

**UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION- INSTITUTE OF
JOURNALISM**

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSAR)

**THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN
TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A STUDY OF SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION –
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (UNIMAC-IJ)**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that with the exception of referenced work which I have duly acknowledged, I have personally undertaken this study herein under supervision. This dissertation is the result of my own research and no part of it has been presented for another award in this institution or elsewhere.



.....

ELIZABETH S.A BOATENG

.....9th December, 2025.....

DATE

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I supervised this dissertation in accordance with the guidelines on the supervision of research works as laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. Below the signature is a horizontal dotted line.

9th December, 2025

JAMES KWAKU ASANTE (PhD)

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr and Mrs Agyenim-Boateng for their endless love and support throughout my journey in life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank the Almighty God for how far he has brought me. My appreciation again goes to my supervisor, Dr James Asante for his guidance in doing this project. I would also like to thank my family and friends who have been of great help to me during this academic period.

ABSTRACT

This study examines how communication practices influence stakeholder engagement at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) of UniMAC-IJ, analysing communicative satisfaction as a mediating mechanism. A cross-sectional quantitative study collected data from graduate students, faculty, and administrative staff to assess their perceptions of communication clarity, feedback, digital tools, satisfaction, and engagement. The findings reveal that communication practices at SoGSaR are perceived as neutral, with significant shortcomings in feedback and responsiveness. Communicative satisfaction emerges as a key mediator, demonstrating that the impact of communication practices on engagement is mediated entirely by stakeholder satisfaction. Engagement levels were generally low, particularly regarding decision-making and the perceived value of contributions, highlighting a participation deficit consistent with broader critiques of hierarchical communication in West African higher education. Digital tools, although commonly used, have not been perceived as strategically integrated or effective. This study makes an empirical contribution to organisational and stakeholder communication theory by clarifying the causal link between communication and engagement and by providing contextualised data from a Ghanaian higher education setting. It offers a diagnostic basis for institutional improvement and underscores the need for dialogue-driven communication, strengthened feedback systems, and relational communication strategies to enhance stakeholder engagement.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Communication within higher education institutions is a crucial factor for effective governance, academic excellence, and participatory decision-making processes. Academic literature increasingly emphasises that well-structured and two-way communication processes contribute significantly to strengthening trust, accountability, and engagement among higher education stakeholders (Carnegie et al., 2021). Institutional communication is particularly important in postgraduate programmes, such as those offered at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) of the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ). This is where administrative complexity, academic specialisations, and diverse student expectations converge. However, a systemic deficit in institutional communication at many tertiary institutions is evident in Ghana. Numerous empirical studies point to structural weaknesses, such as inadequate feedback loops, inconsistent information dissemination, technical fragmentation of communication channels, and a lack of transparency (Anani-Bossman, 2022). These challenges are particularly serious in graduate schools, where there is a high dependence on accurate, timely, and relevant information. For example, Mensah and Gyasi (2023) reported that students at public universities in Ghana often face uncertainty regarding examination modalities, supervision processes, and course requirements, which is attributed to inefficient internal communication.

Although many universities in Ghana have introduced digital platforms such as email, learning management systems (e.g., Moodle), and WhatsApp, their effectiveness and acceptance among

stakeholders remain questionable. Studies such as those by Appiah, Frimpong, and Boateng (2023) show that the mere implementation of digital channels does not automatically lead to an improvement in communication quality. Rather, these channels require active design, taking into account user preferences, media literacy, and institutional objectives.

International studies also demonstrate that communication processes in educational institutions only have a lasting impact if they are participatory, accessible, and built on trust. Bryson and Hand (2021), for example, argue that in many universities, communication is still limited to a one-way "sending of information" without ensuring genuine interactivity or opportunities for feedback. This deficit leads to a lack of engagement and institutional commitment. In a comparable West African context, Nwokocha, Adediran, and Badoe (2022) emphasised that, while digital communication tools are widespread in universities, their strategic integration into participatory processes is often lacking.

In the Ghanaian higher education sector, there is also a lack of research empirically assessing the relationship between institutional communication and stakeholder engagement. Many studies offer qualitative analysis and case studies, but there are limited systematic quantitative studies that empirically validate causal relationships using statistical methods (Cummings, Kalelkar, & Wilkerson, 2022). Consequently, it remains unclear which communication variables (e.g., frequency, clarity, and timeliness of feedback) actually promote or hinder student and staff engagement.

This study addresses this point. It examines the quality, structure, and impact of institutional communication using the example of SoGSaR, focusing on the perspectives of key stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrative staff. The objective is to use quantitative methods

to determine the perception of communication processes, the tools deemed effective, and the extent to which satisfaction with communication influences institutional commitment. Thus, this study not only contributes to filling the gaps in empirical research but also provides concrete avenues for improving internal communication strategies in the Ghanaian higher education context.

