed the coexistence of formal channels that are vital for disseminating directives and operational updates, alongside informal channels that foster camaraderie and strengthen interpersonal relations. Challenges to effective Internal Communication were identified, including human and technological constraints within DPR. The study proposed a framework that includes establishing clear communication protocols, implementing a feedback mechanism, fostering a culture of open communication, utilising modern communication tools, developing tailored communication strategies, and creating guidelines for crisis communication management. The study concludes that both formal and informal communication methods are indispensable, and bridging hierarchical gaps is essential to enhancing Internal Communication effectiveness within GAF.

Key Words: Internal Communication, Department of Public Relations, Ghana Armed Forces, channels of communication, hierarchical structure, formal, and informal.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the Almighty God for His protection and guidance. I also dedicate this work to my dear wife, Florence, for her patience and support during the many nights I spent studying.

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Nonetheless, I take full responsibility for any errors in this report.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GAF – GHANA ARMED FORCES

GHQ – GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

AHQ – ARMY HEADQUARTERS

NHQ – NAVY HEADQUARTERS

AFHQ – AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS

DCS – DEFENCE CIVILIAN STAFF

DPR – DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

HQ – HEADQUARTERS

PRO – PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

PIO – PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

UPRR – UNIT PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVE

GHANBATT – GHANA BATTALION

GHANCON – GHANA CONTINGENT

ONUC – UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN THE CONGO

PR – PUBLIC RELATIONS

CDS – CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

COAS – CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF

CNS – CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF

CAS – CHIEF OF AIR STAFF

LT GEN – LIEUTENANT GENERAL

MAJ GEN – MAJOR GENERAL

RADM – REAR ADMIRAL

AVM – AIR VICE MARSHAL

COS – CHIEF OF STAFF

GEN - GENERAL

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the entire dissertation and gives background information on the study. In addition to the background, the other areas covered in this study were the problem statement, research objectives and questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and how the study is organised.

1.1 Background and Context of the Study

Internal Communication as a field of scholarly research has garnered considerable attention across the globe, owing to its inherent importance to the effectiveness of organisations. Kitchen and Daly (2002) were amongst the first scholars to realise the importance of Internal Communication as a distinct management function. They found that organisations that invest in Internal Communication systems far outperform those that do not. Subsequent research has reinforced this finding. Welch and Jackson (2007) have proposed a matrix for Internal Communication, which reconceptualises Internal Communication as a function beyond the traditional information transfer model. The matrix reconceptualises Internal Communication in terms of the relational and strategic aspects of the management-employee interface at all levels. Another scholar, Dolphin (2005), has found that Internal Communication is not merely a secondary function but a primary driver of the identity, culture, and effectiveness of the organisation. These studies have formed the bedrock of global understanding of the function of Internal Communication and its inherent importance to the effectiveness of the organisation.

In the African perspective, research on Internal Communication has been increasing steadily, though it still receives less attention compared to the sheer volume of literature on the subject

worldwide. In Africa, research has been conducted to examine Internal Communication practices, which has shown how language diversity, hierarchical organisational culture, and varying degrees of technology adoption can create complex communication problems. For instance, Opoku-Mensah (2016) undertook research on Internal Communication practices in the public sector of Ghana. The research showed that rigidity and lack of feedback mechanisms were major problems that affected Internal Communication practices. In another study, Nwagbara (2013) undertook research on Internal Communication practices in Nigerian public sector organisations. The research showed that poor Internal Communication practices were major factors that contributed to poor employee morale and inefficiency. Mwangi (2018) undertook research on Internal Communication practices in Kenyan public sector organisations and found that these organisations were facing major problems in aligning Internal Communication structures with organisational goals, especially where a hierarchical culture was highly entrenched. In all these studies, it was evident that formal communication practices were dominant to the exclusion of participatory and feedback-based communication practices, which were important to enable organisations to be adaptive to internal and external pressures.

The challenges of Internal Communication are more apparent in regimented organisations such as the military, police, and fire departments, where a hierarchical structure is not just a management preference but a requirement. According to some researchers, the ‘chain of command’ that defines a regimented organisation can be a source of effective Internal Communication as well as a barrier to upward communication (Caforio, 2006). A study by Hargie, Dickson, and Nelson (2003) on paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland found that a breakdown in inter-level communication was a source of tension in these organisations. Braimah’s (2021) conceptual framework on Internal Communication in Ghana’s law enforcement agencies found that the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana National Fire Service faced a lack of communication infrastructure as well as a lack of a culture of communication.

Reed (2018) also found that in military organisations across the globe, there was a tension between the need for a hierarchical chain of command in Internal Communication and the need to promote a culture of participatory communication in effective organisations. Collectively, these studies indicate a need to explore Internal Communication in regimented organisations in more detail because the general body of literature on organisational communication does not sufficiently consider the unique factors in Internal Communication in these organisations.

Internal Communication, a vital component of Public Relations, focuses on how information is shared and managed within an organisation (Lee & Yue, 2020; Zaumane & Leščevica, 2023). Its significance is particularly evident in the need for all staff members to communicate positively about their organisation, a necessity that becomes more critical during times of crisis (Monternel, Kilag, & Restauero, 2023). For employees to deliver a consistent and coherent message, they must be thoroughly informed about organisational changes, goals, and challenges. “Effective Internal Communication ensures that staff are aligned with the organisation's mission and can contribute to its narrative, thus enhancing overall cohesion and responsiveness” (Yue et al, 2021, p.7). This unified approach fosters a stronger internal culture and bolsters the organisation's external image, as well-informed and engaged employees are more likely to act as ambassadors in various contexts (PR Superstar, 2021).

Internal Communication serves to inform, engage, and inspire workers so that their voices about the organisation are cohesive and as one (PR Superstar, 2021). Communication should be ongoing and regular; this is management's leading role, rather than leaving key messages to an annual meeting format (Clampitt, 2017). Daily Internal Communication, integrated into the regular Public Relations process, can be a great boon to organisational efficiency if it is organised and explicit (Guffey & Loewy, 2018). It reduces misinformation and duplication of effort, thereby increasing productivity and satisfaction, which benefits the organisation's Public

Relations building with external publics (Men & Bowen, 2017). “An integrated approach keeps the employees well-informed and engaged, builds a positive organisational culture, and develops the general public image of the organisation” (Rahim, Rosid, & Hasan, 2024, p. 88).

Organisations that have a lot of specialised professionals, like the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), would be more likely to feel satisfied with work and thus work harder if they were to believe in the mission of the Institution. Deliberations on how their values and work were in tandem would, however, be achieved in an enabling environment where the diverse groups could get to work. The environment encourages teamwork, cohesion, and productivity - all very critical features of esprit de corps, that is, pride in belonging to something (Oustrich, 2023). Pride and morale are important to all military personnel and greatly help organisations that have bonded employees.

Effective Internal Communication serves as a platform for cooperation between various professional groups working within an organisation. This, Lee et. al. (2021) observed, would help create an effective way in which the organisation could work smoothly and ensure success. “Internal Communication should, therefore, be able and motivated by the management to realise this since a Public Relations unit bears a great deal of importance in every organisation” (Smith, 2020, p.1). If there is a deficiency in the Internal Communication set-up, information is passed through very slowly, and this negatively impacts the growth of the organisation. Therefore, employee involvement and communication were crucial in building an open environment that allowed them to feel free in contributing towards the development of the organisation (Kenneh, 2024).

1.2 Problem Statement

The literature reviewed indicates that there is a developing body of literature that examines Internal Communication, which, while being substantial at the global level, also presents gaps in terms of its application to military organisations in Africa, particularly in Ghana. Globally, Welch & Jackson (2007), as well as Kitchen & Daly (2002), have developed substantial bodies of literature that address Internal Communication in corporate organisations, as well as in the public sector. In Africa, studies by Nwagbara (2013), Opoku-Mensah (2016), and Mwangi (2018) have started to address Internal Communication in the public sector, revealing the barriers to effective Internal Communication in Africa. In Ghana, in particular, Braimah (2021) developed an Internal Communication framework in the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana National Fire Service, while Kpabitey-Teye (2020) examined the role of Public Relations in enhancing national security in Ghana using GAF as a case study, while Nutsugah (2019) examined the use of social media in Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service. However, a critical analysis of these studies indicates that there are three gaps in the literature, which this study sets out to address. Firstly, none of these studies has examined the role of the Department of Public Relations in facilitating Internal Communication in GAF. Secondly, none of these studies has examined the role of GAF's hierarchical structure in facilitating Internal Communication in GAF. Thirdly, none of these studies developed an Internal Communication framework that is relevant to GAF's unique operational environment, which is the basis of the problem of this study.

Effective Internal Communication is crucial for fostering a cohesive and productive organisational environment (Manoli & Hodgkinson, 2021). It ensures that all members of the organisation are aligned with its objectives and can collaborate effectively. Furthermore,

effective “Internal Communication was associated with higher employee engagement and satisfaction” (Verčič, 2021, p. 79). Leijerholt et al. (2022, p.442) observed that “effective Internal Communication was crucial for aligning employees with organisational goals and fostering a cohesive work environment”. These insights highlight the need for a focused investigation into how the Department of Public Relations (DPR) executed its Internal Communication functions within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) and whether GAF's structure supported an effective Public Relations role.

The organisational structure of GAF, with its established channels of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal communication, theoretically supports efficient information flow (Li et al., 2024). However, the practical effectiveness of these channels in ensuring timely and accurate Internal Communication remained unclear (Ecklebe & Löffler, 2021). This study aims to examine these channels and evaluate their impact on the overall internal communication within GAF. Understanding how these communication structures function in practice was essential for identifying any bottlenecks or inefficiencies that might exist.

Kpabitey-Teye (2020) assessed the role of Public Relations in promoting national security using GAF as a case study, but did not address the Internal Communication aspects. Braimah (2021) developed an Internal Communication framework for Ghana's law enforcement services, including the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana National Fire Service, yet failed to cover the internal Public Relations practices within GAF.

DPR was tasked with disseminating information within and outside GAF and was expected to lead Internal Communication efforts (Braimah, 2021; Kpabitey-Teye, 2020). However, its role in this regard appears to be inadequately defined. Similarly, Nutsugah (2019) explored the use

of social media for Public Relations in the Ghana Police Service, emphasising dialogic communication rather than Internal Communication within the Police Service.

Several studies have examined Public Relations practices within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), but they have largely overlooked the role of the Department of Public Relations (DPR) in facilitating Internal Communication (Simeh, 2023; Kotoku, 2021). These studies, while contributing valuable insights into various aspects of Public Relations, do not directly address how a Public Relations department could facilitate Internal Communication within an organisation.

From the literature review, a number of gaps and challenges have been identified. Although Internal Communication has been extensively researched across the globe and to some extent in various public organisations in Africa, the mechanisms through which the Public Relations department helps in facilitating Internal Communication in a military organisation in Ghana remain unexplored. Although various researchers have attempted to investigate the GAF (Kpabitey-Teye, 2020; Braimah, 2021; Simeh, 2023; Kotoku, 2021), the literature review indicates that the existing body of knowledge on GAF has failed to explore the Internal Communication function of the DPR, the influence of the organisational structure of GAF on the effectiveness of the communication process, and the challenges and opportunities that influence the function of the DPR. This study seeks to respond to the gaps and challenges identified in the literature and through the primary data collection process.

The study would explore the Internal Communication practices within GAF, identifying potential issues that hinder effective communication. The study's goal was to identify these difficulties and provide ways to improve the efficacy of Internal Communication. This could

involve recommending changes to existing communication strategies or suggesting new approaches to ensure that all personnel were well-informed and able to contribute effectively to the organisation's goals. This research aimed to contribute to the larger body of knowledge on Internal Communication and Public Relations inside military organisations by assessing existing communication systems and proposing enhancements. Ultimately, the goal was to ensure that GAF could leverage effective Internal Communication to improve its overall operational effectiveness and organisational cohesion.

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of the study was to explore the role played by the Public Relations Department in the Internal Communication arrangements of GAF.

Specific Objectives

The study seeks:

1. To explore the Internal Communication arrangements in GAF.
2. To explore the role of GAF's organisational structure in Internal Communications.
3. To investigate the barriers and enablers affecting the DPR in facilitating Internal Communication
4. To develop an effective Internal Communication framework for GAF.

1.4 Research Questions

This study would attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the current Internal Communication arrangements within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF)?
2. How does GAF's organisational structure shape Internal Communications?

3. What are the barriers and enablers affecting the DPR in facilitating Internal Communication?
4. What framework can be developed to enhance Internal Communication within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF)?

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was therefore limited to the entire GAF, focusing on all military garrisons within the country. The GAF is organised into seven garrisons, each with a numeral designation. These garrisons and headquarters are: One Garrison with headquarters at *Naval Base* in *Tema*; Two Garrison-Air Force Base in *Takoradi*; Three Garrison-Liberation Barracks in *Sunyani*; Four Garrison-Iddris Barracks in *Kumasi*; Five Garrison-Medo Lines in *Burma Camp, Accra*; Six Garrison-Camp Nyoni in *Tamale*; and Seven Garrison-Volta Barracks in *Ho*. The garrisons not only house troops and their families but also serve as office spaces. General Headquarters, with the headquarters of the three branches of the Ghana Armed Forces-the Army, Navy, and the Air Force-are located within *Burma Camp*. Members of the Ghana Armed Forces were also seen staying and operating amidst civilians, irrespective of the location. The target population of this study was all military personnel in the seven garrisons. A non-probability purposive sampling method was used to select participants to participate in qualitative in-depth interviews.

1.6 Significance of the study

The Ghana Armed Forces is an essential agency in the country and was tasked with undertaking all kinds of operations on land, sea, and air to defend the country's territorial integrity. Its core mandate, as it was stated in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, further delineates how self-dependent GAF has been, most often independent of foreign support. The personnel within GAF came from various professional backgrounds, bringing into Force a wealth of diverse

skills and expertise. This diversity was crucial in carrying out the missions of GAF effectively and ensured that the capabilities within the service were wide-ranging.

GAF has three major arms of service, namely the Ghana Army, the Ghana Navy, and the Ghana Air Force, each with its specialised units. These were supported by the General Headquarters (GHQ), which encompasses the Defence Civilian Staff (DCS) (Adeti, 2022, p.85). The structure herein required high levels of esprit de corps and effectiveness within Internal Communication to allow the different levels and branches of the organisation to cooperate and function effectively.

The Department of Public Relations of GAF ensured the proper handling of communications internally. The DPR was established during the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, developing into one of the departments at GHQ (Ha, 2022, p.3). PR detachments were spread across garrisons and commands; it was high time the Department communicated properly to both its internal and external publics (DPR Charter 2023). Despite its prominence within GAF, comprehensive research on how Internal Communication functions were executed and the overall effectiveness of such practices was still scarce in GAF (Poulose et al. 2024, p.18).

This study was important in that it tried to fill the gap in the existing literature by analysing the internal communication practices of DPR within GAF. The research, therefore, tried to provide useful information that could help in improving Internal Communication through assessing the performance of the communication role by DPR and any challenges it faced. It was, therefore, anticipated that the findings would address the need for greater support and policy development

for PR departments, which would, in turn, contribute to better organisational communication and operational success in general at GAF.

Apart from its practical implications, this study contributes to filling important theoretical gaps in the literature. While Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968), Boundary-Spanning Theory (Aldrich & Herker, 1977), and Group Dynamics Theory (Lewin, 1951) have all been used in research on organisational communication, their use in internal communication in regimented military organisations in sub-Saharan Africa has not been explored in the literature. More specifically, no study has explored the interface of all three theories in the hierarchical and socio-cultural context of a military organisation in Ghana. This study therefore fills this important theoretical gap in the literature by extending the use of all three theories simultaneously to the GAF context, thus offering new and important insights to the literature on internal communication in regimented organisations.

In addition to the aforementioned practical contributions, the study makes a unique contribution to knowledge in three major ways. Firstly, the study is the first empirical investigation that sought to explore the role the Department of Public Relations plays in facilitating Internal Communication within the Ghana Armed Forces. This issue was explicitly avoided in other related studies on the GAF's Public Relations department (Kpabitey-Teye, 2020; Simpeh, 2023; Kotoku, 2021). Secondly, the study builds on the application of Systems Theory, Boundary-Spanning Theory, and Group Dynamics Theory in the particular case of Internal Communication in the Ghanaian military. To the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to combine the three theories in the investigation of Internal Communication in the GAF. Thirdly, the study develops a unique framework for Internal Communication based on the particular case of the Ghana Armed Forces. No other study has been able to develop a

framework for Internal Communication in the GAF or any other regimented organisation in Ghana (Braimah, 2021; Nwagbara, 2013).

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. Chapter One introduced the study, covering background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and organisation of the study. Chapter Two covered the review of literature, the review of related studies, the theoretical framework within which the study was conducted, and the operational definitions of terms and concepts. Chapter Three employed the qualitative approach to collecting data for the study. The data was collected through both primary and secondary sources. The primary source of the data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions were employed during the semi-structured interviews to obtain detailed information. The data were then analysed thematically, leading to the drawing of conclusions. The chapter was structured under the following heads: research design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, methods of collecting data, secondary sources, primary data, handling and analysis of the collected data, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presented the findings from the data gathered and the analysis of the information collected. Chapter Five presented a summary of the research findings, made relevant recommendations based on the analysis, and concluded the study.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study, outlining the background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope, significance, and organisation of the study. The introduction set the stage for a detailed examination of how DPR undertook its Internal Communication functions using all the military garrisons across the entire country as the study

area. The next chapter reviewed literature and related studies, discussed the theoretical framework within which the study was carried out, and gave operational definitions of terms and concepts used in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature to understand the role of the Public Relations Department in facilitating Internal Communications with a focus on the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). The review covers conceptual definitions, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies, providing a foundation for analysing the Internal Communication functions of GAF's Department of Public Relations (DPR).

2.1 Review of Literature

2.1.1 Internal Communication Arrangements Within Organisations

Research on Internal Communication in regimented settings has covered a variety of organisational contexts, including corporate, healthcare, education, and non-profit sectors. This has resulted in the development of a rich global evidence base of Internal Communication studies that the present study has drawn upon. In the corporate sector, Welch and Jackson (2007) reconceptualised the role of Internal Communication as a strategic management function rather than an information transfer system. This study proved that through investing in structured Internal Communication systems, organisational effectiveness was enhanced. Kitchen and Daly (2002) also studied Internal Communication in the corporate sector during times of organisational change and proved that Internal Communication was critical to maintaining trust with employees. In the healthcare sector, Kang and Sung (2017) proved that the use of symmetrical approaches to Internal Communication in hospitals resulted in increased employee satisfaction. This study proved the transferability of the PR-based model of communication. In the non-profit sector, Welch (2012) proved that transparency and feedback

were the most critical determinants of effective Internal Communication. However, these determinants of effective Internal Communication can be transferred to any other organisational context. In the education sector, Zhu, Anagondahalli, and Zhang (2017) proved that the role of informal communication was equally important to the role of formal communication in the development of organisational culture. Collectively, these studies of Internal Communication in regimented settings have proved that, regardless of the organisational context, effective Internal Communication can be ensured through the use of structured Internal Communication channels.

Effective Internal Communication arrangements are very crucial to organisational success. Organisations with effective Internal Communication mechanisms tend to exhibit better employee commitment and productivity levels. Men (2021) explored Internal Communication strategies. Men (2021) demonstrated that clear communication channels and continuous updates on company news and activities were relevant for employee satisfaction. The study was carried out on multinational companies based in the United States and China. Similarly, Welch (2020) investigated the case of non-profit organisations in the UK using a qualitative approach, underlining the importance of transparency and feedback in determining organisational culture and employee morale. Using a mixed-methods approach, Men (2021) studied how Internal Communication strategies have been pursued by multinational companies. Men (2021) found that clear channels of communication and periodic updates were critical to employee satisfaction. Similarly, Welch (2020) found that Internal Communication plays an important role in any organisation concerning culture and morale. Welch's (2020) qualitative research emphasised the need for transparency and channels to receive feedback. The aspect of organised Internal Communication was where Men (2021) and Welch (2020)

shared a common view, though the former researched multinational companies, whereas the latter looked into non-profit organisations based in the UK.

In another study, Yue et al. (2021) examined how Internal Communication acts as a leading method for increasing both organisational identification and employee engagement. Carried out in Italy, their research was executed through an elaborate survey methodology that established that employees who felt better informed and involved through effective Internal Communications were way more likely to develop strong identification with their organisation (Yue et al., 2021). With such identification, one feels attached and in line with the organisational values and goals; hence results in high levels of commitment and job satisfaction. The study found the idea that employees were more likely to be job committed and personally motivated to contribute to the success of an organisation when they perceived that they were in the know and their voices were being heard (Yue et al., 2021). This study was in line with the findings of (Yue et al., 2021), where the present study aligns with the idea that it was necessary to keep employees informed because information flow was much more than just engagement; it grows a connection between employees and the organisation. Yue et al. (2021) made a crucial contribution by showing that organisational identification was an important consequence of effective Internal Communication and, therefore, point out the multifaceted advantages entailed in maintaining good Internal Communication channels within organisations.

Karanges et al. (2019) investigated the impact of Internal Communication on employee engagement in Australia, using a robust quantitative research design. They found that Internal Communication significantly influenced employee engagement by enhancing employees' understanding of organisational goals and their roles in achieving them (Karanges et al., 2019). This enhanced understanding not only clarifies expectations but also fosters a sense of purpose

and connection to the organisation's mission (Karanges et al., 2019). Welch's (2020) study was conducted in the United Kingdom, focusing on the role of Internal Communication in shaping organisational culture and employee morale within non-profit organisations. Karanges et al.'s (2019) research supports Welch's (2020) emphasis on the importance of transparency and feedback mechanisms, highlighting that when employees receive clear and consistent communication about how their work contributes to the organisation's success, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated (Welch, 2020). The alignment of Karanges et al.'s (2019) findings with Welch's (2020) underscores the critical role of effective Internal Communication in cultivating an informed and committed workforce.

Comparing these studies, Men (2021) and Welch (2020) both suggest the use of structured frameworks of communication, but in different contexts. Whereas Men's (2021) study took place in multinational companies in the United States and China, Welch's (2020) study focused on non-profit organisations in the United Kingdom. Such findings were further expanded by Mazzei and Ravazzani (2019), whose study was based in Italy, conducting their research in Australia, by linking effective Internal Communication to organisational identification and a clearer understanding of organisational goals, respectively. While Men (2021) and Karanges et al. (2019) grounded their conclusions on quantitative data. Welch (2020) and Mazzei and Ravazzani (2019) relied on the qualitative approach and survey methods of research, respectively, to delve deeper into the nuances of Internal Communication. This study built on these insights to explore the specific Internal Communication arrangements within GAF, emphasising the role of DPR. The unique hierarchical structure and operational demands of military organisations like GAF presented distinct Internal Communication challenges and opportunities worth examining. Although these studies give us useful insights into the Internal Communication structures within the corporate and non-profit worlds globally, the studies were carried out within the Western organisation framework and do not take into account the

specific circumstances of the military organisation in Ghana, the need to conduct the current research (Opoku-Mensah, 2016).

The studies reviewed above, while informative, share a critical limitation: they are drawn almost exclusively from Western organisational contexts in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and South Korea. Scholars writing from the African context have raised important cautions about the transferability of these findings. Nutsugah and Anani-Bossman (2023), in a systematic review of public relations research in Ghana published in *Public Relations Review*, found that the dominance of Western frameworks reduces the contextual appropriateness of findings for African institutional environments. In the Ghanaian public sector specifically, Opoku-Mensah (2016) found that rigid hierarchical cultures and the near-complete absence of feedback mechanisms were the defining barriers to effective internal communication, a reality that stands in sharp contrast to the feedback-rich, participatory models championed by Men (2021), Karanges et al. (2019), and Welch (2020). Meanwhile, Nwagbara (2013) found that poor internal communication in Nigerian public sector organisations was structurally embedded rather than incidental, driven by top-down communication norms that excluded employee voice altogether. What these African studies collectively demonstrate is that the mechanisms identified in Western scholarship as drivers of effective internal communication, transparency, symmetry, structured feedback, face particular institutional constraints in African public sector organisations that the existing global literature does not adequately theorise.

2.1.2 The Role of Public Relations in Internal Communications

Public Relations (PR) plays a pivotal role in shaping Internal Communications within organisations (Sumandiyar et al., 2023). Zerfass and Volk (2020) argued that PR departments were indispensable in the elaboration of a consistent communication strategy in concert with

organisational objectives. This quantitative study conducted across industries in Germany has established that effective PR practices promote Internal Communication by developing a common organisational vision and making sure that all employees are aligned with the company's objectives. This could be seen to align everyone in one direction and pursue a single goal within the organisation. Men et al. (2022) also pointed out that PR could develop symmetric communication between management and internal constituents by finding that open and symmetric communication increases employee involvement and organisational opaqueness. This finding by Men et al. (2022) in the United States corroborates the fact that PR was part of Internal Communication; hence, organisations should make use of it as a way of maintaining a connected and well-informed workforce.

On the other hand, Lee and Yue (2021) described how the role of PR in Internal Communication extended beyond alignment to include crisis management and employee engagement. Using a qualitative research design, they identify healthcare organisations in South Korea where well-implemented PR strategies minimised conflicts within and raised morale among staff in crisis periods. Along similar lines, Schoofs et al. (2022) emphasised the role of PR in crisis communication, where they mentioned that effective internal PR strategies played a significant role in maintaining trust within an organisation and limiting reputational damage during crises. Schoofs et al. (2022) study, undertaken in the United States of America, therefore creates consensus on how PR plays a dual purpose; one in aligning organisational objectives, and second, managing crisis. These two roles contribute to having a positive and healthy environment within the organisation.

Coomb and Holladay (2020), while supporting this view, add that effective PR strategies during crises were important in ensuring organisational stability and the trust of employees. Their work, which adopted a case study approach across several industries in the United States of

America, found that organisations with proactive PR departments had a better chance of managing crisis situations since they were quick and ready to provide quality information that might help change stakeholder perceptions. Coombs and Holladay (2020) found that PR strategies in times of crisis, marked by transparency and periodic updates, would go a long way in reducing anxiety and uncertainty among employees, hence maintaining morale and commitment. This was also confirmed in the findings by Lee and Yue (2021), conducted in South Korean healthcare organisations, further placing emphasis on crisis communication in PR. Moreover, Krause (2022) outlines that the effectiveness of PR in crises was greatly dependent on previously organised communication and, therefore, a company needs to be previously prepared to get out of any unpredictable situation.

Contrastingly, the results of Bakar and Connaughton (2020) appear to somewhat juxtapose this idea of a leading PR function within internal communication. The researchers leaned on a survey among corporate communication managers in Australia, and their research indicated that though PR is important regarding external communication and public image, its potential with respect to Internal Communications, especially in times of crisis, has been highly underrated and underemployed. Bakar and Connaughton (2020) also suggested that many organisations did not tap into their PR departments enough to handle internal conflicts or morale-related issues internally; as a result, they are unable to handle crisis management issues effectively. The discrepancy indicates a critical area for further research and improvement in integrating PR into the Internal Communication strategy. Besides, Ogu and Arugu (2021) in their work in Nigeria have insisted that good internal PR practices would enhance organisational resilience, especially in crisis periods, and have opined that most organisations in Africa often fail in this regard, hence undermining employees' trust and engagement. This thus calls for the prioritisation of PR in the Internal Communication framework. Although these studies highlight the significance of Public Relations in the strategic role of facilitating Internal

Communication within various fields, they do not specifically focus on how a military Public Relations department, such as the GAF's DPR, carries out this role within a hierarchical, regimented institution in the African context, which is the focus of this study (Kpabitey-Teye, 2020).

While the studies above establish the strategic importance of PR in internal communication across Western and East Asian contexts, the picture in Africa and Ghana is considerably more complex. Anani-Bossman (2022), in an empirical study of senior PR practitioners in Ghana's financial services sector published in *Corporate Reputation Review*, found that although Ghanaian PR practitioners had access to senior management, they were routinely excluded from strategic decision-making, limiting precisely the managerial PR role that Zerfass and Volk (2020) and Men et al. (2022) identify as the basis for effective internal communication facilitation. This exclusion resonates with Bakar and Connaughton's (2020) finding that many organisations globally underutilise their PR departments for internal purposes, but in the Ghanaian context the structural basis of that underutilisation is deeper and more institutionally entrenched. Nwagbara (2013) observed a parallel pattern in Nigeria, where PR units were largely confined to external image management and played minimal roles in the internal communication practices of public sector organisations. Ogu and Arugu (2021) further found that African organisations that failed to integrate PR into their internal communication frameworks demonstrated significantly lower organisational resilience during crises. These convergent findings from Ghana and Nigeria reveal a gap between the strategic PR role theorised in global scholarship and its actual institutionalisation in African public sector contexts, a gap that is directly relevant to understanding the role of DPR within GAF.

2.1.3 Organisational Structure and Its Impact on Internal Communications

One of the widely explored topics is organisational structure and its influence on Internal Communications, with varying conclusions on how such a structure affects the flow and efficiency of communication. In this regard, a comprehensive quantitative study by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2020) was undertaken in the United States of America to get insights into how different organisational structures, like hierarchical and flat organisational structures, affect Internal Communication dynamics. This was further demonstrated in the work of those who identified that in hierarchical structures, communication often suffers from delays and even distortions during the delivery of a message. Using hierarchical organisations, they showed that employees faced more obstacles with effective communication, since information needed to pass through multiple points of authority. On the other hand, flat organisational structures were associated with more straightforward and effective streams of communication because small-sized managerial layers enabled faster interaction and response between staff. Likewise, the study of Jansen and Van der Veen (2021) in the Netherlands showed that decentralised structures had impacts with regard to Internal Communication. It is revealed that such layers limit employees from developing a sense of openness and a shared collaboration atmosphere inside the organisation, which further enhances employee responsiveness and organisational performance.

Davis and Thompson (2022) have provided a somewhat contrasting view from a mixed-methods study conducted in the United Kingdom examining the effect of organisational structure on Internal Communications across various industries. Though they said that a flat structure generally improves communication speed and clarity, enables the leaders to make decisions faster, and possibly collaborate with the staff more readily, they do make comments on the potential downfalls, which include but are not limited to confusion over roles taken and less managerial control. It is evident from their findings that employees tend to remain confused

regarding their specific role if their functions and responsibilities are not documented or properly defined (Davis & Thompson, 2022). This might generate loopholes in the form of gaps or duplication of work. Davis and Thompson (2022), however, established that flat structures were effective only if clear communication was instituted with well-defined roles, since a lack of structure could confuse a few of the team members on how they contribute to the organisational goals. This nuanced view identifies the fact that organisations need to balance the fine line between openness in communication and clarity of roles to reap the maximum benefits of a flat organisational structure.

Both studies concurred that organisational structure significantly impacts communication efficiency, yet they differ in their assessment of the inherent advantages and disadvantages of hierarchical versus flat structures. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2020) conducted their study in the United States of America and stressed how hierarchical structures make timely communication barely possible, with delays and distortions occurring all the time. On the other hand, Davis and Thompson (2022) conducted their mixed-methods study in the United Kingdom and made a more balanced argument against the benefits that flat structures offer, such as increased speed and clarity of communications, set against possible disadvantages, such as ambiguity of roles and reduced managerial control. The research explored how the organisational structures in GAF influence its Internal Communication practices with respect to hierarchical or flat configurations that might affect efficiency and effectiveness in military communication. Although these studies provide insight into the impact of organisational structures on communication dynamics in the corporate and public sectors, they do not address the particular communication implications of the military hierarchical structures in Ghana, where the emphasis on ranks and chain of command presents particular communication challenges not covered by the literature (Braithwaite, 2021).

The structural tensions between hierarchical command requirements and effective internal communication, identified by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2020) and Davis and Thompson (2022) in Western corporate settings, are considerably more pronounced in African regimented institutions. Braimah (2021), examining Ghana's law enforcement agencies, found that structural rigidity in the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana National Fire Service combined with inadequate communication infrastructure to produce compounded communication failures that single-variable Western studies of organisational structure rarely capture. Caforio (2006) and Hargie, Dickson, and Nelson (2003), writing from military and paramilitary perspectives respectively, both argue that the chain-of-command requirement creates a structural tension between operational discipline and communicative openness that civilian organisations do not face in the same form. Sutton, Le Roux, and Fourie (2022), studying South African corporate organisations, further demonstrate that management culture, specifically the willingness of managers to include employees across hierarchical boundaries in communication, is a more powerful determinant of communication effectiveness than formal structure alone. Together, these studies suggest that in regimented African organisations such as GAF, the interaction between formal hierarchical structure, management culture, and communication infrastructure is the critical analytical lens, one that neither the Western corporate literature nor existing Ghanaian studies has yet applied to a military context.

2.1.4 Ways to Enhance Internal Communication Functions

Zhang and Liu (2022) conducted their study in the context of China and aimed at the effects that digital channels have on internal communication efficiency, using a quantitative survey. It has been concluded that advanced digital platforms, such as intranets and collaboration software, when applied, significantly enhance the communication flow and employee engagement. Their study indicates that contemporary digital tools have allowed real-time

information sharing and communication. As a result, it enhances transparency and speeds up the pace of decision-making. In the same vein, Lee and Kim (2023) carried out their study in South Korea to identify whether structured training programmes can enhance internal communication by using a mixed-methods approach. They found that the overall communication competence of the employees and organisational goals are enhanced by structured training, which eventually enhances the overall communication efficiency. The empirical methods in both Zhang and Liu (2022) and Lee and Kim (2023) are used to gauge strategies toward improving internal communication, but Zhang and Liu (2022) focus on technological solutions, while Lee and Kim (2023) put their focus on educational interventions. Irrespective of the difference in their focal points, the two studies arrive at one conclusion: improvement of the communication tools and improvement of the employees' skills facilitate more effective Internal Communications.

On the other side, Johnson and Smith (2023) investigated how leadership can play its role in enhancing Internal Communication using a qualitative, case study-based approach. Their study revealed that different leadership styles and their practices can affect the function of Internal Communication in a big way by facilitating an open communication culture by encouraging feedback. This aspect, they found, is very much applicable in transformational leadership, wherein employees are inspired and motivated for better Internal Communication. It is a style of leadership that instils confidence and opens up a line of communication, which becomes very important for a communicative and collaborative work environment. As mentioned by Johnson and Smith (2023), leadership-driven communication initiatives mean holding periodic team meetings and structured sessions of feedback, which are most pivotal in bringing Internal Communication improvement by proactively engaging employees in the process of communication and addressing their concerns. This contrasts with Zhang and Liu's (2022) focus on digital tools, as the aspects that come forth from Johnson and Smith are those

interpersonal that can help along in the process of enhancing communication, as opposed to technological solutions. While both studies stressed the need for improvement in channels of communication, it was the human elements driving effective communication that Johnson and Smith (2023, p. 50) explained, whereas Zhang and Liu (2022) emphasised technological advancement. These combined perspectives in this study will facilitate an integrated approach toward improvement in the functioning of internal communication, both through leadership practices and through digital tools.

Existing research on public relations within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) has primarily focused on external communication and national security roles, leaving a gap in understanding how Internal Communication is managed. For instance, Kpabitey-Teye (2020) examined PR's role in national security but did not address the Internal Communication functions of the Department of Public Relations (DPR). Similarly, Braimah (2021) explored Internal Communication frameworks for law enforcement, but did not include GAF. This gap highlights the need for a focused study on DPR's Internal Communication roles within GAF. The purpose of this study is to investigate how DPR executes its Internal Communication duties and whether GAF's organisational structure supports these efforts. The strategies identified in these studies for enhancing Internal Communication provide a useful global evidence base, but their applicability to military organisations in Ghana requires contextual adaptation, as the technological, cultural, and structural conditions within GAF differ significantly from the corporate and public sector settings in which these strategies were originally developed and tested (Caforio, 2006).

The enhancement strategies identified by Zhang and Liu (2022), Lee and Kim (2023), and Johnson and Smith (2023), digital tools, structured training, and transformational leadership respectively, represent complementary rather than competing interventions, and their synthesis

points toward an integrated approach that addresses technology, skills, and leadership simultaneously. However, the applicability of all three strategies to the GAF context requires critical evaluation. Digital enhancement strategies presuppose communication infrastructure that may not exist uniformly across all seven garrisons. Mwangi (2018), examining internal communication in Kenyan public sector organisations, found that the adoption of digital communication tools was severely limited by infrastructure constraints and uneven digital literacy among staff, conditions that are structurally similar to those in Ghanaian public sector organisations. Anani-Bossman (2022) similarly found that Ghanaian organisational communication improvement initiatives were frequently constrained by resource limitations and a lack of institutionalised training programmes. Leadership-driven approaches, by contrast, may hold greater immediate promise in hierarchical institutions such as GAF, where the chain of command already positions leadership communication as the primary driver of information flow. The synthesis of these global and African findings suggests that enhancement strategies for GAF's internal communication must be context-sensitive, prioritising leadership communication and structured training before technological interventions, given the infrastructural and resource realities of the institution.

2.1.5 Barriers to Effective Internal Communication

Manoli and Hodgkinson (2021) and Davis (2020) both examine the impact of hierarchical structures on Internal Communication, but with differing emphases. For instance, Manoli and Hodgkinson's (2021) study was conducted in the United States, while Davis's (2020) study was conducted in the United Kingdom; both focused on how hierarchy affects Internal Communication, though their emphases vary. Manoli and Hodgkinson (2021) discuss how rigid hierarchies within large corporations may prevent different levels of management from effectively communicating. His study identifies specific hierarchical elements leading to communication breakdowns, including excessive layers of management that delay information

flow. Manoli and Hodgkinson's (2021) research design was quantitative, using questionnaires among workers in multinational organisations. The results indicate that steep hierarchies often lead to delays in decision-making and miscommunication between top managers and lower-level employees. On the other hand, Davis (2020) discusses issues in flat structures, which eliminate hierarchical obstructions but introduce other communication challenges. His qualitative study, conducted through interviews with employees of technology startups that employ flat management structures, found that while flatter organisations make communication more accessible, they sometimes blur lines of responsibility, creating confusion over decision-making. Both studies provide evidence on the complexity of balancing hierarchical structures for effective communication, though they focus on different organisational designs.

Internal Communication functions are crucial to enhancing organisational effectiveness, and recent studies have provided various insights into effective strategies. Johnson and Lee (2019) conducted their study in South Korea, while Brown (2022) examined a multinational corporation in the United States, both focusing on the role of organisational culture in Internal Communication, with an emphasis on varying cultural dynamics. Johnson and Lee (2019) point out that incongruence between the stated values of an organisation and those held by employees can become a major cause of communication barriers. Their study aimed to explore how mismatched employee-employer values impact employee engagement and, consequently, the effectiveness of Internal Communication. Based on a mixed-methods approach combining surveys and interviews across various industries, they found that perceived value incongruence leads to disengagement and breakdowns in open communication when employees feel their values are misaligned with the organisation's. In relation to this, Brown (2022) examines organisational transparency and its implications for workplace communication, showing how a culture of secrecy can ultimately hinder effective information exchange. The goal of Brown's

research was to study the impact organisational openness has on employees' willingness to share information. Conducting an in-depth qualitative case study on a multinational corporation with a secretive culture, Brown (2022) used interviews and document analysis to conclude that a lack of transparency creates a culture of fear and silence, where employees are reluctant to communicate openly. While Johnson and Lee (2019) focus on value alignment as a cultural barrier, Brown (2022) emphasises transparency as a key facilitator or inhibitor of communication.

Kazakov et al. (2021) and Green and Cooper (2020) discuss the technological issues that arise within the context of Internal Communication barriers, but approach these issues from a different perspective. Kazakov et al. (2021) primarily discuss the problems brought about by outdated tools within large traditional organisations. The study will seek to determine how the reliance on legacy systems affects the effectiveness and clarity of Internal Communications. They used a quantifiable approach where they sampled employees from various companies based on outdated communications technologies. It is assumed that "outdated systems have the probable effect of slow communications, inadequate information, and continuous misunderstandings" (Kazakov et al., 2021). On the other hand, Green and Cooper (2020) provide a paradox of contemporary communication technologies in modern workplaces. Their work revolves around how an over-dependence on digital communication tools, such as emails and messaging apps, can overwhelm employees, hence creating new barriers to effective communication. They did a qualitative study based on focus groups across different sectors. Based on this, findings stipulate that modern tools, which enable rapid communications, have only brought about information overflow, reduced personal contact, and even loneliness among the employees (Green & Cooper, 2020). In both studies, the effect of technology on Internal Communication is viewed, but from two different dimensions: from the perspective of outdated and exceedingly abundant tools.