1.2 Problem Statement

Effective communication is a central element of modern higher education administration, particularly in building student trust, institutionalising participatory processes, and ensuring transparency in academic decisions. However, in the context of Ghanaian universities, the practical implementation of these principles presents significant gaps, directly affecting stakeholder engagement and satisfaction (Mensah and Gyasi, 2023; Anani-Bossman, 2022).

Ideally, institutional communication should be two-way, consistent, timely, and focused on the needs of target groups. This quality of communication forms the basis for effective governance in graduate schools, which, due to their high complexity (e.g., course structure, administrative processes, and supervision), are particularly dependent on a smooth flow of information. However, in the case of the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) at the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ), there are indications that existing communication mechanisms are inadequate to ensure the active and equitable participation of all relevant stakeholders.

Preliminary observations and feedback from SoGSaR indicate that students often complain about the lack of clarity in the processes for course registration, project supervision, and thesis

submission. At the same time, faculty and administrative staff report a low response rate to information dissemination and a lack of student awareness of institutional procedures. These symptoms suggest structural weaknesses in communication processes, including a lack of coordination, incompatible channels, and the absence of feedback mechanisms.

The study by Appiah et al. (2023) suggests that, in many Ghanaian universities, internal communication is largely top-down, leaving little room for feedback from students or faculty. This not only leads to misunderstandings and inefficiencies but also undermines trust in the administration. Anani-Bossman (2022) also criticise the fact that the abundance and lack of coordination of communication channels (emails, notice boards, WhatsApp groups, and other media) often leads to information gaps or contradictions. This phenomenon, called "channel fragmentation," is particularly problematic when it comes to key decisions such as exam scheduling or deadlines.

Another structural problem is that the communication systems of many universities are not designed to foster participation. In a comparative study of West African universities, Nwokocha et al. (2022) found that the use of digital tools does not automatically improve interactions in the absence of feedback mechanisms or trust structures. Bryson and Hand (2021) reached a similar conclusion in their study of European universities. In their recommendations, they stated that technological expansion must be accompanied by a change in institutional culture to achieve sustainable improvements in communication.

Despite the topic's high relevance, there has been little quantitative and systematic analysis of communication mechanisms in Ghanaian graduate schools to date. The current literature focuses mainly on qualitative case studies or refers to undergraduates (Alabi, Adeola, & Ojei, 2023). A

methodologically rigorous study empirically examining the relationship between communication quality, satisfaction, and engagement is still lacking. Additionally, despite the increasing digitalisation and complexity of higher education operations, there is a lack of real knowledge about the extent to which institutional communication actually contributes to promoting stakeholder engagement, particularly in the context of doctoral schools like SoGSaR. Without this knowledge, optimisation steps remain unsystematic and may fail to meet the real needs of stakeholders. This study therefore aims to critically analyse current communication practices at SoGSaR, examine their impact on key stakeholder engagement and, on this basis, develop evidence-based recommendations for institutional improvement.

1.3 Research Objectives

The overarching objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between institutional communication and the engagement of key stakeholders at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) of the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ). The focus is on the quantitative recording and analysis of the perception, use, and impact of existing communication mechanisms from the perspective of students, faculty, and administrative staff. Essentially, the focus is on the extent to which communicative factors (such as communication frequency, information clarity, feedback functionality, and digital channels) influence stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The goal is to generate evidence-based insights for optimising SoGSaR's internal communication strategy.

1.3.1 General Objective

To investigate the effectiveness of institutional communication on stakeholder engagement at SoGSaR, particularly with regard to the perceptions and reactions of different stakeholder groups.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

This study aims to:

- i. Analyse the current communication practices at SoGSaR, including channels used, information frequency, feedback processes, and perceived clarity.
- ii. Assess and evaluate the engagement levels of key stakeholders, particularly students, faculty, and administrative staff.
- iii. Investigate the relationship between communication quality and engagement, with particular attention to the influence of communication satisfaction as a potentially mediating variable.
- iv. Evaluate the role of digital communication tools (e.g., email, WhatsApp, learning platforms) in the communication process and their perceived effectiveness in addressing different target groups.
- v. Identify communication barriers and potential for improvement from the stakeholders' perspective in order to derive concrete starting points for optimising the communication strategy at SoGSaR.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Main Research Question

To what extent does the quality of institutional communication influence the engagement of key stakeholders at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) at UniMAC-IJ?