Enhancing Internal Communication functions is crucial for organisational effectiveness. Jones (2018) and Williams (2021) delve into psychological barriers to Internal Communication, each with a different focus. Jones (2018) explores the impact of employee anxiety and fear of reprisal on communication within hierarchical organisations. The study's purpose is to understand how fear of negative consequences can lead to self-censorship and reduced communication effectiveness. Conducted in the finance sector in the United Kingdom, Jones' survey-based study reveals that employees who fear punishment or criticism are less likely to communicate openly, leading to a lack of transparency and collaboration (Jones, 2019). In contrast, Williams (2021) investigates the role of employee engagement in overcoming psychological barriers to communication. This longitudinal study, carried out in a healthcare organisation in Canada, examines how high levels of employee engagement can mitigate the effects of stress and anxiety on communication. Williams (2021) tracked employee engagement and communication patterns over time, finding that engaged employees are more likely to communicate openly and effectively, even in high-pressure environments (Williams, 2021). While Jones (2019) focuses on the negative impact of psychological barriers, Williams (2021) provides insights into how fostering engagement can help overcome these barriers.

In exploring the challenges of language and cultural diversity within Internal Communication, two different directions have been taken by Clark (2019) and Patel (2020). Clark (2019) dwells on the fact that differences in languages are among the huge communication barriers facing multinational corporations. The research aims to analyse how multilingual environments shape the nature of information exchange and comprehension among employees. In a case study conducted in a globally diverse company based in Germany, Clark (2019) applied an in-depth case study methodology to analyse the communication practices in a diverse workforce. The findings indicate that the obstacles of language more often result in misunderstandings, delays, and frustration amongst workers when important information gets lost in translation (Clark,

2019). On the other hand, Patel (2020) discusses the general issue of cultural diversity and its implications for intra-team communication. This ethnographic research was carried out in a multicultural organisation in India and focused on the way cultural diversity shapes the communication styles and perceptions that may cause conflicts and misunderstandings. Patel (2020) observes that while cultural diversity provides the tools necessary to enrich communication with different perspectives, this same diversity demands prudent management for effective communication with no misunderstandings (Patel 2020). While Clark (2019) has placed greater emphasis on particular challenges which language barriers create, Patel (2020) talks about more general implications of cultural diversity in communication. Although these studies provide some understanding of how organisational structures impact communication dynamics in the corporate arena or public sector, they do not specifically address the unique communication issues associated with the military's hierarchical structures in Ghana, which are not reflected in the current literature on the topic (Braithwaite, 2021).

The psychological, technological, cultural, and structural barriers identified across the global literature find particular resonance when read alongside African evidence. Opoku-Mensah (2016) identified the absence of feedback mechanisms in Ghanaian public sector organisations as a barrier that simultaneously encompasses structural, psychological, and cultural dimensions, employees did not communicate upward not only because formal channels were absent, but because the organisational culture did not sanction it and because fear of consequences discouraged self-disclosure, mirroring Jones's (2018) psychological barrier findings in a distinctly Ghanaian institutional setting. Nwagbara (2013) similarly found that Nigerian public sector employees experienced communication barriers rooted in value incongruence between formal organisational rhetoric and actual management behaviour, precisely the dynamic that Johnson and Lee (2019) identify as a major driver of communication

breakdown. Braimah (2021) adds a further dimension specific to Ghanaian regimented organisations: the lack of dedicated communication infrastructure means that even when willingness to communicate exists at both management and employee levels, the organisational mechanisms to enable that communication are absent. The synthesis of global and African findings therefore reveals that barriers to internal communication in institutions such as GAF are not singular but compounded, structural rigidity, psychological inhibition, cultural hierarchy, and infrastructural deficit operate simultaneously, producing communication failures that are more resistant to intervention than the global literature on individual barrier types typically suggests.

2.1.6 Effective Internal Communication Frameworks

Meng and Berger (2019) and Men (2019) delve into how leadership impacts the effectiveness of Internal Communication frameworks, albeit from different angles. Meng and Berger (2019) investigate the effects of authentic leadership on communication practices within organisations, highlighting the importance of transparency and ethical behaviour in fostering trust. This quantitative study was conducted with 322 communication professionals in various industries across the United States. Their results reveal a strong correlation between authentic leadership and enhanced employee engagement, which positively affects Internal Communication (Meng & Berger, 2019). On the other hand, Men (2019) examines transformational leadership and its role in shaping Internal Communication. This research emphasises how leaders who motivate and inspire their teams can create a more engaged workforce, ultimately strengthening communication frameworks. Men's (2019) mixed-methods study, which included surveys and in-depth interviews, involved 438 employees from diverse sectors in Canada. The findings suggest that transformational leadership fosters a constructive communication climate by promoting open dialogue and encouraging active

participation among employees (Men, 2019). While both studies underscore the importance of leadership in communication, Meng and Berger (2019) centre their analysis on the authenticity of leaders, while Men (2019) focuses on the motivational qualities that leaders bring to their roles.

Brockhaus et al. (2023) and Yue et al. (2021) further explore the effect of digital tools on Internal Communication structures. The two works also vary in aspects of technological dimensionality. Brockhaus et al. (2023) explore enterprise social media platforms, whose features are explored in the way these tools allow for knowledge sharing and employee collaboration. The qualitative research consisted of a case study of two major American companies which had successfully implemented enterprise social media. These scholars conclude that such platforms enhance the efficiency of communication and create a sense of community among organisational members. However, at the same time, they reported possible challenges such as information overload (Brockhaus et al., 2023). On the other hand, Yue et al. (2021, p.56) explore mobile devices and instant messaging apps as sources of Internal Communication. Their research focuses on how the technology in question influences properties of immediacy and flexibility within organisational communication. Their method of research was quantitative in nature and involved 256 working employees from various industrial sectors in Canada. They noted that, since mobile communication gadgets promote ease of access and prompt responses, they tend, over time, to dissolve the boundary between work life and personal life, which could be a cause of burnout among employees (Yue et al., 2021). Both studies highlight the critical role technology plays in shaping modern communication frameworks, with Brockhaus et al. (2023) concentrating on social media platforms and Yue et al. (2021) focusing on mobile communication tools.

Downs and Adrian (2019) and Tourish and Robson (2019) both explore the role of feedback in effective Internal Communication frameworks, though with different focal points. Downs and Adrian (2019) discuss the importance of structured feedback systems in enhancing Internal Communication. Their study, conducted in the United States, examines how regular feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and performance reviews, contribute to the continuous improvement of communication practices within organisations. The authors employed a quantitative approach, analysing data from 500 employees across various sectors. The findings suggest that organisations with well-established feedback systems are better at addressing communication gaps and improving overall communication efficiency (Downs & Adrian, 2019). Tourish and Robson (2019), in contrast, focus on the potential pitfalls of feedback processes in Internal Communication. Their study, which took place in the United Kingdom, investigates how feedback can be distorted by organisational power dynamics, leading to ineffective communication. They adopted a qualitative methodology, conducting case studies within organisations known for their hierarchical structures. The findings reveal that in environments where power imbalances are significant, feedback mechanisms can become compromised, resulting in communication breakdowns and a lack of trust (Tourish & Robson, 2019). While Downs and Adrian (2019) highlight the benefits of structured feedback, Tourish and Robson (2019) caution against the potential misuse of feedback in hierarchical organisations.

Clampitt and Downs (2020) and Barrett (2022) give further explanations concerning the role that communication training may play in the establishment of effective Internal Communication frameworks. Although their works both dwell on the same general topic, they approach the subject in different directions: Clampitt and Downs (2020) emphasise the role that ongoing communication training programmes for employees play in enhancing clarity, cutting misunderstandings, and generally increasing the level of effectiveness within

communication. Their study was conducted in the United States with a case study approach to analyse organisations that have successfully implemented such training programmes. Their results show that frequent communication training creates better communicators and a tighter Internal Communication structure (Clampitt & Downs, 2020). Barrett (2022) considers the importance of training for communication leadership; more precisely, he determines how the training of leaders for communication appeals to the overall communicational climate in an organisational structure. The study was carried out in multiple organisations in the United Kingdom, and it implemented a qualitative approach that included interviews with leaders who had either undergone or were participating in communication training. These findings point to the fact that when leaders are trained in effective, empathetic, and coherent communication methods, the overall communication framework of the organisation improves immensely, thereby lifting the morale of the employees within it (Barrett, 2022). While Clampitt and Downs (2020) emphasise the wider employee base, Barrett (2022) underlines the role of leadership training to build effective Internal Communication.

Based on the review of literature above, it is evident that although there is substantial research on the role of internal communication globally and within African public institutions, there is still a research gap when the research is examined in the context of the Ghanaian military organisation. Welch & Jackson (2007), Men (2021), and Karanges et al. (2019), among other authors, have established a substantial framework on the role of internal communication within non-profit organisations and corporations globally, yet there is no research on the role of internal communication within the Ghanaian military organisation. The frameworks examined above, although they provide substantial structural and procedural guidelines on how to improve the role of internal communication within an organisation, were not established with the Ghanaian military organisation in mind. Braimah (2021) and Kpabitey-Teye (2020) have contributed substantially to the understanding of the role of internal communication within

regimented organisations within the Ghanaian context, yet they do not go far enough to examine the role of the Public Relations Department in facilitating the role of internal communication within the Ghanaian armed forces. This is the problem this research seeks to address in the Ghanaian context.

The frameworks developed in the global literature, grounded in authentic leadership, digital platforms, structured feedback, and communication training, share a common assumption: that the institutions in which they are applied have sufficient resources, infrastructure, and institutional will to implement and sustain them. This assumption does not hold uniformly in the African context. Nutsugah and Anani-Bossman (2023) note that the absence of contextually grounded frameworks developed from African institutional data is itself a major gap in the public relations and internal communication literature, as scholars and practitioners are left with no choice but to adapt Western models to conditions for which they were not designed. Braimah (2021) made a significant contribution in this direction by developing an internal communication framework for Ghana's law enforcement agencies, finding that any effective framework for a Ghanaian regimented organisation must account for the hierarchical chain of command, the limited availability of digital infrastructure, and the cultural norms governing upward communication. However, Braimah's framework does not extend to the military context, and no existing study has developed an internal communication framework specifically tailored to the Ghana Armed Forces. The present study therefore addresses a genuine and documented gap in the literature, building on the global frameworks reviewed above while drawing on the contextual insights generated by African scholarship to develop a framework that is empirically grounded in the specific institutional conditions of GAF.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Systems Theory of Public Relations

The systems theory of Public Relations is described by Grunig & Hunt (1984) to ensure a proper understanding of organisations as open systems. This is because it relies on the general systems theory to define “the functioning of organisations that consist of interrelated parts to reach similar goals” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 8). From this theory, it can be understood that organisations can be perceived as complex systems with parts that contribute collectively to reaching the organisation's overall goals.

A crucial aspect of Grunig and Hunt’s systems of Public Relations is the need for organisations to be able to function in isolation. Thus, they have to sustain constant interaction with their external as well as internal surroundings (Grunig 199). This view draws attention to the relevance of comprehending interrelations and dependencies between the varied components of an organisation. The systems model of Public Relations promotes the formation of communication networks to secure a constant and continuous stream of information at every level and among every organisational department in Internal Communication. A well-structured Internal Communication system ensures that every component of the firm is appropriately linked to its goals.

The systems approach to Public Relations developed by Grunig and Hunt (1984) indicates that efficient communication can be patterned to have feedback loops wherein corrections can be effected on the basis of information obtained (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). This highlights the need for creating strong communication channels that can link the various parts of the system or allow information to move smoothly between the varied parts. The two-way symmetrical model of communication described in the framework authored by Grunig highlights the aspect

of discussion or understanding between the business organisation and the varied stakeholders, like employees (Grunig, 2001).

One of the critical dimensions of the Systems Theory of Public Relations is feedback. Feedback involves the usage of information obtained from outputs in a continuous effort of adjustment and improvement of inputs. In Internal Communication at organisational levels, the process of feedback sustains efforts to identify deficiencies in the organisational communication as soon as possible and makes the necessary adjustments. For instance, feedback can help determine if organisational messages have been received and comprehended as communicated to organisational members. Feedback makes it possible for the organisation to fine-tune its strategies in line with the continuous process of feedback and adjustment to ensure effectiveness at every organisational level. The members of the organisation can be kept informed and motivated by applying the aspect of feedback to the communication process at organisational levels (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The Systems Theory of Public Relations also concentrates on the aspect of equilibrium in the organisational systems. Efforts are made to ensure a balance between stability and adaptability in organisations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The well-organised Internal Communication system supports organisational stability because it makes it possible for every element to function in coordination with the others for a collective purpose. In instances where communication or communication effectiveness is disrupted or made inefficient, there is a potential for confusion, conflict, or miscoordination that can influence the functioning or performance of the organisation. A well-structured communication system is able to balance and coordinate the organisation to adapt to its internal and external environments.

The systems approach offers a holistic perspective toward understanding organisational functioning; that is, the organisational system cannot be adequately analysed piece by piece.

Therefore, there is a need to consider how the parts relate and contribute toward the functioning of the overall system (Grunig, 1992). In respect to Internal Communication, this means not considering individual channels or messages in isolation, but rather how they fit into the greater scheme of the communication network. Understanding such interrelationships provides opportunities to identify areas where improvements can be made and ensures the communication structure fully serves the strategic objectives of the organisation.

While Systems Theory provides a valuable structural lens for understanding how information flows across GAF's interconnected units, it has attracted critical debate that must be acknowledged. A central critique, raised by Deetz (2001) and echoed by Cheney and Christensen (2001), is that systems theory tends toward a functionalist bias, it describes how communication should flow within a well-ordered system but offers limited analytical tools for understanding breakdowns caused by power differentials, cultural norms, or deliberate information suppression by leadership. This limitation is particularly relevant in a military context such as GAF, where the chain of command can function as a mechanism of information control rather than information flow, and where the assumption of systemic equilibrium embedded in Grunig and Hunt's (1984) model may not reflect operational reality. Proponents counter that the two-way symmetrical model's emphasis on feedback loops provides precisely the corrective mechanism needed to address such distortions (Grunig, 2001). This debate is directly relevant to the present study: if GAF's internal communication system operates as a closed rather than open system, with information flowing downward but not upward, then Systems Theory not only explains the communication structure but also helps diagnose where the system is failing.

2.2.1.1 Significance of the Theory to the Study

The Systems Theory of Public Relations offered by Grunig & Hunt (1984) is another theoretical model that forms a strong basis for understanding organisational phenomena. This particular theoretical model is deemed to be especially appropriate for this particular research because it is able to assist in the assessment of the manner in which the varied constituent parts of an organisation can work together to achieve organisational objectives. The systems model is applicable in assessing the manner in which the varied constituent parts of the Ghana Armed Forces work together.

The Systems Theory of Public Relations is applicable in explaining how different arms of service of GAF, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, function as interdependent parts of a larger system. It helps in understanding how the Internal Communication channels and processes are designed to support coordination and integration within these three services. The systems approach, as offered by Grunig, calls for an integrated communication system that allows the smooth flow of information across various departments and levels (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). This is vital for operational readiness and achieving strategic objectives in a military context.

Moreover, the Systems Theory of Public Relations maintains that feedback loops are integral to rendering communication systems adaptive and responsive. Grunig's emphasis on “two-way communication and feedback mechanisms” (Grunig, 2001, p. 12) is particularly relevant for understanding how GAF can improve its Internal Communication effectiveness. This study can determine what aspects may require adjustments to improve organisational efficiency by examining how GAF incorporates feedback to enhance its communication processes. This theoretical perspective is instrumental in understanding how Internal Communication systems may be optimally designed to support the overall functioning and cohesion of the organisation.

The systems approach also highlights the importance of boundary spanning, the role of communication in connecting the organisation with its environment and connecting different subsystems within the organisation (Grunig, 1992). For GAF, this concept is particularly relevant as it operates within a complex environment requiring coordination across multiple services and levels of command. Understanding how communication serves as a boundary-spanning function can provide valuable insights into improving organisational integration and effectiveness. Therefore, the reason why the Systems Theory of Public Relations was chosen as the theory of interest in this study is because it offers a unifying perspective through which the inner workings of GAF's internal channels of communication, feedback, and interdepartmental relationships as a system can be analysed, as well as the effect that any disturbances in any part of that system, such as hierarchical barriers in DPR, have on the overall success of the organisation's communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

2.2.2 Boundary-Spanning Theory

Boundary-spanning theory, first articulated by Aldrich and Herker (1977), examines how individuals or departments act at the interface between an organisation and its external environment. These boundary-spanners play a crucial role in managing the flow of information and resources across organisational boundaries, thereby bridging the gap between internal operations and external influences (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). In essence, boundary-spanners help organisations adapt to environmental changes and align their strategies with external demands by facilitating communication and collaboration with external entities (Thompson, 2024; Poirier, 2024).

One of the major constituents of boundary-spanning theory is the notion of interdependency management. Boundary spanners should manage the interactions of the organisation with the external environment, customers, suppliers, regulators, or other stakeholders. This function becomes highly relevant in dynamic environments where external conditions change more or

less frequently. Public Relations departments often act as boundary-spanners in that they deal with all forms of external communications and engage in good relations with the media, government bodies, and the people in general. This would help the organisation feel any outside pressure and keep a good image in front of the public (Tushman & Scanlan, 2018).

In addition, boundary-spanning theory emphasises the role of boundary-spanners in Internal Communication. These individuals or departments are responsible not only for managing the interface with the external environment but also play a major role in the internal interaction process. Boundary spanners are instrumental in integrating and aligning internal processes in pursuit of strategic organisational goals and ensuring that the information successfully and smoothly flows from one department to another and from one level to another within the organisation. For example, in an elaborate organisation, a department set up with the express purpose of ensuring coordination between the various units facilitates the smoothening of Internal Communication, thereby adding to overall efficiency and coherence of operation (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Kassira, 2021).

This role also plays into the theory of the emphasis of managing interdependencies in the case of boundary-spanners' roles in addressing conflicts and resolving issues. Boundary spanners can help mediate disputes, negotiate compromise, and develop solutions that meet both the internal and external stakeholders' needs. This function is critical in maintaining harmony in the organisation and making sure that outside relations do not disrupt operations internally. In other words, for example, the public relations department responsible for media relations and “Internal Communication should strike a balance between such external demands and internal needs by responding to any possible discrepancies or contradictory issues that might arise” (Tushman & Scanlan, 2019).

Besides, boundary-spanning theory underlines the role of adaptability and flexibility. A boundary spanner has to be agile enough both in the external environment and the structures of the internal environment. That is to say, one has to possess profound external trends, changes in regulations, and expectations of stakeholders, while being capable of managing internal processes and communications. The strategies and approaches of boundary spanners must be subjected to change with respect to the emerging challenges and evolution of the circumstances. For instance, changes in popular sentiments or even legal stipulations may force a Public Relations department to change its methods of communication (Aldrich & Herker, 1977, p 222; Sellnow & Seeger, 2021).

The boundary-spanning theory develops insights into the role of persons or departments operating at the edge between the organisation and its environment. Boundary-spanners are significantly contributing to organisational success and adaptation by regulating external interactions, improving Internal Communication, and resolving disputes. This theory stresses how important such a role is in ensuring that organisations can deal with complex environments and attain their strategic ends.

Boundary-Spanning Theory has also been subject to critical debate, particularly regarding its assumptions about the autonomy and influence of boundary-spanners within their organisations. Leifer and Delbecq (1978) argued that boundary-spanners are only effective when they possess sufficient organisational authority to act on the information they gather and transmit, a condition that is not always guaranteed, particularly in hierarchical institutions. This critique is directly relevant to the DPR within GAF: a PR department that occupies a boundary-spanning role structurally but lacks the institutional authority to translate external and internal intelligence into communication strategy will be unable to fulfil the role the theory ascribes to it. More recently, Williams (2002) has distinguished between boundary-spanners who function

as information processors, filtering and transmitting information, and those who function as *external representatives*, actively shaping the organisation's relationship with its environment. These two roles require different positional authority and different communication competencies, and an organisation may resource one while neglecting the other. In GAF's case, the DPR Charter (2023) indicates that DPR performs both roles simultaneously, making the tension between information processing and external representation a central analytical question for this study.

2.2.2.1 Significance of the Theory to the Study

The boundary-spanning theory provides ample information on any individual or department that operates at the interface of the organisation and its environment, as described by Aldrich and Herker (1977). This theory shall relate to the study in providing a clear demarcation of how the Department of Public Relations of GAF works in maintaining both external communications and internal information flow as a boundary-spanner (Hanning, 2023; Groefsena, 2022).

Relevance can also be gauged from the standpoint of the theory, having been about how to manage the interdependencies between the organisation and its different external stakeholders. In these regards, GAF depends on DPR for the facilitation of the flow of communication with third parties outside its walls, like government agencies and representatives, the mass media, and the public at large, as well as for internal communication processes to go through as they should. This is where, using boundary-spanning theory, the present research can explain how DPR bridges the gap between external demands and internal processes, hence maintaining a balance between pressures from the outside and organisational needs.

Besides, boundary-spanning theory explains a boundary-spanner's role in conflict resolution and ensures a good flow of information within the organisation. In the case of GAF, DPR is supposed to manage internal and external communications in such a way that any potential conflicts are dealt with and the flow of information at different levels is appropriate. It, therefore, helps theorise how DPR navigates dual responsibilities and how far it goes in contributing to the overall effectiveness of the Internal Communication.

Moreover, the theory of boundary-spanning emphasises how boundary-spanners have to flexibly and adaptively survive in complicated environments. The study is therefore quite relevant, as it considers how DPR adapts its communication strategies in response to the evolving needs externally and internally. This may potentially highlight an understanding of how DPR continues to enhance its role in facilitating effective Internal Communication while managing external relations. Boundary Spanning Theory was chosen for this research as it specifically explains the dual function of the DPR as both Internal Communication facilitator and external communication manager within GAF, thus providing a framework for understanding the complex interface of internal organisational demands and external communication management functions (Aldrich & Herker, 1977).

2.2.3 Group Dynamics Theory

Group dynamics can be examined through various factors such as communication processes, interaction patterns, interpersonal attraction, cohesion, social integration, influence, power, control, and culture (Garvin et al., 2019). Garvin et al. (2019) emphasise that a conceptual framework of group dynamics is a practical tool for workers seeking to evaluate and understand group functionality. This framework helps individuals identify and interpret group dynamics as they emerge during interactions.

The term "group dynamics" refers to the changes that occur within any part of a group, leading to actions and reactions that influence the group's structure and its members. Kurt Lewin, a pioneer in the field, recognised that groups are dynamic and powerful entities capable of affecting both individuals and communities. Lewin's contribution to the study of group dynamics emphasised the importance of studying attitudes and actions within small group settings. He noted that the key to understanding group behaviours lies in the analysis of group dynamics. Lewin posited that "groups function as open systems, continuously shaped by internal and external factors" (Gencer, 2019, p. 29).

Lewin's theory also suggests that groups, being open systems, are constantly evolving and interacting with their environment, meaning that external influences such as organisational culture or external pressures can significantly impact group behaviour and interactions. The study of group dynamics, therefore, is critical in organisational settings, as understanding how groups function can lead to more effective management and teamwork. Garvin et al. (2017) further assert that successful organisations recognise and harness the power of group dynamics to foster collaboration and innovation.

Group Dynamics Theory, while widely applied in organisational research, has also generated important critical debates. Forsyth (2019) notes that Lewin's original formulation was developed primarily through laboratory studies of small civilian groups, raising questions about its direct applicability to large, formal, hierarchically structured organisations such as military institutions. In response, scholars such as Garvin et al. (2019) have argued that the theory's core insights, that group cohesion, communication patterns, and shared norms are dynamically interrelated, remain valid in large organisations provided that the unit of analysis is shifted from the organisation as a whole to the operational sub-groups within it, such as GAF's garrison-level units and service branches. A further debate concerns the relationship between

group cohesion and communication openness. Janis's (1982) concept of groupthink suggests that very high levels of group cohesion in hierarchical organisations can actually *suppress* open communication, as members become reluctant to challenge group consensus or communicate dissenting information upward. In a regimented institution such as GAF, where esprit de corps is both an organisational value and an operational necessity, the tension between cohesion-building and communication openness is a live and unresolved one that Group Dynamics Theory both illuminates and, in its original formulation, inadequately addresses.

2.2.3.1 Significance of the Theory to the Study

The Group dynamics theory by Kurt Lewin creates an avenue for the members of a group to pool their resources and efforts towards a common goal. Interdependence promoted by the theory is something which an institution like GAF relies on for the successful execution of assigned tasks. The operationalisation of the group dynamics theory primarily depends on Internal Communication. The study can explore how DPR facilitate Internal Communication within the Armed Forces by applying this theory.

These three theories that underpin this study, systems theory of Public Relations, boundary-spanning theory, and the group dynamics theory, offer useful insights in analysing the role of Internal Communication within GAF. The systems theory and the group dynamics theory will help explain the interconnections and the feedback mechanisms inside the organisation, while boundary-spanning theory will be of help in explaining the role DPR plays in managing external and Internal Communication. Put together, the theories mentioned above create a wide framework from which to observe how communication processes add to the overall effectiveness and cohesion of GAF. Group Dynamics Theory was selected for this study because the operational effectiveness of GAF depends fundamentally on cohesion, teamwork, and shared purpose across its diverse units and garrisons, qualities that are directly shaped by

the quality of Internal Communication facilitated by DPR, making Lewin's framework an essential theoretical tool for understanding how communication practices influence group behaviour and organisational performance within a military context (Lewin, 1951).

2.2.4 Interrelationship of the Theoretical Frameworks

The three theoretical frameworks adopted in this study are not simply complementary lenses that reinforce one another, they are also frameworks that embody different and sometimes competing assumptions about how organisations communicate, which must be explicitly addressed. Systems Theory and Boundary-Spanning Theory share a structural orientation: both are primarily concerned with the architecture of communication, how information moves through organisational systems and across organisational boundaries (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Group Dynamics Theory, by contrast, takes a social-psychological orientation, focusing on how human relationships, norms, and group identities shape communication behaviour at the interpersonal level (Lewin, 1951). This distinction matters analytically: structural approaches explain why certain communication channels exist or are absent, while social-psychological approaches explain why individuals and groups use or avoid those channels even when they exist. In GAF's case, both levels of explanation are necessary, the structural barriers to upward communication and the psychological and cultural inhibitions that operate independently of structure require different analytical tools.

A second point of theoretical tension concerns the assumptions each framework makes about power. Systems Theory, in its Grunigian formulation, assumes a degree of organisational openness and willingness to incorporate feedback that may not reflect the reality of highly hierarchical institutions (Deetz, 2001). Boundary-Spanning Theory assumes that boundary-spanners possess sufficient authority to act on the information they gather (Leifer & Delbecq, 1978). Group Dynamics Theory, in its original formulation, assumes that group cohesion and

open communication are mutually reinforcing rather than in tension (Janis, 1982). Each of these assumptions is potentially problematic in the GAF context, and the value of combining the three frameworks lies precisely in the fact that their combined application exposes these tensions rather than obscuring them. Where Systems Theory identifies a breakdown in information flow, Boundary-Spanning Theory can explain whether the DPR has the positional authority to address it, and Group Dynamics Theory can explain whether the prevailing group norms within GAF's units make open communication culturally possible. Together, the three frameworks provide a sufficiently multi-dimensional analytical base for the development of an empirically grounded internal communication framework for GAF that accounts for structure, authority, and culture simultaneously.

2.3 Conceptual Review

2.3.1 Public Relations

“Public Relations (PR) is a symmetrical process of communication aimed at establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisation and its public” (Grunig & Hunt, 2020, p. 14). This mere definition underscores PR in establishing and maintaining a good relationship between an organisation and its publics. Properly done PR practices will facilitate an organisation's reputation-building processes, image improvement, and steady information flow.

Communications management is one of the major functions of PR. The professional constructs messages consistent with an organisation's goals and sends them via appropriate channels to the intended target. It is not just a question of message delivery, but also of hearing from the public in a two-way communication process. The engagement by organisations helps them to comprehend the perceptions and public feedback that may be vital in informed decision-making (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2019).

Crisis management is a much sought-after domain within Public Relations because it directly touches on how the reputation of an organisation is guarded in the event of high risk. In simple terms, a crisis can be defined as a circumstance in which an organisation is under scrutiny and has its public image badly hurt, thus necessitating immediate action by PR practitioners to act tactfully. Their task is to develop and carry out crisis communication strategies intended to face up to and mitigate the negative occurrence. This will call for the swift dissemination of timely, transparent, and accurate information toward the management of stakeholder perception in an effort to sustain trust and maintain a favourable narrative supply regarding the crisis. Coombs (2019, p. 112) confirms that “successful crisis management not only helps reassure shareholders, such as customers, employees, and investors, but it also plays a very important role in minimising long-term damage to the organisation's reputation and stability of operation”. Public Relations professionals try to restore the trust and integrity of the organisation by being proactive in the face of a crisis, showing accountability.

Image building is a continuous and systematic function of public Relations meant to develop and maintain a good perception of the organisation among the stakeholders. Thus, in this continuously ongoing process, active promotion of organisational objectives, achievement of key values, and contributions to society are undertaken to build the public image of the organisation. The core activities of image building include PR practices like media relations to pursue positive publicity; community involvement that creates goodwill within the public; and social responsibility showing the care of the organisation for ethical behaviours and improvement in society. Internal Communications is also a very relevant aspect in which the alignment of employees happens according to the goals and values of the organisation. This well-structured image-building strategy strengthens not only the organisation's reputation but also increases the level of trust, loyalty, and support from the public for further long-term success and stability (Agarwal, 2021).

Another important dimension of PR is internal cohesion. PR establishes one organisational form and develops shared objectives among organisational members. Effective Internal Communication means that all organisation members are informed, involved, and directed to accomplish the goals and mission of the organisation. Such practice can lead to higher morale, effective collaboration, and increased overall productivity in general (Men & Bowen, 2017).

It is a multi-disciplinary career, a complex one, attending to communication management, crisis management, image building, and image maintenance for organisations, hence helping to facilitate internal cohesion within the organisation. PR facilitates organisations in creating and maintaining worthwhile relations through key stakeholder management, which is crucial to long-term successful organisations through practical management of the identified variables.

Public Relations is a multifaceted field that involves managing communication, handling crises, building and maintaining an organisation's image, and fostering internal cohesion. PR assists organisations in developing and maintaining favourable connections with their stakeholders by strategically managing these factors, which is critical for long-term success.

2.3.2 Internal Communication

Internal Communication can best be described as the articulation of information and ideas within an organisation (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 86). This, therefore, involves the use of formal and informal channels in ensuring the realisation of messages between management and employees for the same purpose of being on par in pursuit of common objectives. This is important because it ultimately helps in creating a sense of unity and direction among employees, which is vital in ensuring good performance and morale within organisations.

Effective Internal Communication encompasses informational dispersion at strategic intervals. This includes, but is not limited to, routine updates from management on organisational goals,

changes in policies, and other relevant information. With that kind of openness, employees will have the sensation of being in the know and appreciated. There will presumably be a greater belief in management and a better dedication to the goals of the organisation. Most of the ways organisations have conventionally attempted to keep their employees informed and involved include regular town hall meetings, newsletters, and intranet updates (Welch, 2020, p. 99).

Beyond formal routes, informal communication also makes a very valuable contribution to Internal Communication. Informal communication can occur through less formal interaction, social relations, and unofficial networks within the organisation. The interactions in these would further help bonding and a collaborative culture. They also allow for the voicing of employee concerns or airing views that may not come out through more formal channels of communication (Verghese, 2019).

Similarly, Internal Communication is essential in terms of employee engagement. When employees learn how things really are inside an organisation and when they understand how their role serves the larger mission, they can get more motivated and engaged. An engaged employee is a productive employee; they express higher levels of job satisfaction and have lower turnover rates. Some of the techniques being practised to ensure that Internal Communication improves employee engagement include recognition programmes, mechanisms for giving and receiving feedback, and opportunities for professional development (Ruck, 2020).

Other effective benefits of good Internal Communication are organisational coherence and unity. Good, consistent communication in all instances aligns the employees of an organisation with its mission, vision, and values. When people feel they belong and are part of a common purpose, it lays a comfortable ground for teamwork and cooperation. When all employees

within an organisation understand and buy into the goals set forth by the organisation, they will work together to achieve these goals (Kanter, 2024, p.71).

Productivity increases by practising effective Internal Communications. Misunderstandings and errors are reduced when the flow of information is smooth within an organisation, thereby allowing personnel to perform their functions more efficiently. Expressed clearly, what will be expected, responsibilities, and deadlines ensure everybody knows, which can dramatically boost productivity (Ravasi et al., 2024).

2.3.3 Ghana Armed Forces

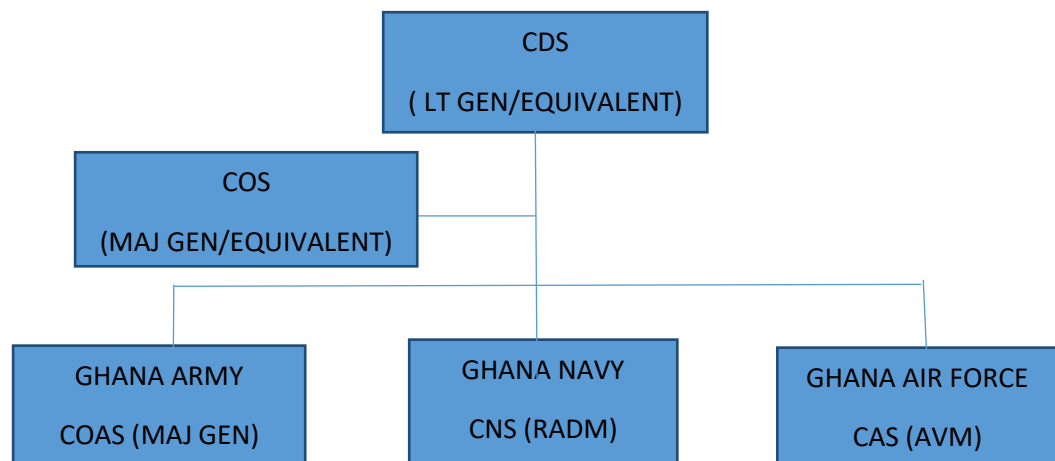
The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), as established by law under the Ministry of Defence, performed three extensive roles. These are deterring any external aggression against Ghana using countermeasures. Secondly, providing internal security alongside other state institutions as appropriate and responding to national disasters and emergencies. Lastly, support Ghana's foreign policy of international peace and cooperation by engaging in international peace support operations under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Simpey, 2023).

GAF is composed of three distinct arms of service: the Army, Navy, and Air Force (Adeti, 2022; Ba-Taa-Banah, 2023). Each branch has specific roles and responsibilities aimed at protecting Ghana's national interests and maintaining territorial integrity. The Army is tasked with land-based military operations and is primarily responsible for safeguarding the country's borders and responding to ground threats. It plays a key role in national security, peacekeeping, and crisis response operations (Ghana Ministry of Defence, 2023). The Navy, with its focus on maritime defence, ensures the security of Ghana's coastline and territorial waters. Its duties include patrolling the maritime borders, combating illegal activities such as smuggling and piracy, and ensuring safe navigation (Ghana Ministry of Defence, 2023). The Air Force, on the

other hand, provides aerial support for the other branches and is responsible for surveillance, reconnaissance, and transportation. It plays a critical role in defending the airspace and supporting ground and naval operations through air superiority and logistical support (Kwaku, 2021).

The organisational structure of GAF is hierarchical and designed to ensure efficient command and control (Yidaan, 2022). At the top of the hierarchy is the Chief of the Defence Staff, who oversees the overall operations of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Below the Chief of the Defence Staff are the individual service chiefs, each responsible for the operational and administrative functions of their respective service as shown below:

Figure 1: Ghana Armed Forces Organisational Chart



Source: Author’s Construct (2024)

This hierarchical structure is essential for maintaining discipline, operational efficiency, and effective decision-making. Each level of the hierarchy has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which help in coordinating efforts and ensuring that strategic directives are implemented effectively across the organisation (Mensah, 2022).

The Ghana Armed Forces' hierarchical structure is also integral to maintaining command and control within the military. The chain of command ensures that orders and directives are passed down through a well-defined sequence, allowing for clear communication and accountability. This structure supports a disciplined environment where personnel understand their roles and responsibilities, and it helps to prevent conflicts and confusion. Adherence to this chain of command is crucial for maintaining operational effectiveness and ensuring that all members of the Armed Forces work towards common objectives in a coordinated manner (Osei, 2021).

The roles of GAF extend beyond national defence to include participation in international peacekeeping missions and humanitarian operations. GAF has been involved in various United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions across Africa, contributing to regional stability and conflict resolution. These missions demonstrate GAF's commitment to international peace and security, as well as its capacity to operate effectively in diverse environments. Additionally, GAF plays a role in disaster response and humanitarian aid, assisting in natural disasters and emergencies. This comprehensive role underscores GAF's versatility and its importance not only in national defence but also in contributing to global peace and stability (Bonsu, 2023).

The training and development of personnel are key aspects of GAF's operational effectiveness. GAF invests significantly in the professional development of its members through various training programmes and exercises. These programmes are designed to enhance the skills and capabilities of military personnel, ensuring that they are well-prepared to meet both current and future challenges. Training encompasses a range of activities, from basic military training to specialised courses in areas such as logistics, intelligence, and combat operations. The emphasis on continuous training reflects GAF's commitment to maintaining a highly skilled and capable force (Amoako, 2022).

The Ghana Armed Forces is a structured and multifaceted organisation dedicated to defending the nation and contributing to international peacekeeping efforts. Its hierarchical structure ensures effective command and control, while its diverse roles and responsibilities highlight its significance both domestically and globally. GAF's commitment to training and professional development further enhances its operational capabilities, ensuring that it remains a key player in both national and international security landscapes (Edu-Afful, 2022)

2.3.4 Overview of Public Relations Practice in the Ghana Armed Forces

The first Public Relations Cell was established in August 1961 to stem inimical Belgian and other propaganda in Congo (Aboagye, 1999; Danso-Ankrah, 2012). A contingent of Ghanaian peacekeepers was deployed to Congo as part of the first United Nations mission. Civilians who also performed liaison duties at the UN Operations Force Headquarters in the Congo performed the PR functions at the time. The PR Cell was redesigned as the Forces Publicity Unit in 1963 (Aboagye, 1999; Danso-Ankrah, 2012). The Unit was later re-designated Public Relations Directorate with the Directorate being part of the General Headquarters currently located in *Burma Camp* (Aboagye, 1999, p.205). The outfit gained a departmental status in August 2023, thus formally placing it among the top hierarchy at the General Headquarters (DPR Charter 2023).

The PR structural deployment follows the lines of the deployment of military units in the seven garrisons of GAF. The PR outfit presently has Department Headquarters in *Burma Camp*, Accra; Service HQs PR directorates in *Burma Camp*, PR detachments at Garrison HQs across the country, and detachments at all the training commands. (DPR Charter, 2023)

The Department has a training school where it trains its staff and personnel from other units in information studies, photography and videography. The sections in the Department would be elevated to the status of directorate in due course as part of the expansion programme of GAF.

Currently, the sections and the cells under them handle issues relating to public information, command information, protocol and liaison, information systems and web management, social media, operations, training and education. Plans are in place to set up a broadcasting system for GAF, which would be managed by the Department. The Public Relations Officers (PROs) at the detachments outside the Department act as spokespersons in addition to the commanders of the garrisons/commands/service headquarters, on issues relating to the media and civil-military relations at their respective locations. (DPR Charter 2023)

DPR uses all the means at its disposal to establish good relations with the media and the civilian public to mitigate any bad press that it is likely to receive in the event of any of its personnel acting beyond bounds (Danso-Ankrah, 2012). The outfit publishes a quarterly house journal, *Afnews*, which was first published in 1967 (Danso-Ankrah, 2012). The *Afnews* serves as one of the main channels for troops' education and information. It was also a means through which the media and society could access information about the military. It was a public information tool which documented major activities undertaken by GAF in and out of the country. Another means of obtaining regular information about the military was the GAF website and social media handles, which were being managed by DPR (Azornu, 2017).