1.4.2 Specific Research Questions

- i. How do students, faculty, and administrative staff rate SoGSaR's current communication mechanisms in terms of frequency, clarity, feedback opportunities, and transparency?
- ii. What is the perceived level of engagement among the various stakeholder groups, measured by their participation in feedback processes, decision-making forums, and administrative interactions?
- iii. Is there a significant relationship between the effectiveness of communication mechanisms and stakeholder engagement and what role does communication satisfaction play as a mediating variable?
- i.v. Which digital communication tools do the various stakeholder groups prefer, and how do they rate their effectiveness in terms of comprehensibility, interactivity, and accessibility?
- v. What barriers or weaknesses in institutional communication do the stakeholders identify, and what suggestions for improvement can be derived from them?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is relevant both theoretically and practically, particularly with regard to the quality of institutional communication and its influence on stakeholder engagement in postgraduate educational institutions in Ghana. In the context of advancing digitalisation, growing student numbers, and the increasing complexity of administrative processes, the need for effective communication systems is becoming a strategic priority for higher education institutions such as SoGSaR.

For the management and administration of SoGSaR, the study provides concrete empirical insights into how internal communication processes are perceived by key stakeholders and which aspects of the existing communication strategy need to be optimised. By collecting quantitative data from various stakeholder groups (particularly students, teachers, and administrative staff), the study enables an evidence-based assessment of the effectiveness of the channels used (e.g., email, WhatsApp, LMS) and the underlying communication culture. The study not only identifies structural deficiencies but also offers differentiated suggestions for improvement that can contribute to increasing participation, fostering institutional trust, and improving efficiency. Given the repeated criticism of the lack of transparency and interactivity in communication at public universities in Ghana (Anani-Bossman, 2022; Mensah & Gyasi, 2023), the study represents a valuable tool for higher education management.

Relatively, the results can equally serve as a basis for decision-makers in higher education policy to develop standardised communication guidelines for graduate schools. Particularly within the strategic development of the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), the findings of this study could be used as input for guidelines on quality assurance in internal communication at

universities. Furthermore, it offers other departments and institutions a model approach for reviewing and adapting their own communication mechanisms.

This study also contributes to closing an existing research gap by quantitatively examining the relationship between communication characteristics and stakeholder engagement in the context of a Ghanaian graduate school, specifically one at UniMAC-IJ. While previous studies have often been limited to qualitative methods or focused on undergraduate programmes (Alabi et al., 2023; Appiah et al., 2023), this study contributes to the further development of empirical communication research in higher education.

At the societal level, this study contributes to improving governance structures in educational institutions. Transparent, consistent, and inclusive communication not only strengthens trust within the institution but also promotes democratic participation, social cohesion, and institutional accountability. These factors are key for the sustainable development of the tertiary education sector in Ghana.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on internal communication at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) of the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ). It examines the perceptions and experiences of postgraduate students, faculty, and administrative staff regarding the frequency, clarity, feedback functions, and use of digital communication channels. The objective is to quantitatively assess the influence of these communication characteristics on the institutional engagement of these groups.

Geographically, the study is limited to the Accra campus and only considers stakeholders within SoGSaR. Other departments or external partner institutions are explicitly excluded. Similarly, the study only considers current communication practices for the 2024/2025 academic year, without including historical trends or long-term comparisons.

In terms of its methodological scope, the study is based on a quantitative approach using standardised questionnaires. Qualitative methods such as interviews are intentionally excluded to allow for a broader empirical scope. The findings are context-specific and primarily transferable to SoGSaR but provide impetus for comparable institutions in the Ghanaian higher education sector.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter covers the study's background, problem definition, objectives, research questions, scope, and significance. The second chapter contains a literature review. It discusses theoretical foundations such as stakeholder theory, organisational communication theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). In addition, relevant empirical studies are used to analyse existing findings on effective communication and stakeholder engagement and identify research gaps. The third chapter describes the methodological approach of the study. It explains the research design, the target population and sampling method, the survey instrument, and the methods chosen for data analysis. Here, the operationalisation of the variables and the justification for using quantitative methods receive particular attention. The fourth chapter presents and interprets the empirical results. And, finally,

Chapter 5 summarises key findings, draws conclusions, and provides practical recommendations for improving institutional communication within SoGSaR. Furthermore, the study identifies its limitations and presents potential avenues for future research.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This first chapter lays the foundations of the study. It begins with the observation that the quality of institutional communication plays a central role in stakeholder engagement in graduate schools. Using SoGSaR as an example, a specific problem was formulated: the insufficient effectiveness of existing communication mechanisms despite the availability of technical infrastructure. From this, clearly defined research objectives and questions were derived, which will be addressed within the framework of a quantitative design.

The significance of the study was demonstrated in both the institutional and academic contexts. The results are intended to provide practical recommendations for SoGSaR and to contribute to closing empirical research gaps in Ghanaian higher education. The scope of the study was limited in terms of content, space, and methodology to ensure a focused analysis.