Apart from the PR outfits mentioned above, all GAF units deployed on peacekeeping missions outside the country have PR detachments as part of the contingent (Danso-Ankrah, 2012). The tasks of the PROs of the various Ghana Battalions (GHANBATTs) deployed on international peacekeeping missions were similar to what they did in Ghana. They served as spokespersons and or liaison officers for their respective contingents, especially when it came to dealing with the media in the theatre of operation.

The PROs were referred to as Public Information Officers (PIOs) when deployed on peacekeeping operations. It is worth noting that one of the hallmarks of GHANBATTs is their ability to publish contingent news magazines during every tour of duty. The PIOs/PROs are normally the editors for these news magazines. The contingent news magazines, apart from serving as historical documents, were also used to inform and educate troops and commanders at home about the activities of a particular GHANBATT during its tour of duty (Adeti, 2022). In its efforts to improve military-media relations in all military units in the country, DPR has instituted a programme aimed at training selected personnel who act as Unit Public Relations Representatives (UPRR). Their responsibilities include handling media and protocol activities in their respective units. The UPRRs were expected to maintain close liaison with the media in their respective localities, as well as the DPR and the Garrison PROs.

2.3.5 Operational Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms are defined as follows:

Arm of Service – It refers to the individual services that make up GAF.

Officers – These were the commissioned ranks of GAF.

Soldier – This was a generic term for all military personnel.

Military – It was used interchangeably with GAF in this study.

Other Ranks – This referred to the non-commissioned ranks of the military. The junior ranks of the Army were also referred to as soldiers. The junior ranks of the Navy were referred to as ratings, and junior personnel of the Air Force were referred to as Airmen and Airwomen, respectively.

Military High Command – This is the highest decision-making body of GAF, made up of the Commander-in-Chief, the Armed Forces Council, and the Defence Staff Committee.

Ghana Armed Forces - This is the organisation that represents the military in Ghana. It is made up of three services, namely, the Ghana Army, the Ghana Navy, and the Ghana Air Force.

General Headquarters - This is the highest headquarters within the Ghana Armed Forces. The Chief of the Defence Staff, the head of GAF, operates from the General Headquarters. It oversees the operations of the Service Headquarters. The General Headquarters is composed of Departments and Functional Directorates.

Service Headquarters – A Service Headquarters oversees the activities and operations of a particular arm of service.

Functional Directorate – This is a semi-autonomous outfit within the GHQ headed by a Director and forms part of a Department.

Department – This is an autonomous outfit, which forms part of the GHQ. A Director General heads it.

Autonomous – The word autonomous, as used in this study, means an outfit or office where its day-to-day activities are controlled and supervised directly by the head, be it a Director or Director General within the GHQ.

2.4 Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter creates a good understanding of PR and Internal Communication. In addition, the literature reviewed points out that they are considered important concepts within organisational settings, especially within GAF. Most of the reviewed literature emphasises that PR is a strategic communication process aimed at fostering mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their stakeholders. Authors like Grunig and Hunt (2020) stress that effective PR not only enhances an organisation's reputation but also ensures a steady flow of information through a two-way communication system. This allows organisations to comprehend and address public perceptions and feedback, which is essential for informed decision-making. Crisis management, image building, and communication management are key components of PR discussed, with Coombs (2019) emphasising the role

of PR in protecting an organisation's reputation during crises through timely and transparent communication.

Internal Communication refers to both formal and informal information exchange within the organisation aimed at keeping employees informed and engaged. Other scholars, such as Cornelissen (2020) and Welch (2020), have reiterated that regular management updates coupled with avenues for feedback will serve to enhance employee engagement and morale. The literature also articulates how effective Internal Communications translate into better coherence by the organisation, higher productivity, and a sense of shared purpose from its employees.

The review has also pointed out the organisation and functions of the Ghana Armed Forces, which consists of three services, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, each of which has its particular functions and responsibilities regarding national and territorial defence. GAF is hierarchically organised in such a way that command, control, discipline, and effectiveness in all aspects ensure coordination of efforts and maintenance of order. The literature also reveals the peacekeeping and humanitarian roles that GAF plays outside the nation's defence.

Generally, the literature has provided a linkage between PR, Internal Communication, and organisational effectiveness; thus, lays a foundation for the investigation into the role PR plays in the Internal Communication of GAF. The next chapter, therefore, discusses the methodology adopted in carrying out this research.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this study to investigate the role of Public Relations (PR) in facilitating Internal Communication within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), specifically focusing on the Department of Public Relations (DPR) at *Burma Camp* in Accra. The chapter covers research design, data collection methods, sampling procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This research design follows a qualitative approach, for which the collection and analysis of narrative data have been conducted to achieve an in-depth insight into Internal Communication practices (Smith et al., 2021). Based on the interpretivist paradigm, this approach was underpinned by the assumptions that reality is subjective and socially constructed through shared human experiences (Johnson, 2020). It is especially fit for exploring complex and context-dependent experiences and meanings that individuals and organisations attach to Internal Communication (Brown, 2022). The study sought to uncover nuanced insights into perceptions and enactments of communication within organisations, particularly GAF, through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis.

“The epistemological stance of this research is that knowledge is best acquired through the investigation of lived experiences, perspectives, and meanings of individuals” (Johnson, 2020, p. 5). This research adopted a constructivist perspective in which the notion of reality is viewed as plural and seen to be constructed through human interaction. The interpretivist paradigm

supports the use of qualitative methods to contextualise the richness of organisational communication dynamics, which cannot be reduced to numeric data (Taylor, 2023).

Research paradigms embody the underlying philosophical approaches to knowledge generation and validation. In the context of the present study, the three most prominent approaches to knowledge generation in the field of social sciences are positivism, post-positivism, and interpretivism. Each of these approaches has its own set of ontological, epistemological, and methodological underpinnings. As defined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), positivism has its roots in the natural sciences. It assumes that the real world has only one true reality that can be objectively observed and measured. It assumes that knowledge can be effectively generated through the use of quantitative methods of data analysis. A positivistic approach to the present study would have involved the use of standardised instruments to measure the effectiveness of Internal Communication through the use of structured questionnaires to a larger sample of GAF personnel. However, the positivistic approach was ruled out as an appropriate approach to the present study, as the key aim of the study was not to measure the effectiveness of Internal Communication in numerical terms but to understand the meanings and perceptions of GAF personnel associated with the use of Internal Communication. As defined by Bryman (2016), post-positivism accepts the limitations of objectivity but relies on quantitative approaches to knowledge generation. It aims to approximate objective reality through controlled observation. This paradigm was equally inappropriate since the study was not designed to test any hypotheses but to explore the dynamics of communication as they were experienced and described by the participants in their particular organisational context. Critical Realism was the third paradigm to be considered. This paradigm accepts the existence of structures underlying the phenomena we observe socially, but encourages us to design studies to reveal these underlying structures. Bhaskar (1989) was the key author of critical realism. Although there was some analytical potential to the critical realist paradigm with reference to the structured

hierarchical setting of GAF, it was felt to be less appropriate to the study of the lived experiences of the participants and their subjective descriptions of the Internal Communication processes at GAF, rather than the revelation of underlying structures. Interpretivism was the paradigm of choice because it was felt to be the only paradigm that truly acknowledged the socially constructed nature of the reality we observe socially. This included the socially constructed nature of the communication processes we observe in an organisation. Schwandt (2000) was the key author of the interpretivist paradigm. In the context of GAF, where the nature of the communication processes was so strongly influenced by status, culture, tradition, and interpersonal relationships, the interpretivist paradigm was felt to be the only paradigm that would allow the researcher to access the richness of the communication dynamics in a way that no other paradigm could. Crotty (1998) was the key author of the interpretivist paradigm. As noted by Clarke (2019), it is for this reason that emphasis has been placed on the meanings underpinning participants' communication practices to capture the complexity of their experiences and ensure a comprehensive understanding of Internal Communication frameworks.

The choice of a qualitative approach was justified by the fact that detailed insights are contextually grounded, which is important for establishing complex social phenomena such as Internal Communication. Unlike quantitative methods, which emphasise generalisability and statistical analysis, qualitative research allows depth and detail that enable the researcher to explore communication dynamics from the point of view of participants within specific organisational settings (Williams, 2021). Such depth of insight is required to develop context-sensitive suggestions about how to potentially improve communication practices, which would, by necessity, be organisation-specific.

The choice of using a qualitative approach was made after consideration of alternative methodological options that could be used to achieve the research objectives. The two alternatives considered were using a quantitative approach or a mixed approach. A quantitative approach, which uses numerical data to inform analysis, would be appropriate if the research were intended to measure Internal Communication effectiveness across a large population of GAF personnel (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The main aim of this research was to explore the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of participants concerning Internal Communication practices in GAF, which cannot be quantified or measured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). A mixed approach, which combines elements of quantitative and qualitative approaches, was also considered as a suitable option but was found to be inappropriate for this research. A mixed approach has the advantage of triangulating findings from different sources of evidence, but it requires large resources, time, and sample size to execute effectively (Bryman, 2016). The research objectives were purely exploratory, and as such, it was appropriate to use a purely qualitative approach as it was more epistemologically appropriate (Patton, 2002).

This approach enables the researcher to delve into issues concerning Internal Communication, such as the perceived effectiveness of communication strategies, employee engagement, and organisational culture. Qualitative instruments, including semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions, ensure that rich, descriptive data is gathered, allowing flexibility in the methodical exploration of communication practices (Harris et al., 2020). Thematic analysis identifies patterns and themes repeated in the data, providing a more elaborate analysis of Internal Communication factors. In this way, thematic analysis emphasises how employees perceive the effectiveness or inefficiency of information flow from higher management or leadership and how communication breakdowns influence cohesion within the firm (Adams, 2022).

Additionally, a qualitative focus has advantages in the articulation of actionable insights that are context-specific. The recommendations from this study are based on in-depth analyses of participant experiences and are thus more connected to real-world complexities occurring within organisational Internal Communication. As highlighted by Carter et al. (2023), this enhances the relevance and practical utility of the study findings for organisational leaders and communication practitioners. The focus is on providing recommendations rich in context that establish better methods of communication, tailored to the needs and culture of each organisation.

The interpretivist, constructivist orientation adopted in this study was not merely a philosophical declaration but a commitment that shaped every methodological decision that followed. The choice of semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection instrument directly reflects the interpretivist assumption that meaning is co-constructed in interaction, the semi-structured format allows participants to elaborate, reframe, and nuance their responses in ways that a structured questionnaire cannot accommodate (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The use of criterion-based purposive sampling reflects the constructivist recognition that knowledge about internal communication in GAF is held by specific individuals whose positional experience gives them privileged interpretive access to the phenomena under investigation, rather than being distributed uniformly across the entire population (Schwandt, 2000). The choice of thematic analysis as the analytical method is equally consistent with the interpretivist paradigm, as thematic analysis foregrounds the researcher's interpretive role in identifying patterns of meaning across participants' accounts rather than treating data as objective facts to be measured (Braun & Clarke, 2021). These methodological choices constitute a coherent and consistently applied interpretivist research design in which the philosophical orientation and the practical methods are mutually reinforcing rather than incidentally aligned.

3.2 Research Population

A population is the entire group about which a researcher wants to conclude. It encompasses all the elements that the researcher intends to study, which might include people, objects, events, organisations, countries, species, and more (Bhandari, 2020). Taylor (2019, p. 45) defined a statistical population as "any group of individuals who are the subject of a study," indicating that a population could be almost anything, so long as the individuals shared similar characteristics. This was complemented by Sheppard's (2020) assertion that the population generally refers to the "who" or "what" that social scientific researchers want to describe at the end of their study. It refers to the cluster of people, events, things, or phenomena that are of most interest to the researcher. Therefore, the population for this study included all military personnel of the Ghana Armed Forces stationed across the entire country.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The study used non-probability purposive sampling as a technique to sample participants to be interviewed using the semi-structured interview method. Purposive sampling is a technique used to sample participants based on specific characteristics or qualities that make them particularly relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). The use of non-probability purposive sampling ensured that participants were sampled based on specific characteristics or qualities that made them particularly relevant to the research objectives, thereby increasing the chances of obtaining meaningful and rich data from participants who were knowledgeable about Internal Communication practices within GAF (Patel et al., 2022).

Purposive sampling has various forms, including maximum variation sampling, homogeneous sampling, typical case sampling, expert sampling, criterion-based sampling, and snowball sampling, which can be used to sample participants based on specific characteristics or qualities that make them particularly relevant to research objectives (Patton, 2002). In this study, expert

purposive sampling was used to sample participants based on specific characteristics or qualities that made them particularly relevant to the research objectives. The use of expert purposive sampling was most appropriate since it ensured that participants were sampled based on specific characteristics or qualities that made them particularly relevant to research objectives, which required obtaining firsthand information from participants about how DPR facilitates Internal Communication practices within GAF. The research objectives required firsthand information from participants about how DPR facilitates Internal Communication practices within GAF, which could not be obtained from a general sample of military personnel.

More particularly, it employed criterion-based purposive sampling, which involves choosing participants based on specific criteria, including their position or function in the Department of Public Relations, their involvement in Internal Communication practices, as well as their length of service in the Armed Forces. The researcher used three steps to sample participants. These included obtaining official clearance from the appropriate military authorities to enable access to participants from all garrisons, identifying participants based on specific criteria, and contacting participants to inform them about the purpose of the research to obtain their informed consent to participate (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A total of 20 participants were purposively sampled from all seven military garrisons across the country. The choice of this sample size was based on the theoretical saturation concept, which argues that data collection should be continued until no further information or new themes are found from further interviewing (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The study was informed by research by Guest et al. (2006), which found that saturation in qualitative research can be reached with as few as 12 to 20 participants, especially when participants share similar professional backgrounds, as was the case with this study.

The 20 participants were drawn from specific categories of personnel whose roles made them directly relevant to the study's objectives. The sample comprised Public Relations Officers (PROs) attached to the Department of Public Relations at the General Headquarters and at garrison-level PR detachments across all seven garrisons, as well as selected senior and middle-ranking officers from non-PR units who were directly involved in the management and receipt of Internal Communication within their respective garrisons. In terms of rank distribution, participants included both commissioned officers — spanning the ranks of Lieutenant to Lieutenant Colonel and their service equivalents in the Navy and Air Force — and senior non-commissioned officers who held communication-related responsibilities at unit level. No participants were drawn from the most junior ranks of the military, as the research objectives required respondents with sufficient experience and institutional knowledge to speak meaningfully to the communication arrangements, challenges, and structural dynamics within GAF. This deliberate rank-based criterion ensured that participants could provide both a managerial perspective on how Internal Communication is designed and a practitioner perspective on how it functions in daily operational reality. The combination of DPR-specific personnel and non-DPR officers also ensured that the data captured both the supply side, how DPR designs and delivers Internal Communication, and the demand side, how communication is received and experienced by personnel across the organisation.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The primary data collection instrument used in the study was the interview guide. The interview guide was specifically designed to enable the conduct of interviews with the selected participants in the seven military garrisons of the GAF. An interview guide can be defined as a list of open-ended questions and topics that guide the interview, giving the interviewee sufficient freedom to discuss the interview topics (Panyasai & Ambele, 2025). The interview

guide as a data collection method has been widely used in various studies, especially in the collection of data in complex organisational settings, as it offers the interviewee sufficient freedom to discuss the interview topics (Chand, 2025). Although semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews can be used interchangeably, they have methodological implications. The primary difference between the two methods of data collection is that in-depth interviews are unstructured, whereas in semi-structured interviews, the interview guide consists of a series of specific open-ended interview questions (Karatsareas, 2022). The interview guide was used as the primary data collection method in the study, as the four research objectives were specific, and the data collection needed to be comprehensive for all twenty participants. The interview guide was specifically designed to enable the collection of data that met the four research objectives (Naz et al., 2022).

The interview guide was specifically designed by using the four research objectives as the basis for each of the interview questions. The interview guide was reviewed by the supervisor to ensure that the interview guide was clear. The interview guide was pre-tested on two of the interview participants, and the interview guide was adjusted accordingly (Lampart et al., 2023). The interview guide was then used to interview the 20 participants. The interview guide used in the study can be found in the appendix.

3.5 Sample Size

In qualitative studies, the term sample refers to a group of participants who have been selected to offer in-depth information about the research topic (Taylor, 2023). Therefore, for this study, a sample of 20 participants was chosen. The sample size of 20 for the study was appropriate since, in qualitative studies, a small sample of the population is used to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Williams, 2021). The sample of 20, as opposed to 30, was chosen to ensure that the data collected was sufficient for the purpose of the study, as opposed

to overwhelming the qualitative research (Clarke, 2019). The reason for selecting a sample of 20, as opposed to 30, was further based on the theoretical saturation concept, which implies that data collection in qualitative studies should be conducted to a point where there is no new information to be gathered (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Guest et al. (2006) found that in qualitative studies, data saturation occurs when a sample of 12 to 20 participants, particularly those in the same professional field, as in the case of the study, where the sample was drawn from the same institution, GAF, is used.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews, one of the widely accepted methods in qualitative research, as the primary data source. Semi structured interviews are known for providing rich first-hand information from participants, allowing for a deeper understanding of their experiences and perceptions about Internal Communication. An interview guide was developed based on guidelines from Smith et al. (2021) to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. This approach ensured consistency in the questions asked while allowing participants to elaborate on key topics. In line with Johnson's (2020) recommendations, particular care was taken to create a comfortable interview environment, fostering open and candid responses from the participants.

3.6.1 Secondary Sources

It is important to distinguish between secondary data and secondary sources, as the two concepts are often used interchangeably but refer to methodologically distinct categories. Secondary data refers specifically to data originally collected by another researcher for a different purpose and subsequently reused in a new study, such as national census records, institutional datasets, or previously conducted surveys (Bryman, 2016). Secondary sources, by contrast, refer to published academic literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books,

and credible online publications, that are consulted to contextualise, inform, and support a study's theoretical and empirical arguments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study did not employ secondary data. Rather, it drew upon a wide range of secondary sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Public Relations in facilitating Internal Communication within organisations. These secondary sources, comprising peer-reviewed journals, academic texts, and institutional documents, including the DPR Charter (2023), provided both foundational and contemporary insights into Internal Communication practices, enriching the study by offering diverse theoretical perspectives and supporting evidence to contextualise the primary data collected through semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2002).

3.6.2 Primary Data

The primary data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews, which were the main data collection instrument. Semi-structured interviews are particularly effective in qualitative research as they provide a balance between structured guidance and flexibility, allowing researchers to cover essential topics while also giving participants the freedom to elaborate on their experiences (Ruslin et al., 2022). This method enabled the exploration of the participants' perspectives in a natural and open-ended manner, capturing the complexities and nuances of Internal Communication practices (Nijkamp, 2024). Open-ended questions were used to facilitate depth in responses, a factor considered important for the capture of rich data characterised by context (Muzari et al., 2022). The combination of these techniques enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive insights into how Internal Communication functioned within the organisation, offering a detailed understanding of the practices, challenges, and opportunities from the participants' viewpoints (Weller et al., 2019).

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

In qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability used in quantitative studies are replaced by the parallel criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as established by (Aslan, 2025; Yanti et al., 2025). Each of these criteria was addressed in the design and execution of this study.

Credibility refers to the degree to which the findings accurately represent the experiences and perceptions of the participants (Shufutinsky, 2020). Credibility was established in this study through prolonged engagement with the research context, as the researcher's familiarity with GAF's institutional structure and communication practices informed the design of the interview guide and the interpretation of the data. In addition, member checking was employed as a credibility strategy: after the initial analysis of each interview transcript, a summary of the key themes identified was shared with five of the participants for verification, and their feedback was incorporated into the final thematic analysis. This process ensured that the interpretations presented in the findings chapter accurately reflected the participants' intended meanings (Lim, 2025).

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings may be applicable to other contexts (Weise et al., 2020). Although qualitative research does not seek statistical generalisability, the researcher addressed transferability by providing thick, detailed descriptions of the research context, including the institutional structure of GAF, the composition and distribution of the sample, and the organisational conditions under which data were collected, so that readers and future researchers can assess the degree to which the findings may be relevant to comparable regimented organisations in Ghana and elsewhere (Drisko, 2025; Hays & McKibben, 2021).

Dependability refers to the consistency and stability of the research process over time (Aslan, 2025). Dependability was addressed through the maintenance of an audit trail, which

documented all methodological decisions made during the research process, from the initial design of the interview guide through to the final thematic analysis. This trail included notes on the pre-testing of the interview guide, records of the two pilot interviews and the adjustments made to the guide as a result, and documentation of the coding process used in the thematic analysis.