The subsequent chapter discusses the theoretical foundations and the existing research relevant to this study. Relevant theories are also presented, existing empirical studies are analysed and synthesised, and the conceptual framework underlying this study is developed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores theoretical perspectives, elucidates key concepts, and synthesises empirical findings on communication and stakeholder engagement in higher education, with an emphasis on the Ghanaian higher education context. The chapter concludes by identifying research gaps and presenting the conceptual framework that underpins this study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Institutional Communication

Institutional communication refers to the processes, systems, and practices through which information is created, exchanged, and interpreted within an organization to achieve its objectives and maintain relationships with its internal and external stakeholders. In higher education institutions, communication is both an operational necessity and a strategic asset that supports the effectiveness of teaching, research, and administration (Kalla, 2005; Welch, 2012). It encompasses the formal and informal information flows that shape institutional identity, stakeholder engagement, and decision-making. Effective institutional communication ensures the clarity, relevance, and alignment of messages with institutional objectives, while facilitating feedback and participatory dialogue (Men, 2014).

According to Cornelissen (2017), institutional communication in academic contexts integrates several sub-functions, such as internal communication, external relations, media relations, and

strategic communication. These sub-functions collectively contribute to maintaining coherence between the discourse, actions, and perceptions of the institution's stakeholders. In universities, communication serves to disseminate institutional policies, coordinate administrative processes, and reinforce the values shared by members of the academic community. For graduate schools such as the Graduate School of Research (SoGSAR) of the Institute of Journalism at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC-IJ), communication is essential for connecting management, faculty, and students in an environment heavily dependent on the exchange of academic and administrative information.

Institutional communication is not limited to the simple dissemination of information; it involves building relationships and creating meaning. As proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984) in their two-way symmetrical communication model, institutions that prioritise dialogue and feedback over one-way dissemination tend to build greater trust and legitimacy with stakeholders. This concept is particularly relevant for higher education institutions, where communication is intrinsically linked to academic freedom, participation, and collegiality. Welch (2012) argues that universities that foster open communication systems encourage collaboration, strengthen the engagement of staff and students, and reduce organisational conflicts. Consequently, effective institutional communication becomes a tool to promote a culture of transparency, mutual respect, and inclusion.

The complexity of institutional communication in universities also stems from the diversity of its stakeholders. These stakeholders include internal actors, such as faculty, administration, and students, as well as external actors, such as alumni, government agencies, regulatory bodies, and the media (Men & Stacks, 2013). Managing communication between these groups requires strategic planning and coordination to ensure consistent and responsive messages. According to Lewis (2011), institutions that align their communication strategies with stakeholder expectations

tend to exhibit higher levels of satisfaction and a stronger institutional reputation. In the context of UniMAC-IJ SoGSAR, maintaining effective communication channels with postgraduate students, research supervisors, and administrative services is essential for the smooth functioning of academic activities and for stakeholder trust.

Technological advancements have also reshaped institutional communication in academia. The rise of digital communication platforms, such as institutional websites, social networks, and learning management systems, has created new opportunities and challenges for engagement (Dolphin, 2019). While digital tools improve accessibility and immediacy, they also require institutions to manage information overload and ensure message accuracy. A study by González-Rodríguez et al. (2020) revealed that higher education institutions that effectively integrate digital communication strategies are better positioned to improve student participation and administrative efficiency. Consequently, institutional communication must now find a balance between traditional face-to-face interactions and digital and asynchronous engagement methods.

Furthermore, organisational culture and leadership communication skills influence the effectiveness of communication within institutions. Leaders centrally shape the tone and flow of communication, thus determining its hierarchical, participatory, or collaborative nature (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). When leaders are open and honest in their communication, it makes the institution more credible and builds trust among stakeholders. Conversely, deficient communication can lead to misinformation, mistrust, and disengagement. Welch (2012) emphasises that strategic institutional communication should not be limited to the transmission of information but should also include building understanding and commitment to institutional objectives.

2.1.2 Organisational Communication Climate

The organisational communication climate refers to the prevailing atmosphere or environment that characterises communication within an organisation. It represents employees' shared perceptions about the quality, openness, and effectiveness of communication practices across different levels of the organisation (Pace & Faules, 1994). In higher education institutions, communication climate determines how information flows between administrators, faculty, and students, and influences the extent to which members feel valued, informed, and engaged. A good communication climate builds trust, teamwork, and understanding between people, while a bad one causes confusion, low morale, and lack of interest (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015). Therefore, studying the communication climate at UniMAC-IJ SoGSAR is crucial for understanding how institutional communication dynamics influence stakeholder engagement and satisfaction.

The concept of organisational communication climate has evolved from early work on organisational culture and interpersonal communication. Redding (1972) was among the first scholars to define communication climate as the enduring quality of an organisation's internal environment that is experienced by its members and influences their attitudes and behaviours. According to Redding, five key dimensions shape a healthy communication climate: supportiveness, participative decision-making, trust, openness, and high-performance goals. These dimensions remain relevant today and form the foundation of many subsequent communication climate frameworks. For instance, Pincus (1986) later identified openness, trust, and feedback as the most critical indicators of a positive communication climate, suggesting that organisations that promote dialogue and feedback loops tend to have more satisfied and committed members.