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings are shaped by the participants' responses rather than by the researcher's personal biases or preconceptions (Lim, 2025). Confirmability was addressed through reflexivity: the researcher maintained a reflexivity journal throughout the data collection and analysis process, documenting personal assumptions and institutional familiarity with GAF that had the potential to influence the interpretation of the data. This journal was consulted during the analysis phase to ensure that emerging themes were grounded in the data rather than in prior expectations.

3.8 Data Handling and Analysis

Data analysis was considered an important stage of the entire research process, whereby raw data were converted into meaningful insights that directly addressed the research questions and objectives (Patel et al., 2022). Data analysis involves a systematic process of examining the data collected during the research to detect patterns, relationships, and trends that help create new knowledge or affirm existing knowledge (Brown, 2022). “Data analysis in this study was achieved through thematic analysis, an effective methodology for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 78; Patel et al., 2022, p. 9).

Thematic analysis followed a procedure of familiarising oneself with the data through close reading and re-reading of interview transcripts to develop an intimate understanding of the

content. Second, initial codes were developed through the systematic categorisation of relevant portions of data into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2021). These codes were then reviewed and refined to identify potential themes representing the core aspects of Internal Communication practices. Theme development was not based solely on frequency but also on its relevance to the research questions (Harris et al., 2020).

This was followed by a review of themes for refinement to ensure that they depicted meaningful patterns in the data. The naming and defining of themes were based on what they portrayed and how they contributed to an overall understanding of the dynamics of Internal Communication within the organisation. This aligns with Taylor (2023), who explained that naming and defining themes ensures clarity on what they convey. Finally, these themes were woven into a rich, detailed narrative that provided an insightful interpretation of the data, based on participants' lived experiences (Adams, 2022).

3.9 Research Ethics

Ethics is a crucial concern in every research study to ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of participants. Informed consent was necessary at the beginning of the research process due to ethical strings attached to the research work. The ethical principle of informed consent refers to a situation when respondents fully understood what the research was about and why it was being conducted, as well as the role they played in the research study (Harriss, MacSween & Atkinson, 2019), (Sheppard, 2024), (Babbie, 2020). The aims of this research project, the procedures involved and the time it would take were thus explained to the participants before the start of the current study. There was full disclosure, and the participants were duly informed of their considered decision to participate in this project (Sheppard, 2024)

Moreover, participation in the study was voluntary. The principle of voluntariness allows the individual to decide whether to participate or not to participate in research without any coercive or undue influence (Kiener, 2021). Those who refused to participate were left out with respect and thus maintained their integrity. This approach not only protects the rights of those participating but also gives much-needed credibility and ethical integrity to the research (Padure & Padure, 2024).

Another fundamental ethical concern was to maintain the participants' privacy and confidentiality. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) support this assertion because personal information of any kind needs to be protected to maintain trust and ethics within research. In this study, anonymity for all respondents was strictly maintained: personal identifiers were removed, and data were coded so that individuals could not be traced from their responses (Sheppard, 2024). The process of anonymisation kept them from being identifiable; their responses could not be traced back to them, hence guaranteeing privacy (Yin, 2019).

Additionally, ethical research practices were maintained throughout the data handling and analysis stages. The data collected were stored securely, accessible only to the research team and were used solely for this study. According to the ethical guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), such measures are critical in preventing unauthorised access and ensuring that the data is handled responsibly. These ethical considerations were foundational in building a trustworthy and respectful research environment, which was essential for obtaining genuine and reliable data.

Before the implementation of the study, the researcher complied with the ethical clearance policy of UniMAC-IJ.

3.10 Brief Information on the Research Setting

The research was conducted across all seven military garrisons of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), which encompassed the various units and barracks throughout the country. Each garrison was responsible for internal security in one or more of Ghana's 16 regions, ensuring comprehensive coverage nationwide. The study population included all military personnel stationed within these garrisons, providing a broad representation of individuals involved in GAF's internal security operations. GAF is a unique organisation that was well structured in the way it carried out its activities. The structure of the organisation and its system of Internal Communication, also brought about the problem being studied.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research methodology employed to explore Internal Communication practices and the role of Public Relations in the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). It outlines a qualitative research design grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasises understanding the complexities of human experiences and interactions. The chapter detailed the research population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations. The study focused on 20 military participants from various locations across the country, selected using purposive sampling. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and was analysed thematically to identify key patterns and insights. Ethical standards were rigorously adhered to, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring the anonymity of participants, thereby upholding the study's integrity and credibility. The next chapter analyses the data collected, presents the findings and discusses.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study conducted to explore Internal Communication arrangements within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). The analysis draws from in-depth interviews of twenty (20) military personnel, including Public Relations practitioners and a review of related literature on military communication structures. The research participants were anonymised and given codes. The chapter has been designed based on the objectives of this study, and it focuses on the channels used in the process of communication, organisational structure and its impact on communication's effectiveness, the problems faced by the Department of Public Relations (DPR) and an effective framework of Internal Communication.

4.1 Internal Communication Arrangements in GAF

4.1.1 Channels Used

The study found that a variety of channels were employed for Internal Communication at GAF. Formal channels such as memoranda (memos), electronic mails (emails), and newsletters dominated the channels. Participant 1, while stressing the need for these channels, said, "*Official memoranda are very important for just conveying the information fast, in particular operational updates.*" Participant 10 also emphasised that "*Emails often serve as our first line of communication because that ensures that everybody is informed at the same time, especially during deployment planning.*" Sixty percent of the participants also identified informal channels as valuable. As noted by participant 13, "Sometimes the best information is exchanged informally, during training sessions or even in the mess hall." Participant 19 said, "*I get more correct information from others informally than through official sources. It is*

where real talk takes place". This is supported by the findings of Yildirim and Demir (2022), which highlight that informal communication strengthens interpersonal bonds among staff, fostering trust and collaboration, especially in structured environments like the military. This viewpoint was supported by Participant 15, who affirmed, "*As much as formal communication is important, we must not belittle informal interactions. They actually help in building camaraderie and confidence among members, which is very essential in our line of operations.*" This underscores the multifaceted nature of communication within GAF, highlighting the interplay between formal and informal channels in facilitating effective Internal Communication. From a theoretical point of view, the presence of both formal and informal communication channels in GAF can be seen as an expression of the Systems Theory assumption that effective organisations tend to have various interconnected communication channels to ensure the uninterrupted flow of information through all levels of the organisation (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In particular, the informal communication channels can be seen as an expression of the Group Dynamics Theory assumption that informal interaction plays an important role in the development of group cohesion and trust in the organisation's units.

4.1.2 Message Dissemination

The dissemination of messages within GAF follows a strict hierarchical protocol, which participants described as both a strength and a limitation. The structured chain of command ensures that information flows systematically, reducing the likelihood of miscommunication and maintaining operational discipline. This is highlighted in the submissions of Participant 3, who stated, "*While the hierarchy ensures that the messages are relayed accurately, sometimes it may cause delays in information flow.*" This observation aligns with Costa (2022), who notes that tall hierarchies can slow down decision-making processes due to the multiple layers of information that must traverse, potentially hindering organisational agility. Participant 1 also explained this further by saying that "*Where the situation is not urgent, the chain could delay*

issuing information. This could be a source of confusion." Information concerning procedures for critical information was reported as being structured, and efforts for timely distribution were emphasised. Participant 4 reiterated, *"In cases of emergency, we have our ways of ensuring the most important information reaches all units in time."* This is supported by Meyer (2020), who observed that during crises, communication is not just about how quickly information is shared but is also about how it facilitates decision-making, co-ordination and overall effectiveness. This further illustrates how well Meyer (2020) underscores the need for timely communication in crises. Participant 10 contributed that *"Our command structure is designed to make sure that everyone gets the right information, but it requires that we trust the process. It sometimes means delays in the flow beyond what we may have liked to see"*. Besides, Participant 19 added, *"I respect strict protocols for they avert misinformation, but there are instances where we need to shoot some levels out for urgent matters."* There is thus always tension between these two competing demands of accuracy of message transmission and the speed with which information can be passed on. While the hierarchical distribution of messages within GAF is designed to ensure accuracy and accountability, it presents challenges in maintaining swift communication, particularly in dynamic operational environments. The hierarchical protocol for message diffusion in the GAF network aligns with the Systems Theory perspective that organisations function as a series of subsystems in which information must pass through specific channels to promote order and accountability (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). However, the trade-off between accuracy and speed, as raised by the participants, can be seen as a function of the Boundary-Spanning Theory's acknowledgement of the need for boundary spanners such as the DPR to manage the organisation's needs with the need for timely information transfer (Aldrich & Herker, 1977).

4.1.3 Communication Effectiveness

Generally, participants viewed the communication effectiveness in GAF positively. However, some were concerned about clarity and understanding. As was pointed out by Participant 4, *"We need to make sure that messages were not just sent but understood. It could cause serious operational problems."* This highlights the need for clarity in military communications, as emphasised by Perez (2023), who outlines key principles of effective communication, including clarity and brevity, to prevent misunderstandings that could jeopardise operations. Participant 6 also highlighted that *"Sometimes, the instructions have a lot of jargon that they confuse rather than enlighten us as to what we are to do. We need simpler language to bridge the gap."* This shows that there was a need for simplification of messages for better understanding among the ranks. Moreover, Participant 11 emphasised that *"In training exercises, we always have to debrief and find out that each unit had a different understanding of the same message. This inconsistency may lead to chaos in actual situations."* This is pointing out that in operational time, minor mistakes in the interpretation of messages may be potentially disastrous. Besides, Participant 15 added, *"We do have set rules, but sometimes those in lower ranks feel hesitant to ask for clarification, for fear of being perceived as incompetent."* This points out that one of the potential barriers to effective communication could stem from the hierarchical structure within the military itself. Participant 19 stated that *"Encouraging a culture of questioning and clarification would go a long way in making sure we are on the same page."* Although participants acknowledge strengths in GAF communication, there is a clear cry for a more focused approach toward clarity, inclusiveness and creating an environment that makes personnel feel comfortable enough to engage in discourse. The concerns raised by the participants regarding understanding in GAF's communication are a direct reflection of the Group Dynamics Theory assertion that effective communication is basic to the maintenance of group cohesion, as well as the avoidance of

operational misunderstandings in organisational units (Lewin, 1951). The hierarchical barriers to understanding in GAF's communication, as raised by the participants, also reflect the assertion of the Systems Theory that any breakdown in communication in any part of an organisational system can affect its overall effectiveness (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

4.1.4 Recent Changes in Communication Methods

Newly developed technologies have had a major effect on the way GAF communicates. There has been a gradual increase in the adoption of modern digital tools, that included mobile phone communication and social media. According to Participant 7, "*We are growing to adapt to modern communication tools. It's a huge adjustment, but it's necessary for our relevance.*" This reflects an evolution in awareness that technological advancement is useful for making communication more effective. Participant 12 emphasised that "*We use social media to engage with some younger personnel who are more comfortable communicating over social media. It helps us to keep everyone up to date and informed.*" The literature supports this perspective, suggesting that leveraging technology could enhance engagement and facilitate more effective communication (Baker & Durr, 2021). Moreover, Participant 14 was optimistic about this transition, saying, "*Mobile applications could offer a real-time flow of information and updates, which is considered an important element during operations.*" On the other hand, issues such as cybersecurity concerns and misinformation problems were identified. Participant 10 warned, "*While these tools are helpful, security has to be watched out for, and we must ensure whatever information is passed on is accurate. Misinformation causes anarchy.*" Participants acknowledged the necessity of embracing modern communication methods while also recognising the importance of maintaining security and accuracy in the information shared within GAF. The gradual adoption of digital communication tools within GAF reflects the Systems Theory emphasis on organisational adaptation to environmental changes through updated communication channels (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). This transition also aligns with

Boundary-Spanning Theory, which recognises that boundary spanners such as DPR must remain adaptive to evolving communication technologies to effectively manage both internal and external communication responsibilities (Aldrich & Herker, 1977).

4.2 Impact of Organisational Structure on Internal Communications

4.2.1 Structure Design

The organisational structure of GAF, characterised by a strict hierarchy, plays a pivotal role in facilitating Internal Communication. Participant 3 noted, *“Our structure is designed to ensure order and discipline, but it could sometimes hinder open communication.”* This observation aligns with recent studies indicating that hierarchical organisations can experience communication challenges (Josephs, Peng, & Crawford, 2022). Participant 11 echoed this sentiment, stating, *“While the hierarchy ensures that information flows through the appropriate channels, it could create barriers for personnel at lower levels to voice their concerns or suggestions.”* This reflects a common tension in military organisations where order is paramount, but there is also the need for feedback and dialogue. Additionally, Participant 19 noted, *“The structure could sometimes lead to delays in communication. Important decisions take time to filter downwards, which could be problematic in urgent situations.”* This concern is corroborated by the literature, which highlights how rigid hierarchies could result in bottlenecks, limiting the speed of information dissemination (Harrison & Wallace, 2021). Furthermore, Participant 15 emphasised, *“A rigid structure could stifle creativity and initiative. If personnel feel they cannot speak up, we might miss valuable insights that could improve our operations.”* The design of GAF's organisational structure as a hierarchical system directly reflects the Systems Theory conception of organisations as structured open systems where each unit plays an interdependent role in achieving overall organisational goals (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

4.2.2 Facilitation of Internal Communication

Even though the hierarchical structure of GAF might impede communication, it does greatly assist in accountability. As stated by Participant 8, "*Knowing exactly whom to report to does make communication easier to handle, even in times of crisis.*" This perspective reinforces the idea that a well-defined structure could facilitate effective communication in military settings (Josephs, Peng, & Crawford, 2022). Participant 12 reinforced this view by adding, "*The chain of command enables everyone to know the roles and responsibilities and could reduce confusion.*" This clarity is crucial, particularly in high-stakes environments where timely and accurate information is essential for operational success. For instance, Participant 4 noted, "*During emergencies, structured communication provides for swift decision-making as each person knows his or her position in the line of communication.*" In this direction, studies acknowledge that clarity in roles and responsibilities ensures effective Internal Communication, particularly where entity operations are under threat (Heath, 2020). However, Participant 10 observed that "*While helpful for structure, there is a risk it could make people not want to share information upward for fear of repercussions.*" This again emphasises that GAF must create an environment where feedback is encouraged, even in its hierarchical structure. GAF needs to find a balance between accountability and openness toward better Internal Communication and operational effectiveness. The facilitation of Internal Communication across GAF's units aligns with the Boundary-Spanning Theory role of DPR as the department responsible for bridging communication gaps between different levels and branches of the organisation (Aldrich & Herker, 1977).

4.2.3 Effect of Hierarchy on Communication

The study found that hierarchy significantly impacts communication dynamics within GAF. Participant 3 pointed out, "*Information tends to flow downwards, and there are times when feedback does not reach the top.*" This limitation could create a disconnect between the lower

and upper echelons of the organisation, which may hinder the timely exchange of crucial information. Participant 15 noted, *“In some instances, important updates get lost because they get stuck at one level of command.”* This sentiment illustrates the likelihood of critical insights being overlooked in a rigid hierarchy. Moreover, Participant 19 emphasised the need for upward communication, stating, *“Those at the top must hear what’s happening at the grass-roots level; otherwise, they make decisions without the full picture.”* Such observations reflect a common challenge in hierarchical organisations, where upward communication is often restricted, leading to potential misalignments in strategy and execution. This underscores the importance of creating channels for upward feedback to ensure that vital information flows freely throughout the organisation (Urbancová, Vrabcová & Pacáková, 2024). The inhibiting effect of hierarchy on upward communication in GAF also corroborates the Group Dynamics Theory that rigid power structures that exist in groups can inhibit communication, which can result in reduced group cohesion and members’ contributions to organisational decisions (Lewin, 1951).

4.2.4 Role of Structure in Decision-Making and Crisis Communication

The study also found that GAF's organisational structure greatly influences the process of decision-making and crisis communication. Participant 4 stated, *“During a crisis, decisions must be made quickly, and our structure helps streamline that process.”* This observation highlights the effectiveness of having a well-defined hierarchy in enabling prompt decision-making in high-pressure situations. For instance, Participant 10 emphasised, *“During emergencies, we know whom to consult, so we do not have much confusion and hence could respond appropriately.”* A clear identification of roles and responsibilities in the GAF structure ensures a cohesive response during crisis situations. Participant 2 added, *“Our chain of command is crucial as it provides a channel for issuing orders that could be quickly relayed at times when even a second counts.”* This view is further confirmed by literature indicating that

a well-organised institution could reach decisions much faster during critical times than institutions that are not well organised (Gomis et al., 2023). The function of GAF's structure in crisis communication can be related to the Systems Theory's focus on feedback loops and adaptive communication as critical elements of stability maintenance during crises (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The function of DPR as a boundary-spanner assumes critical importance during crises, as it has to balance internal and external communication needs (Aldrich & Herker, 1977).

4.2.5 Impact on Structural Efficiency

Participants expressed mixed views on the efficiency of communication due to the hierarchical structure. While some noted that it provides clarity, others indicated that it could slow down information flow. Participant 1 remarked, *“In some instances, we spend too much time waiting for approvals. This could be improved.”* This highlights the potential delays caused by a rigid hierarchy, which could affect the timely dissemination of critical information. Conversely, Participant 4 stated, *“Having a clear chain of command could help reduce misunderstandings, which ultimately enhances efficiency in some scenarios.”* This duality in perspectives underscores the complexity of communication efficiency within hierarchical organisations. Participant 10 added, *“When decisions need to be made quickly, waiting for multiple layers of approval could be frustrating and counter-productive.”* This sentiment reinforces the argument that structural inefficiencies could hinder timely communication, particularly in situations where rapid response was essential (Thielsch et al., 2021). Thus, balancing the need for a structured hierarchy with the demand for agile communication remains a critical challenge for GAF. The impact of GAF's hierarchical structure on communication efficiency reflects the Systems Theory argument that overly rigid organisational systems can create bottlenecks that impede the smooth flow of information, ultimately undermining organisational effectiveness (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

4.3 The barriers and enablers affecting the DPR in facilitating Internal Communication

4.3.1 Main Challenges

DPR faces several challenges in facilitating effective Internal Communication within GAF. Participant 2 highlighted, “*Resource limitations, both human and technological, are our biggest hurdles.*” This finding aligns with literature indicating that inadequate resources could significantly affect communication quality (Zhang et al., 2021). Additionally, Participant 5 remarked, “*The lack of modern communication tools often makes it difficult to relay important information quickly,*” underscoring the impact of technological shortcomings on operational efficiency. Another concern was expressed by Participant 8, “*Sometimes there is a disconnect between different units, leading to confusion about roles and responsibilities during operations.*” This disconnect emphasises the need for improved coordination and communication protocols within DPR. Moreover, Participant 6 pointed out, “*Training for our personnel on effective communication practices is often overlooked, which could lead to misunderstandings.*” This highlights that the challenges faced by DPR were multifaceted: resource constraints, technological gaps, inter-unit coordination issues, and a lack of training, all of which significantly impede effective Internal Communication. The resource limitations and structural barriers identified as main challenges facing DPR directly reflect the Boundary-Spanning Theory recognition that boundary spanners require adequate resources and organisational support to effectively manage both internal and external communication responsibilities (Aldrich & Herker, 1977).

4.3.2 Addressing Issues

For these matters to be tackled, DPR has tried several measures in an attempt to improve the Internal Communication within GAF. According to Participant 3, “*We provide regular training to improve the communication skills of our personnel.*” This proactive approach reflects the importance of continuous professional development in military communication

(Lebedyk & Strelinkov, 2023). Participant 4 further said, "*We have started incorporating modern communication tools to lessen the gap between other units.*" This means DPR was keen on embracing new technologies to enhance information flow. Moreover, Participant 7 added, "*We are creating clear communications during operations so that all know what to do.*" Participant 10 also added, "*Feedback mechanisms have been introduced to gather insights from personnel on how we could improve,*" which shows an effort toward creating a culture for the free flow of information and responsiveness to the needs of staff. These strategies taken together suggest that DPR realises its problems and is committed to formulating some actual solutions toward Internal Communication in GAF. The strategies identified for addressing the challenges in the DPR's communication systems are consistent with the Systems Theory's focus on the importance of feedback and adaptation as a means of improving organisational communication systems (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

4.3.3 Staff Feedback and Concerns

Responses from staff were a key determinant of the communication practices in GAF. Participant 5 noted, "*We have regular debriefs where we get insight from staff, and this enhances our practices.*" This attention to feedback was in line with organisational communications best practices (Opferkuch et al., 2021). Further, Participant 6 said, "*By listening to the ground-level personnel, we understand the form of practical problems they face and help us in devising communication strategies accordingly.*" This again shows two-way communications where the leadership seeks to take input from the staff to create inclusiveness. Apart from this, Participant 8 reflects, "*Sometimes, feedback doesn't seem to amount to actual changes, which could be frustrating.*" This points out that though the mechanisms to provide feedback exist, there might be a need to make the corresponding changes for feedback to be realised. Participant 9 reiterated this when he said, "*It is important we do not only collect the feedback but feed it back to the staff as to how this has impacted decisions.*" Together, these

observations suggest that a structured feedback process is necessary, where personnel's opinions are actively solicited and addressed to enhance overall communication effectiveness within GAF. The staff feedback and concerns identified in this section reflect the Group Dynamics Theory argument that open and responsive communication within groups is essential for maintaining morale, trust, and cohesion among organisational members (Lewin, 1951).

4.3.4 Crisis Management

DPR's effectiveness in crisis management was highlighted by several participants, illustrating both the strengths and areas for improvement within the current framework. For example, Participant 3 stated, "*The protocols we have in place have been helpful in times of crises in the past, but we always look for ways to enhance them.*" This statement basically demonstrates a positive outlook on how crisis management should be addressed and was paramount in a military setting. This idea was reiterated by Participant 4, who stated, "*We have learned something from those previous incidents. Those pieces of insight help us trim our protocols.*" Such ongoing evaluation finds its echo in literature that indicates the mindset towards crisis communication must be dynamic in nature (Tuan, 2022). Also, Participant 2 noted, "*Crisis communication drills are critical; they prepare us for actual situations and hence allow us to identify gaps in our processes.*" Some participants, however, had issues with the speed of communication during emergencies. Participant 1, for instance, observed that "*There is a delay in relaying information during the heat of the moment, and we do try to work on that.*" This suggests an area for improvement, as, although protocols were in place, the execution of crisis communication could benefit from continuous refinement and regular training. The crisis management challenges identified in GAF are consistent with all three theoretical frameworks applied in this study. According to the Systems Theory, there is a need to be adaptive in terms of communicating during times of crisis (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). On the other hand, Boundary-Spanning Theory points to the significant role that DPR would play in managing information

flow during times of crisis, considering that there would be a need to transcend internal/external boundaries in times of crisis (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Finally, there is a need to communicate well to prevent group panic, as emphasised by the Group Dynamics Theory (Lewin, 1951).

4.4 Development of an Effective Internal Communication Framework for GAF

To enhance Internal Communication within GAF, participants proposed a comprehensive framework that includes:

4.4.1 Establish Clear Communication Protocols

Establishing clear protocols for communication was emphasised as essential by several participants. Participant 5 noted, “*Standardised procedures help ensure everyone is on the same page.*” This sentiment highlights the importance of uniformity in communication to prevent misunderstandings and errors in operations. Participant 6 reinforced this point, stating, “*Without clear protocols, important messages could get lost in the noise, especially in a large organisation like ours.*” This perspective emphasises that well-defined communication channels could enhance the overall effectiveness of Internal Communication within GAF. Furthermore, Participant 8 remarked, “*When everyone knows the communication procedures, it reduces confusion and improves response time during crises.*” This aligns with recommendations from literature advocating for clear communication protocols in military organisations (Baker & Durr, 2021). Additionally, Participant 7 added, “*Having a structured approach to communication means we could quickly adapt when situations change.*” This illustrates that clear protocols not only facilitate immediate understanding but also contribute to organisational agility, which was critical in the dynamic environment of the military.

4.4.2 Implement Feedback Mechanisms

The participants suggested certain mechanisms of feedback that would ensure the effectiveness of GAF's communication. For instance, Participant 3 stated, "*Regular surveys could help us in ascertaining the communication needs of personnel better.*" This refers to the importance of seeking responses from personnel for effective tailoring of communication strategies. Participant 10 similarly expressed, "*Feedback sessions following large events enable us to fine-tune our delivery system and to iron out any problem areas that arose.*" This reveals how effective real-time feedback was in ensuring better communication efficiency. Participant 15 continued by saying, "*Establishing a culture wherein feedback is cherished stimulates more free-flowing interaction among ranks.*" In line with what participant 15 stipulated, building an environment where effective communication and feedback could take place was essential. Moreover, Participant 19 noted, "*With the introduction of anonymous feedback channels, people will provide more frank and constructive feedback.*" This finding aligns with the literature that suggests feedback was a key ingredient in organisational communication improvement (Akpa et al., 2021). These responses symbolised a common realisation on the part of these respondents that mechanisms of receiving and processing feedback represent some of the most significant ways in which communication practices were refined within GAF.

4.4.3 Foster a Culture of Open Communication

A recurring theme that cuts across all discussions was a call for open communication. Participant 1 went on to say, "*Leadership should model open communication to inspire others.*" This adds voice to the literature linking leadership to inspiration in fostering communication cultures (Mayfield et al., 2021). Participant 5 stated, "*When leaders are approachable and transparent, that emboldens us to raise our concerns and suggestions without fear.*" This goes to underline that in leadership, accessibility and transparency are very important in stimulating open interaction. This was further supported by Participant 12, who said, "*The creation of*

forums for discussion whereby all ranks are made to feel valued, is integral in fostering a culture of open communication." It reaffirmed that there should be formatted settings where personnel could have substantive discussions. Participant 20 supported this further by adding, *"Appreciation of inputs from every level of establishment leads to a sense of belonging and the readiness on the part of individuals to speak up."* These pieces of information put together highlight how leadership and recognition were very important to drive open communications in GAF.

4.4.4 Utilise Modern Communication Tools

The adoption of modern communication tools was emphasised as vital for improving communication efficiency within GAF. Participant 3 mentioned, *"We need to leverage technology to reach everyone quickly."* This aligns with findings in the literature indicating that technology could enhance organisational communication (Baker & Durr, 2021). Participant 7 added, *"Using applications and social media could bridge the communication gap, especially for younger personnel who are accustomed to these platforms."* This highlights the generational shift towards digital communication methods that could facilitate quicker exchanges of information. Participant 11 also noted, *"The ability to share updates instantly via mobile platforms has improved our operational readiness."* This underscores the practical advantages of technology in enhancing responsiveness and preparedness. Furthermore, Participant 19 noted, *"While traditional methods have their place, integrating modern tools is essential for staying relevant in today's fast-paced environment."* This reflected the broader consensus among participants regarding the necessity of embracing digital communication tools to maintain effective and timely communication within GAF.

4.4.5 Develop Tailored Communication Strategies

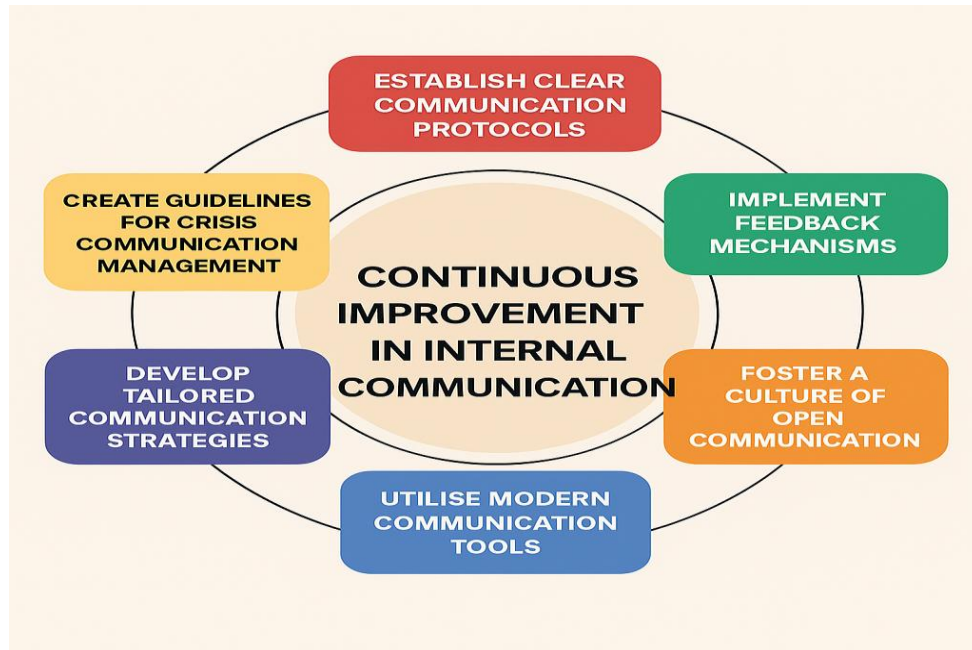
Participants highlighted the importance of developing tailored communication strategies for different units within GAF. Participant 2 noted, *“Every unit has its own culture, and communication should reflect that.”* This underscored the necessity of customising communication approaches to meet diverse needs (Lloyd, 2020). Participant 10 added, *“What works for the Navy may not resonate with the Army; understanding these differences is crucial.”* This sentiment illustrates the need for adaptability in communication styles based on the unique characteristics of each service in the Tri-Service. Additionally, Participant 15 remarked, *“We’ve found that using unit-specific jargon could help in making messages more relatable and understandable.”* This highlighted the effectiveness of contextualised communication in enhancing message reception. Furthermore, Participant 19 emphasised, *“Engaging with unit leaders to co-create communication strategies ensures that we address their specific challenges and goals.”* This collaborative approach not only fosters inclusivity but also enhances the effectiveness of communication by aligning it closely with the needs of individual units.

4.4.6 Create Guidelines for Crisis Communication Management

Finally, the need for guidelines in crisis communication management was stressed by several participants. Participant 1 mentioned, *“Having clear guidelines will prepare us better for unexpected situations.”* This sentiment echoed the findings in literature that advocate for comprehensive crisis communication plans (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021). Participant 3 elaborated, *“During crises, everyone should know their roles and responsibilities; that’s where guidelines come into play.”* This emphasised the necessity of clarity in roles during high-pressure situations. Participant 7 noted, *“Regular simulations based on these guidelines could ensure that we are always prepared, not just in theory but in practice.”* This highlighted the importance of practical training alongside guideline creation. Additionally, Participant 11

remarked, “It’s not just about having the guidelines; we need to ensure everyone is familiar with them to make a real difference.” This underscores the importance of ongoing training and communication in making crisis management guidelines effective.

Figure 2: Diagram of the Proposed Internal Communication Framework for GAF



Source: Researcher’s Field Study, 2025

4.5 Explanation of the Framework

The proposed Internal Communication framework for GAF was conceptualised through a systematic approach to integrating the empirical research findings of the semi-structured interview research with the three theoretical approaches that were adopted as part of this research study. Rather than being conceptualised independently, each component of the proposed Internal Communication framework was informed by and grounded in the Systems Theory of Public Relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), Boundary-Spanning Theory (Aldrich & Herker, 1977), and Group Dynamics Theory (Lewin, 1951), as highlighted below. The Systems Theory of Public Relations informed the conceptualisation of the importance of structured communication channels and feedback mechanisms as critical tools to ensure organisational

integration and consistency across GAF's seven garrisons. The Boundary-Spanning Theory informed the conceptualisation of DPR's critical role as the internal and external communication function and the need to effectively resource DPR to enable it to discharge this critical function. The Group Dynamics Theory informed the conceptualisation of the need to foster open communication cultures and tailor Internal Communication strategies to enhance group cohesion and esprit de corps across GAF's diverse operational groups. The three theoretical approaches to Internal Communication ensured that the proposed Internal Communication framework was conceptualised as a response to the Internal Communication challenges that were empirically identified by this research study.

The Cyclical Internal Communication Framework illustrates how the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) can sustain effective Internal Communication through a continuous improvement cycle. The framework demonstrates the interdependence and simultaneity of six critical components that collectively enhance communication flow, responsiveness, and organisational cohesion. At the centre of the diagram lies the concept of “Continuous Improvement in Internal Communication”, representing the ongoing process of refining communication practices to adapt to evolving operational and institutional needs.

4.5.1 Establish Clear Communication Protocols

This element emphasises the need for structured and standardised communication procedures across all levels of the organisation. Clear communication protocols ensure consistency, reduce ambiguity, and enhance coordination, especially during complex military operations. By setting defined communication pathways, personnel can transmit and receive information efficiently, minimising the risk of misinformation and delays. This component is grounded in the Systems Theory proposition that well-defined communication channels are essential for

maintaining the integrity and efficiency of information flow across all levels of an organisational system (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

4.5.2 Implement Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback is central to communication effectiveness. This component highlights the creation of systems such as surveys, feedback forms, and post-event evaluations to gather responses from personnel. Constructive feedback loops allow leadership to assess the clarity and impact of messages, enabling timely adjustments. The inclusion of anonymous channels can also foster honesty and inclusivity in communication. This component draws directly from the Systems Theory emphasis on feedback loops as critical mechanisms for organisational adaptation and continuous improvement, as well as the Group Dynamics Theory recognition that responsive feedback strengthens trust and cohesion within organisational groups (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Lewin, 1951).

4.5.3 Foster a Culture of Open Communication

A culture of openness nurtures trust, collaboration, and morale. This component underscores the importance of approachable leadership, transparency, and inclusivity in discussions. Encouraging dialogue across ranks ensures that personnel feel heard and valued, leading to stronger commitment and better operational harmony. This component is guided by the theory of group dynamics, which asserts that open and participatory communication in groups is fundamental to the development of cohesion, morale, and purpose that are critical to military effectiveness (Lewin, 1951).

4.5.4 Utilise Modern Communication Tools

The adoption of digital platforms and technological tools enhances the efficiency and reach of communication. Mobile applications, intranets, and secure messaging systems help bridge

information gaps across different units. Integrating digital and traditional channels ensures that information dissemination remains inclusive, quick, and reliable. This component is an acknowledgement of the Systems Theory's emphasis on the need for organisational adaptation to changes in the environment, which recognises the need to update the communication infrastructure at GAF in order to ensure the free flow of information within the organisation's geographically dispersed garrisons (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

4.5.5 Develop Tailored Communication Strategies

Recognising the unique cultures and operational contexts of different units within GAF, this element stresses the need for customised communication approaches. Tailoring strategies to the specific needs and language of each unit enhances message relevance and comprehension, thereby strengthening engagement and alignment with institutional goals. This component is informed by Boundary-Spanning Theory, which recognises that effective communication requires strategies sensitive to the diverse operational contexts and communication needs of different units and levels within the organisation (Aldrich & Herker, 1977).

4.5.6 Create Guidelines for Crisis Communication Management

In times of crisis, communication becomes critical to maintaining order and confidence. This component emphasises the establishment of pre-defined guidelines and role assignments to ensure swift, coordinated responses. Regular simulations and training exercises help personnel internalise these guidelines, fostering readiness and resilience in emergency communication situations. This component will be informed by all three theories. Systems Theory points to the need for adaptive communication protocols in times of crisis, as discussed in Grunig and Hunt (1984), while Boundary-Spanning Theory points to the crucial function DPR plays in times of crisis in terms of the management of information across boundaries, as discussed in Aldrich

and Herker (1977), and Group Dynamics Theory points to the need for effective communication in maintaining group cohesion, as discussed in Lewin (1951).

4.5.7 Central Element: Continuous Improvement in Internal Communication

The continuous improvement in Internal Communication at the centre signifies that Internal Communication is a dynamic and iterative process. It requires regular evaluation, learning from feedback, and adaptation to new challenges and technologies. This cyclical approach ensures that communication within GAF remains responsive, transparent, and strategically aligned with the organisation's mission and structure. As the central piece of the proposed framework, continuous improvement embodies the essence of the convergence of all three theoretical frameworks used in this study. The focus of Systems Theory on feedback loops (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), the focus of Boundary-Spanning Theory on the need to be adaptive in communication management (Aldrich & Herker, 1977), and the focus of Group Dynamics Theory on the evolving needs of group communication (Lewin, 1951) collectively form the basis of continuous improvement, upon which all the other components of the framework are built.

In summary, the diagram presents a self-reinforcing system where each component supports and strengthens the others. Together, they cultivate a communication environment characterised by clarity, inclusivity, technological adaptability, and strategic learning, ultimately ensuring sustained organisational effectiveness within the Ghana Armed Forces.

4.5.8 Critical Interrogation of Findings in Relation to Literature and Theory

Whilst the findings of this study largely align with existing scholarship on internal communication and the three theoretical frameworks adopted, several findings complicate or challenge prevailing assumptions in ways that warrant explicit acknowledgement. First,

Systems Theory, as articulated by Grunig and Hunt (1984), assumes that organisations function as open systems in which feedback loops operate as natural self-correcting mechanisms. The findings of this study challenge that assumption directly: participants consistently reported that feedback from junior personnel rarely reached decision-makers, not because feedback mechanisms were absent, but because the organisational culture actively discouraged upward communication. This suggests that in regimented institutions, the presence of a formal communication system does not guarantee its openness, a distinction that Grunig and Hunt's model does not adequately theorise and which the present study brings into empirical relief for the first time in a Ghanaian military context. Second, Boundary-Spanning Theory predicts that DPR, as the designated boundary-spanning unit, would function as an effective conduit for both internal and external communication (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). The findings complicate this prediction: DPR's capacity to perform this role was significantly constrained by resource limitations and institutional authority deficits, corroborating Leifer and Delbecq's (1978) critique that boundary-spanners are only effective when they possess sufficient organisational authority, and extending that critique into a sub-Saharan African military context where it had not previously been empirically tested. Third, whilst the global literature — including Men (2021), Welch (2020), and Karanges et al. (2019), consistently positions formal structured channels as the primary drivers of internal communication effectiveness, the GAF findings challenge this assumption. Participants reported that informal channels, mess hall conversations, training session exchanges, and peer-to-peer interactions, were more trusted and more information-rich than formal channels in practice. This goes beyond confirming Zhu et al.'s (2017) observation about the supplementary value of informal communication. It suggests that in contexts where formal channels are structurally compromised by hierarchy and cultural inhibition, informal communication becomes a *compensatory* mechanism rather than a

supplementary one, a distinction the current literature has not fully theorised and which this study contributes as an original finding.

4.6 Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes four distinct contributions to knowledge that advance understanding beyond what existing scholarship has established.

The first contribution is **empirical**. Whilst previous studies have collected primary data on GAF's public relations function, their empirical focus was confined to external communication and national security roles. Kpabitey-Teye (2020) examined the role of public relations in promoting national security using GAF as a case study but did not address Internal Communication. Simpeh (2023) focused on governance practices within GAF, while Kotoku (2021) explored identity negotiation among newly recruited soldiers, neither of which directed empirical attention toward the Internal Communication mandate of the Department of Public Relations. Braimah's (2021) internal communication framework for Ghana's law enforcement agencies represents the closest precedent in terms of subject matter but did not extend to the military context. The present study therefore directs primary empirical data collection specifically toward the Internal Communication practices of GAF and the facilitation role of DPR, addressing a gap that the existing body of Ghanaian public relations and military communication research has not filled (Nutsugah & Anani-Bossman, 2023).

The second contribution is **methodological**. This study demonstrates the value of criterion-based purposive sampling as a methodological approach for investigating internal communication in regimented institutions where access is institutionally restricted and where relevant knowledge is positionally held rather than uniformly distributed across the population (Patel, Green, & Wilson, 2022). The study captures both the supply side and the demand side

of internal communication, a dual-perspective sampling design that existing studies of military communication in Ghana have not employed by deliberately sampling across all seven garrisons and combining DPR-specific personnel with non-DPR officers. Furthermore, the study's use of semi-structured interviews within an interpretivist framework demonstrates that the subjective, rank-sensitive, and culturally embedded dimensions of communication in a hierarchical military institution are not accessible through quantitative instruments, establishing a methodological precedent for future qualitative studies of regimented organisations in Ghana and comparable African contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The consistent achievement of data saturation at 20 participants drawn from a highly specialised and institutionally restricted population further validates the appropriateness of the sample size and selection criteria for this type of organisational communication research (Weller et al., 2019).