In the context of academic institutions, the communication climate reflects how inclusive and transparent decision-making processes are, and whether staff and students feel empowered to express their opinions. Welch and Jackson (2007) argue that internal communication in universities should promote mutual respect and collaboration between leadership and academic staff. A climate that encourages upward communication, where subordinates feel free to express concerns and provide feedback, enhances institutional performance and stakeholder engagement. Conversely, a downward or closed communication climate may result in information asymmetry, low morale, and perceptions of authoritarian management (Men, 2014). For SoGSAR, where effective collaboration between administrative staff, faculty, and graduate students is essential, maintaining an open and supportive communication climate can strengthen institutional relationships and foster a sense of belonging.

The role of trust is central to understanding the communication climate. Trust is built when communication is honest, consistent, and reciprocal (Whitener et al., 1998). In a university setting, trust between management and stakeholders enhances cooperation and reduces resistance to institutional initiatives. When staff and students perceive that their voices are heard and their concerns addressed, they develop stronger identification with the institution (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). Such identification reinforces engagement and commitment to institutional goals. On the other hand, a lack of trust can lead to apathy, misinformation, and disengagement. Research by Men and Stacks (2013) found that employees' perception of transparent communication from leaders positively correlates with job satisfaction and organisational reputation, emphasising the strategic importance of maintaining a trustworthy communication climate.

The communication climate also depends on leadership styles and organisational cultures. Leaders play a decisive role in setting the tone for communication practices, influencing whether the

climate is open or defensive (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). Supportive leadership that encourages two-way communication and recognises contributions creates a participatory and empowering climate. In contrast, authoritarian leadership styles can suppress dialogue and foster a defensive environment where employees communicate only what they believe superiors want to hear (Smidts, Pruyn, & van Riel, 2001). In academic environments, participatory leadership is particularly effective because it aligns with the collegial nature of higher education institutions, where shared governance and academic freedom are valued principles.

Technological developments have also affected communication climate in organisations. The rise of digital platforms, email, and online collaboration tools has increased the speed and accessibility of communication, but it has also introduced new challenges related to tone, interpretation, and overload (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020). A healthy communication climate in modern institutions therefore requires digital literacy, responsibility and sensitivity to online engagement practices. For UniMAC-IJ SoGSAR, digital communication tools such as institutional portals, social media, and learning management systems play a key role in shaping perceptions of openness and accessibility. The extent to which these tools are effectively used can either enhance or weaken the institution's communication climate.

2.1.3 Communication Satisfaction

Communication satisfaction refers to individuals' subjective evaluation of the communication environment within their organisation, covering multiple dimensions such as informational adequacy, relational openness, media quality, horizontal/informal flows, and feedback mechanisms (Downs & Hazen, 1977). It is thus a multi-faceted construct that reflects how stakeholders perceive the climate, channels and content of communication. Empirical research has

established that high levels of communication satisfaction are significantly associated with positive organisational outcomes, including trust, commitment and satisfaction with the institution in which the stakeholder is embedded.

Downs and Hazen (1977) originally operationalised communication satisfaction by developing the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ). They identified eight key dimensions of communication satisfaction: communication climate, supervisory communication (upward/downward), organisational integration (information about work environment), media quality (adequacy of channels), horizontal/informal communication, corporate information (about the organisation as a whole), personal feedback (judgement and performance appraisal), and subordinate communication (for those in managerial/supervisory roles) (Gümüş & Hamarat, 2014). The CSQ reportedly achieved high internal reliability ($\alpha \approx .94$) in early applications. The multi-dimensional nature of communication satisfaction emphasises that it is not simply the volume of information that matters, but its relevance, timing, channel appropriateness, relational quality and feedback responsiveness.

Empirical research has empirically linked communication satisfaction to job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and performance in various organisational contexts, going beyond mere measurement. For example, Pincus (1986) found in a field study of hospital nurses that communication satisfaction had a stronger correlation with job satisfaction than with job performance; the dimensions of supervisor communication, communication climate and personal feedback were the most strongly related. Other studies illustrate that when stakeholders perceive that communication is open, timely and responsive, they are more likely to trust leadership, feel integrated into institutional processes, and engage actively (AC-Journal, 2018).

In the context of higher education, communication satisfaction has particular relevance: students and staff who perceive that institutional messages are timely, accurate, and accessible and that they have channels for feedback typically demonstrate greater trust in the institution, stronger engagement, and a sense of belonging. Conversely, low communication satisfaction, for example, resulting from delayed announcements, unclear channels, or restricted feedback, tends to produce disengagement, suspicion and reduced satisfaction (Gizir & Köksal, 2014). The interplay between communication satisfaction and stakeholder engagement underscores its strategic importance: high communication satisfaction acts as both an enabler and indicator of a healthy communication environment that supports meaningful stakeholder involvement.