The third contribution is **theoretical**. The study produces findings that both confirm and challenge each framework individually by applying Systems Theory, Boundary-Spanning Theory, and Group Dynamics Theory simultaneously to a regimented African military institution. The finding that formal communication systems can coexist with deeply entrenched cultures of communicative closure, where personnel do not use available channels for fear of reprisal, reveals a limitation of Systems Theory's open-system assumptions not previously documented in a sub-Saharan African military context (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The finding that DPR's boundary-spanning capacity was constrained by institutional authority deficits extends Leifer and Delbecq's (1978) critique into a new institutional setting, corroborated in the African context by Anani-Bossman (2022) and Ogu and Arugu (2021). The finding that informal communication functions as a compensatory rather than supplementary mechanism in hierarchically rigid organisations advances Group Dynamics Theory's account of how group

cohesion is maintained when formal channels are structurally compromised (Lewin, 1951; Yildirim & Demir, 2022).

The fourth contribution is **practical**. The Cyclical Internal Communication Framework developed in this study addresses a documented gap in the internal communication literature on regimented organisations in Ghana (Braumah, 2021; Nutsugah & Anani-Bossman, 2023). Unlike Western-derived frameworks reviewed in the literature, which assume resource availability, institutional openness, and digital infrastructure (Men, 2021; Welch, 2020; Karanges et al., 2019), this framework is grounded in the specific hierarchical, cultural, and infrastructural conditions of GAF, making it directly applicable to the institution and offering a replicable model for other regimented organisations in Ghana and comparable African contexts (Sutton, Le Roux, & Fourie, 2022).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the findings of the research conducted on the Internal Communication arrangements within the Ghana Armed Forces. The findings drew attention to the complexity of communication in a hierarchical organisation, revealing both strengths and challenges in the current practices. The proposed framework for improving Internal Communication within GAF aimed to address identified gaps and enhance overall communication efficacy. The next chapter will provide a summary of the study, implications of the findings, and recommendations for future research and policy making.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview of Findings

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the findings on the Internal Communication practices within GAF, linking the insights gathered from participants to relevant literature to identify patterns and discrepancies. The discussion is organised around key themes that emerged from the research, including the channels of communication, methods of message dissemination, critical information handling and overall effectiveness of communication. Additional themes include changes in communication practices, the role of organisational structure, the influence of hierarchy and the facilitation of Internal Communication. The chapter also explores decision-making during crises, the impact of structure on efficiency, main communication challenges, staff feedback and the resources required for improvement. This thematic organisation ensures that the findings are systematically connected to the broader context of communication theory and practice.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study highlighted a few critical areas involving Internal Communication within GAF. First, it noted various channels of communications used, which ranged from formal mechanisms like emails, memos, messages and newsletters to informal interactions like word of mouth that took place during training sessions or social gatherings. Formal channels were seen to be imperative in the dissemination of official information that would ensure directives and operational updates reach personnel on time. However, the significance of informal communication was also emphasised, with participants noting its role in fostering camaraderie and building relationships amongst personnel. As Participant 2 identified, "*Sometimes the best information*

you get is when you are sitting around having lunch or over some drinks in the mess hall."

What this suggests is that these informal exchanges can often provide important information that ends up not getting passed on through formal lines, which in turn promotes collaboration and mutual understanding among team members. Research supports this notion, suggesting that informal communication can lead to stronger interpersonal connections, which are crucial for a cohesive working environment, particularly in a hierarchical structure like the military (Geuzinge et al., 2024).

Secondly, the hierarchical structure of GAF significantly impacted communication dynamics. As much as a strict hierarchy is known to ensure order, discipline and accountability within the forces, it also creates some sort of barrier to upward communication. Participants were apprehensive that information flow was more likely to be downwards and, therefore, would be delayed in reaching decision-makers. Participant 4 specifically stated, "*We often feel that our input doesn't make it to the top, which may lead to frustration and disengagement.*" This sentiment reflects the challenges inherent in hierarchical organisations, where communication tends to become one-sided. The rigid structure for GAF supports the literature that a tight hierarchical system impedes effective, timely information exchange. (Yang et al., 2023). This may stifle innovation and adaptability since the personnel on the front line would want to improve the operations without having the appropriate channels for airing views effectively.

The study brought to light several challenges DPR faced in its effort to ensure effective Internal Communication. Resource limitations, both human and technological, emerged as a prime barrier impinging on communication quality. For example, Participant 6 pointed out that "*We usually do not have such means to spread information in time and promptly. So that impacts the whole communication strategy.*" These flaws reduce not only the effectiveness of the information dissemination process but also the quality of information spread within DPR. As

such, the attempts to address these challenges through regular training and feedback mechanisms indicate that continuous professional development is paramount for ensuring better communication in a military context. This focus on skill enhancement reflects the best practices in organisational communication and equips personnel with the necessary tools to navigate complex communication landscapes (Adeniyi et al., 2024).

Lastly, the study highlighted tailored communication strategies and crisis management guidelines. What the respondents indicated is that each unit has its own culture and operational contexts within GAF; therefore, each will require specific approaches as far as communication goes. As one participant noted, "*What works for one unit might not work for another. We need strategies that fit our needs and circumstances.*" That feeling demonstrates the desire to tailor communication approaches to the various needs of the organisation. The second important step was to ensure that very clear-cut protocols for communication were laid out. This is to help everybody in the institution to be informed and prepared for any crisis that may come along. Significantly, in all crisis situations, timely and proper communication often proves to be the dividing line between effective management and chaos. This indicates that developing a set of comprehensive guidelines on crisis communication would be very useful in effectively strengthening GAF's preparedness and resilience against any challenge. It can, therefore, devise some proper strategies and protocols to achieve effective communication in GAF so that personnel are not only informed but also more integrated into the decision-making process that has an effect on their operations and work environment.

5.3 Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have wide ramifications for the development of improved Internal Communication structures within GAF. Firstly, there was a great need to formulate and institute effective communication mechanisms incorporating formal and informal channels.

Through various modes of communication, the inclusiveness of GAF would be realised, and information coordination and sharing would be enhanced among the personnel. This would not only be facilitated by conventional formal mechanisms of communication, such as memos, emails and briefings, but the organisation should also learn to appreciate how much informal sessions during social functions or team-building activities could help. It is envisaged that such a culture would create an environment where personnel can freely interact, exchange knowledge in meaningful ways and build stronger professional relationships. This, in turn, would result in a more unified and well-informed workforce, enhancing collaboration and overall effectiveness. Also, a centralised communication platform would ensure that both formal announcements and informal discussions may be channelled through one single platform, where personnel would have access to all related information to facilitate transparency and build trust in the organisation.

The perceptions of hierarchy and its impact on the dynamics of communication suggest that the leadership of GAF must find ways of enhancing upward communication. The culture where feedback was sought and valued could help bridge the gap between different levels of organisation. This would be for regular forums or even town hall meetings where personnel at all levels share insights and concerns. This would not only ensure that junior personnel spoke up but also that leaders received valuable feedback that might form the basis of decision-making. In addition, anonymous mechanisms of feedback could also be formalised to ensure openness so that concerned personnel could communicate their grievances without fear of reprimand. Similarly, the leadership and subordinates could be given training sessions in effective communication skills, which helps to create a strong feedback loop wherein the flow of information goes upwards and downwards in the hierarchy.

Besides, investing in modern communication technologies and resources could mitigate some of the identified challenges. In this regard, digital engagement of tools and platforms would make GAF more communicative in issuing information and ensuring that personnel were informed on time, especially in cases of emergency. Instant messaging applications, secure group chats, and collaboration platforms ensure faster communication and a real-time channel for updates and alerts. Additionally, the inclusion of video conferencing tools could be very helpful in keeping personnel connected, especially in the case of a remote unit or deployment. Regular training in these technologies was crucial to make all personnel conversant with them for maximum benefit. The result is that investment in technology would not only pay off in improved communication but would also provide personnel with the information they need to be more knowledgeable and engaged in their roles.

Moreover, effective crisis communication management also plays a vital role at GAF. If personnel were provided with a systematic framework or mechanism on how to act within crises, ultimately, it would enable them to act appropriately. Crisis communication training programmes could be provided with the needed competencies to communicate effectively during adverse conditions, thus enhancing the overall preparedness and response capabilities of GAF. Such programmes should emphasise clear functions and responsibilities at the time of crisis to enable all personnel know their roles as well as who to contact in all kinds of situations. Besides, regular simulations and drills contribute to personnel getting acquainted with the adopted norms and reducing the time spent on real emergencies. In so doing, the culture of preparedness through regular training and simulation would significantly help organisational resilience to better cope with crises, while developing confidence in personnel to enable them act capably when an unexpected event occurs.

The proposed Internal Communication framework has some specific and concrete benefits for the Ghana Armed Forces at three levels. At the operational level, the framework's focus on the establishment and use of appropriate communication protocols and crisis communication guidelines will improve the GAF's capacity for timely, accurate, and consistent information dissemination across all the GAF's seven garrisons, thereby minimising the possibility of miscommunication that could negatively impact the effectiveness of GAF operations (Hargie, Dickson, & Nelson, 2003). At the institutional level, the framework's feedback mechanisms and open communication culture components will help narrow the hierarchical gap between the GAF's senior and junior personnel, thereby creating a more responsive and inclusive Internal Communication environment that fosters the development of esprit de corps and organisational cohesion, both being critical factors for military organisational effectiveness (Caforio, 2006). At the departmental level, the framework will serve as a useful operational guide for the DPR in the execution of its Internal Communication mandate, thereby clearly articulating the boundary-spanning role of the department in the management and dissemination of information across the diverse GAF units and branches (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Overall, the framework will equip the GAF with a suitable and appropriate Internal Communication system that meets the particular challenges and barriers identified in this study, making the framework a useful and applicable tool for improving the effectiveness of Internal Communication within the institution.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

While this study has provided considerable insight into the trends in Internal Communication practices at GAF, there is certainly further scope for areas that have not been clearly demarcated. This could prove to be a very important area for future research: after-effects of the introduction of modern communication equipment and tools, and their effect on personnel engagement and satisfaction. As firms increasingly integrate digital platforms, it is necessary

to gain an understanding of how such tools affect everyday interactions, morale and general job satisfaction. Future studies could employ longitudinal methods to assess how the introduction of communication technologies impacts not only the efficiency of information dissemination but also the sense of community and belonging among personnel. Surveys and interviews conducted over an extended period would provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics, allowing military leaders to make informed decisions about technology investments and their impact on personnel.

Additionally, examining the perspectives of junior personnel on communication dynamics may yield insights into the effectiveness of existing channels and protocols. Junior members often occupy a unique position within the military hierarchy, and their views can provide valuable feedback on the clarity and accessibility of communication methods used within the organisation. Qualitative research techniques, such as focus groups or individual in-depth interviews, could facilitate deeper discussions about their experiences with formal and informal communication channels. Investigating whether junior personnel feel empowered to provide feedback and how such feedback was utilised could reveal significant gaps in the current communication framework. Furthermore, understanding their perceptions could inform targeted training initiatives designed to enhance communication effectiveness across all ranks.

Another potential avenue for future research might be comparative studies between GAF and other military organisations from different parts of the world. Different practices and structures of communication could be analysed, and from them, the most appropriate practices that could assist in improving the Internal Communication framework of GAF could be identified. This comparative research would be able to reveal cultural and organisational differences in how styles and the effectiveness of communication were shaped. It would consider some military organisations from allied nations to those with diversified operational structures. When

collecting data on the communicative strategies which have worked for other entities, GAF could put them into place and make adaptations to suit contexts, in order to develop a better and timely communication ecology.

Finally, the role of leadership in influencing GAF communication practices is another area in need of additional consideration. Research into this could cover how different styles of leadership influence communication dynamics, particularly within such a heavily structured hierarchical organisation like the military. Knowledge of the ways leaders communicate expectations, give feedback and foster open dialogue would provide insight into paths to achieve increased effectiveness in general communication. The study could utilise surveys or case studies of the effectiveness of different leadership approaches on communication satisfaction. Placing priority on research in leadership communication allows GAF to generate focused approaches for developing an enabling organisational culture and effective communication practices, leading to a more engaged and responsive workforce.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy

To improve Internal Communication practices at GAF, five key policy recommendations have been proposed:

First, GAF's Chief of the Defence Staff should issue a standing directive mandating the establishment of structured feedback mechanisms across all seven garrisons. Specifically, each garrison's Public Relations detachment should be tasked with administering bi-annual personnel communication surveys, the results of which must be reviewed at the quarterly Garrison Commanders' conference and formally responded to within thirty days. Additionally, structured after-action communication debriefs should be institutionalised following all major military exercises and operational deployments, ensuring that lessons on communication effectiveness are systematically captured and acted upon rather than informally noted and

forgotten. This recommendation directly addresses the finding that feedback mechanisms existed in name within GAF but were not consistently acted upon, creating frustration and disengagement among personnel across the ranks.

Second, the Department of Public Relations should be resourced and mandated to develop a GAF-wide secure internal digital communication platform, accessible across all seven garrisons and compatible with the operational security requirements of a military institution. Given the cybersecurity concerns raised by participants, this platform must be developed in consultation with GAF's signals and intelligence units to ensure that speed of communication is not achieved at the expense of information security. Accompanying this, DPR should develop a structured digital communication literacy programme, delivered through GAF's existing training commands, to ensure that personnel across all ranks and service branches, namely the Army, Navy, and Air Force, are equipped to use the platform effectively. This recommendation responds directly to the finding that technological gaps and uneven digital literacy across garrisons were among the most significant barriers to timely internal communication within the institution.

Third, GAF should formalise its crisis communication protocols by developing a dedicated Crisis Communication Standard Operating Procedure, drafted by DPR in collaboration with the three Service Headquarters and approved at the level of the Armed Forces Council. This procedure should clearly define the communication roles and responsibilities of DPR, Garrison PROs, and Unit Public Representatives during crisis situations, establish pre-authorised communication channels that bypass non-essential layers of the chain of command in time-critical scenarios, and specify the frequency and format of updates to be issued to personnel during active crises. Bi-annual simulation exercises based on these procedures should be conducted across all garrisons to ensure familiarity and readiness. This recommendation

addresses the finding that whilst GAF's hierarchical structure supported orderly communication in routine operations, it created delays in crisis scenarios where speed of information dissemination was operationally critical.

Fourth, GAF should formalise upward communication pathways for junior and non-commissioned personnel by establishing a structured Junior Personnel Communication Forum at each of the seven garrisons, chaired by the Garrison PRO and reporting directly to the Garrison Commander. These forums should convene quarterly, providing other ranks and junior officers with a formal institutional channel through which communication concerns, operational observations, and suggestions can be raised without fear of reprisal. Anonymous written submission mechanisms should also be introduced at unit level, managed by Unit Public Relations Representatives, to supplement the forums for personnel who remain reluctant to speak directly. This recommendation responds to the specific finding that junior personnel across GAF felt that their input did not reach decision-makers, leading to disengagement, a condition that Group Dynamics Theory identifies as directly corrosive to esprit de corps and operational cohesion.

Lastly, leadership communication training should be embedded within GAF's existing professional military education programmes at every career stage, from junior officer commissioning courses through to senior staff college training. Specifically, the DPR's training school, which already trains personnel in information studies, should develop a standardised leadership communication module covering the giving of clear operational instructions, the management of upward feedback, and the fostering of open dialogue across rank boundaries. Completion of this module should be a mandatory requirement for promotion to the ranks of Major and above, and its equivalent in the Navy and Air Force, ensuring that all personnel who assume command or management responsibilities within GAF do so with demonstrated

communication competencies. This recommendation addresses the finding that communication effectiveness in GAF was heavily dependent on the personal communication style of individual commanders, creating institutional inconsistency that a standardised training requirement would systematically address.

5.5 Conclusion

Effective Internal Communication is critical to achieving operational success in any military organisation, including the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). This study highlights the communication dynamics within GAF, identifying areas of strength and those requiring significant improvement. It underscores that while formal channels such as signal messages, memos, and emails play a vital role in disseminating crucial information, informal interactions are equally essential for building relationships and fostering the exchange of valuable insights among personnel. Recognising and integrating these dual aspects can position GAF to adopt a holistic communication approach that balances the efficiency of formal channels with the relational benefits of informal exchanges.

Addressing hierarchical barriers remains a central challenge in enhancing communication within GAF. The rigid organisational structure, though beneficial for maintaining order, often limits the upward flow of information, stifling feedback from lower ranks. Implementing platforms like regular forums and town hall meetings can facilitate open dialogue and ensure every voice is heard, fostering an inclusive communication culture.

Equally, nurturing a culture of collaboration and open communication is vital. GAF leadership must encourage inclusiveness by recognising the contributions of personnel across all levels, including the most junior. This effort should be supported by training programs to enhance interpersonal communication skills, equipping personnel to engage effectively within the unique context of military operations. Such measures will create an environment where all

members feel valued and empowered, leading to greater cohesion, trust and operational effectiveness.

The findings of this study provide a foundation for ongoing dialogue and actionable improvements in communication practices within GAF. Ensuring that personnel are well-informed and engaged prepares them to respond effectively to the complexities of modern military operations. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of communication systems will enable GAF to remain agile in addressing dynamic challenges. Improved communication practices will not only enhance GAF's operational efficiency but also promote harmony and teamwork, ensuring its mission is executed with precision and effectiveness.

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Appendices

Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS DRAWN FROM THE GHANA ARMED FORCES

EXPLORING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN THE GHANA ARMED FORCES

Internal communication arrangements in GAF

1. What internal communication channels are currently used within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF)?
2. How are messages and updates typically communicated to staff members across different levels?
3. What procedures are in place to ensure that critical information reaches all relevant personnel?
4. How do you assess the effectiveness of the internal communication methods currently in use?
5. Can you describe any recent changes or improvements made to internal communication methods within GAF?

The role of GAF's organisational structure in internal communications

1. How is the organisational structure of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) designed, and what are its main components?
2. In what ways does the organisational structure facilitate or hinder the flow of internal communication?

3. How does the hierarchy within GAF impact communication between different departments or units?
4. What role does the organisational structure play in decision-making and crisis communication management?
5. What are the observed impacts of the organisational structure on the efficiency of internal communication?

Barriers and enablers affecting the DPR in facilitating internal communication

1. What are the primary challenges faced by the Department of Public Relations (DPR) in managing internal communication?
2. How does the DPR address issues related to information dissemination and staff engagement?
3. What feedback or concerns have staff members raised regarding internal communication, and how does the DPR respond to them?
4. How does the DPR manage communication during high-pressure or crisis situations?
5. What additional resources or support does the DPR require to overcome its communication challenges?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix B

CODES AND TRANSCRIPTS

CODES	TRANSCRIPTS
Emails WhatsApp Memos Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X) Notice Boards Official Meetings Hard Copy Publications Briefings Phone Calls Newsletters	Channels of Communication
Via email Direct communication (face-to-face, meetings) Durbars (gatherings) Command Orders Notice boards Part One Orders Publications	Message Dissemination
Established protocols (e.g., Part One Orders) Chain of command Operational briefings Emergency protocols	Critical Information Procedures
Perceived as effective Moderately effective Generally effective Average effectiveness	Effectiveness of Communication
Increased use of digital tools Adoption of social media platforms Introduction of mobile apps Enhanced multimedia communication Improved digital communication channels	Recent Changes in Communication Methods
Military hierarchy Divisional structure (Army, Navy, Air Force) Functional divisions Centralised command structure	Structure Design
Encourages clear pathways for communication Promotes accountability Streamlines processes Enhances coordination	Facilitation of Internal Communication
Potential for delays due to layers Strenuous information access Inhibits rapid communication	Effect of Hierarchy on Communication
Command-driven decision-making Follows established processes Clear directives from higher-ups Hierarchical roles influence outcomes	Role of Structure in Decision-Making and Crisis Communication
Supports information flow	Efficiency Impact of Structure

Can hinder flexibility and rapid response Facilitates effective communication	
Delays in information dissemination Information overload Fragmented communication channels Lack of engagement Resistance to new communication methods Cultural barriers	Main Challenges
Need for better training and clarity Mixed reviews and lack of trust Suggestions not acted upon Desire for transparency and improved channels	Staff Feedback and Concerns
Reactive and proactive communication strategies Clear protocols for emergencies Timely updates during crises Focused messaging to allay fears	Crisis Management
More personnel and staffing support Enhanced digital tools and technology Access to new platforms Training on effective communication practices	Additional Resources Needed

Appendix C



PARTICIPANTS INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I,consent to participate in this research project. I

understand that the research may not provide any direct benefit to me.

I acknowledge that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Date:.....

Signature:.....