For the case of the University of Media, Arts and Communication–Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ) School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSAR), assessing communication satisfaction is essential because graduate students, faculty and administrative staff operate in a complex academic-administrative ecosystem where timely and meaningful communication can influence supervision, research progress, collaboration and institutional trust. Thus, communication satisfaction may serve as a key mediator between institutional communication practices and stakeholder engagement. In essence, communication satisfaction is not simply a downstream indicator but an active construct that links communication processes (channels, content, and feedback) with stakeholder perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours.

2.1.4 Communication Effectiveness

Communication effectiveness refers to the extent to which messages within an institution are delivered, received, correctly understood, and acted upon by the intended audiences (Musheke & Phiri, 2021). In higher education settings, communication effectiveness is essential because

students, faculty, administrative staff, and external partners possess diverse needs and expectations and interpretations of institutional communication. Effective communication ensures that academic policies, deadlines, administrative procedures, and governance messages are conveyed clearly, promptly, and through suitable channels, leading to desirable behavioural or attitudinal outcomes (Hargie, 2016).

Communication effectiveness is often evaluated based on five key criteria: clarity, timeliness, appropriateness of the medium, feedback, and accuracy. When communication is effective, it facilitates informed decision-making, promotes trust and coordination, and enhances both individual and institutional performance. Musheke and Phiri (2021) found a significant positive relationship between communication effectiveness and organisational performance in their study of Zambian organisations, emphasising that clarity, openness, and feedback loops enhance productivity and stakeholder confidence. Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2019) note that communication effectiveness contributes to employee satisfaction, collaboration, and goal alignment across departments and teams.

In the context of higher education, effective communication is integral to institutional success. Universities depend on clear, timely, and accurate communication to help with both academic and administrative tasks. When messages about registration, coursework, thesis submissions, or policy changes are unclear or delayed, it can lead to student confusion, dissatisfaction, and reduced engagement. For graduate students at the University of Media, Arts and Communication–Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ) School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSAR), communication effectiveness determines how well students navigate their academic journey. Clear, structured, and responsive communication between administration, supervisors, and students enhances

engagement and accountability, while poor communication weakens institutional trust and delays progress.

Research further indicates that communication effectiveness is not determined solely by message content but also by the appropriateness of the chosen medium. González-Rodríguez et al. (2020) argue that as higher education institutions adopt digital transformation strategies, they must consider factors such as information overload, digital literacy gaps, and audience preferences. Effective use of both digital and interpersonal communication tools can improve the precision and inclusiveness of institutional communication. For instance, online portals, emails, and social media platforms should be complemented by physical meetings, bulletin boards, and workshops to ensure inclusivity and clarity across stakeholder groups.

Cultural and contextual factors also play a role in communication effectiveness. In African higher education institutions, challenges such as infrastructural limitations, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and inconsistent communication systems often impede the flow of information. Institutions like UniMAC-IJ must therefore adopt a deliberate and structured communication strategy that aligns with stakeholder expectations and the institution's strategic objectives. This includes establishing clear feedback mechanisms, ensuring message consistency across channels, and using data-driven communication audits to assess impact.

2.1.5 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement refers to the process by which organisations build and sustain relationships with individuals or groups who have a vested interest in their activities, decisions, or outcomes (Greenwood, 2007). In higher education, stakeholders include students, faculty, administrative staff, alumni, government agencies, industry partners, and the broader community.

Effective engagement ensures that these stakeholders are not only informed but also meaningfully involved in institutional planning, governance, and evaluation processes (Bryson, 2018).

Engagement in universities has evolved from tokenistic consultation to participatory governance models that prioritise inclusion and dialogue. According to Freeman (2010), stakeholder engagement contributes to organisational legitimacy and long-term sustainability by aligning institutional goals with stakeholder expectations. When universities actively engage their stakeholders, they strengthen accountability, enhance trust, and improve the relevance of their policies and programmes. Men and Bowen (2021) also emphasise that transparent and reciprocal communication is central to stakeholder engagement, as it fosters shared understanding and collaborative problem-solving.

In the context of higher education institutions in developing countries, stakeholder engagement often faces challenges stemming from hierarchical communication structures, limited feedback mechanisms, and bureaucratic inertia. African universities, for instance, tend to adopt top-down communication practices that restrict the active participation of students and staff in decision-making processes (Letlatsa, 2022). This weakens institutional trust and reduces commitment among stakeholders. To address this, universities must develop deliberate frameworks for participatory communication that incorporate regular consultations, open forums, and feedback systems.

At UniMAC-IJ's School of Graduate Studies and Research, effective stakeholder engagement is critical for achieving organisational alignment and sustaining academic excellence. Graduate students expect transparent communication regarding supervision, assessment, and administrative policies. Faculty members seek involvement in institutional governance, while administrative staff

value inclusion in operational planning. Engagement, therefore, becomes both a communication function and a strategic management tool that enhances cohesion and institutional performance.

2.1.6 Digital Communication in Higher Education

Digital communication in higher education refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate the exchange of information, collaboration, and engagement among institutional stakeholders (Bond et al., 2021). The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed how universities interact with students, staff, and the wider academic community. Platforms such as institutional portals, learning management systems (LMS), email, and social media now serve as central tools for academic communication and stakeholder engagement (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020).

Digital communication enhances accessibility, efficiency, and interactivity in university operations. According to Capriotti and Zeler (2023), universities that strategically employ digital tools can improve transparency, responsiveness, and participation in academic governance. These platforms enable real-time feedback, facilitate blended learning, and create digital communities that strengthen institutional identity. Learning management systems such as Moodle and Google Classroom, for instance, allow structured academic communication by integrating announcements, discussions, assignments, and grading into a centralised space. Bond et al. (2021) highlight that such systems promote collaboration and active learning, particularly when supported by institutional training and technological infrastructure.

However, the effectiveness of digital communication in higher education is influenced by contextual factors such as digital literacy, infrastructure, and institutional culture. Research shows that while universities in developed regions integrate digital tools within cohesive communication

strategies, institutions in developing contexts often face challenges including unreliable internet access, lack of technical support, and fragmented digital systems (Nwokocha et al., 2022). In African higher education institutions, these challenges contribute to inconsistent communication practices and limited stakeholder engagement. Moreover, excessive reliance on informal digital channels such as WhatsApp groups can blur professional boundaries and lead to information overload (Lauricella et al., 2013).

For institutions like UniMAC-IJ, embracing digital communication requires a balanced approach that integrates formal and informal tools within structured communication frameworks. Ensuring that digital platforms are user-friendly, inclusive, and regularly updated can enhance stakeholder trust and participation. Ultimately, digital communication is not merely a technological adaptation but a strategic necessity for effective governance, academic excellence, and stakeholder engagement in the 21st-century university environment.

2.1.7 Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms constitute a crucial component of organisational communication and stakeholder engagement within higher education institutions. They refer to the systematic processes through which information about actions, decisions, or performance is communicated back to stakeholders for the purpose of evaluation, improvement, and accountability (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In universities, feedback operates at multiple levels: academic, administrative, and institutional, and serves as a means to gauge perceptions, monitor progress, and foster participatory governance (Price et al., 2010). Effective feedback mechanisms enhance transparency and trust between institutions and their stakeholders. In academic contexts, timely and constructive feedback from instructors supports student learning outcomes, motivation, and

engagement (Boud & Molloy, 2013). Similarly, organizational feedback, including surveys, grievance systems, and performance reviews, allows management to assess communication effectiveness, identify areas of concern, and make informed decisions. As Carless and Boud (2018) argue, feedback is not merely a transmission of information but a dialogic process that requires mutual understanding and continuous interaction between sender and receiver. In the context of higher education administration, feedback loops are essential for sustaining stakeholder engagement. Student and staff surveys, complaint-handling procedures, and suggestion boxes provide channels through which institutional leaders can monitor satisfaction and adapt communication practices. Digital tools such as online feedback forms, discussion forums, and social media engagement analytics have expanded the scope of institutional feedback, making it more immediate and data-driven (Evans, 2013). These technologies enable universities to detect emerging issues and respond proactively, which is particularly important for maintaining institutional credibility and responsiveness. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms depends on the degree to which responses are acknowledged and acted upon. A lack of follow-up or visible institutional change can lead to stakeholder apathy and erode trust (Henderson et al., 2019). For institutions like UniMAC-IJ, embedding structured feedback processes within the organisational communication framework ensures that stakeholder voices are not only heard but also integrated into decision-making. A responsive feedback culture thus strengthens engagement, reinforces institutional accountability, and contributes to the continuous improvement of communication effectiveness.

2.1.8 Trust and Transparency in Institutional Communication

Trust and transparency are foundational elements of effective institutional communication, serving as cornerstones for building credible relationships between higher education institutions and their

stakeholders. 'Trust' refers to the confidence stakeholders place in an institution's integrity, competence, and reliability, while transparency denotes the openness and accessibility of information shared by the institution (Rawlins, 2008). Within universities, these two constructs are deeply interdependent; transparency promotes understanding and accountability, which in turn strengthens institutional trust (Men & Stacks, 2014).

In the context of higher education, trust and transparency influence how students, faculty, staff, and external partners perceive and engage with the institution. As noted by Byrne and Hall (2021), transparent communication fosters legitimacy by ensuring that institutional actions align with stated values and policies. This is particularly crucial in times of crisis or change, where a lack of clear and timely communication can lead to misinformation, scepticism, and reputational damage. Conversely, proactive and honest communication can mitigate uncertainty and foster a sense of inclusion among stakeholders (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2015).

Trust in institutional communication is not built through single acts but through consistent and coherent messaging across all channels. Men (2015) emphasises that relational transparency, the practice of disclosing relevant information, admitting mistakes, and involving stakeholders in dialogue, enhances credibility and loyalty. For higher education institutions, this involves not only publishing reports and policies but also engaging stakeholders in participatory decision-making processes. Transparency in governance, financial management, and academic performance contributes to a culture of accountability and shared ownership (Johansen & Nielsen, 2016).

Digital technologies have further expanded the role of transparency in academic communication. The rise of institutional websites, open-access data, and social media platforms has increased public expectations for openness (Etter et al., 2019). However, excessive or poorly managed

disclosure can overwhelm audiences and erode message clarity. Effective transparency therefore requires strategic communication planning that balances openness with context, confidentiality, and ethical considerations.

For UniMAC-IJ, fostering trust and transparency means maintaining consistency between internal communication and external messaging. This includes timely dissemination of information, acknowledgement of stakeholder feedback, and evidence-based communication practices. Ultimately, transparent communication not only enhances institutional credibility but also reinforces trust as the bedrock of sustained stakeholder engagement and organisational resilience.

2.1.9 African Perspectives on Institutional Communication

In Africa, institutional communication faces structural and contextual challenges that differ significantly from those of developed systems. Limited financial resources, infrastructural gaps, and traditional hierarchies constrain universities' ability to establish modern communication systems. For example, many African universities operate without adequately staffed communication units, limiting their capacity to design comprehensive strategies (Adjei & Boateng, 2019). Additionally, communication often remains hierarchical and top-down, with information passed through official memos, meetings, and departmental channels rather than through interactive forums (Letlatsa, 2022). This results in a communication culture that prioritises compliance over dialogue, thereby restricting stakeholder input.

Technological limitations also play a major role. Uneven access to ICT infrastructure and internet connectivity hinders the integration of digital platforms in university communication. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several African universities struggled to adopt online communication tools, underscoring the digital divide within higher education (Nwokocha, Adediran, & Badoe, 2022).

Even where digital tools like WhatsApp groups or email systems exist, their use is often fragmented and inconsistent, leading to gaps in information flow and limited engagement. Research shows that institutional communication in such contexts tends to focus more on disseminating administrative notices rather than encouraging interactive participation (Letlatsa, 2022). These challenges make it imperative for African universities to adopt context-specific communication models that combine traditional channels with sustainable digital innovations.

2.1.10 Communication in Ghanaian Universities

The Ghanaian higher education system mirrors many of these continental challenges but also illustrates specific communication barriers that require attention. Studies indicate that Ghanaian universities frequently depend on traditional modes of communication such as notice boards, face-to-face meetings, and memos delivered through hierarchical structures (Adusei Poku, 2024). Modern digital channels such as institutional email systems are often underutilised, while information transmission largely depends on department heads or administrative staff. This reliance on person-to-person dissemination not only delays communication but also increases the risk of message distortion and exclusion.

Furthermore, resource limitations contribute to weak communication systems. Adjei and Boateng (2019) note that inadequate funding and a lack of professional communication personnel constrain universities from developing proactive stakeholder engagement strategies. The result is often fragmented communication that fosters misunderstandings and mistrust between stakeholders and administrators. Mensah and Gyasi (2023) also highlight the prevalence of “channel fragmentation”, where multiple uncoordinated communication platforms, ranging from WhatsApp groups to emails and physical notice boards, create contradictions and confusion. Such

inefficiencies are particularly problematic for postgraduate institutions, where timely and accurate information is critical to processes like supervision, thesis submission, and examinations.

Against the backdrop of these challenges, scholars advocate for universities in Ghana to strengthen institutional communication by adopting structured strategies that emphasise clarity, timeliness, and interactivity (Anani-Bossman, 2022). Integrating digital tools into participatory processes rather than treating them as mere dissemination mechanisms is particularly important. Effective reform of communication practices in Ghanaian universities could enhance transparency, build trust, and promote stakeholder engagement, outcomes essential for improving governance in higher education.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory has been consolidated since the 1980s as a counterproposal to the traditional shareholder orientation. It is based on the premise that organisations are complex ecosystems in which diverse actors (e.g., customers, employees, suppliers, investors, communities) interact with each other. A central idea is interdependence: an organization can only survive in the long term if it meets the expectations of its stakeholders, at least to some extent. This idea gives rise to a normative obligation to systematically identify stakeholder interests and integrate them into decision-making (Phillips, 2003). Different authors emphasise different facets of this. Bryson (2004), for example, distinguishes a narrow definition of stakeholders, only actors with direct power who can influence the future of the organization, from a broad definition that includes all

those affected by organisational decisions. The latter has an ethical dimension: even "nominally weak" groups (such as local communities without formal power) must be considered. To accommodate this diversity, stakeholder theory proposes several tools, including stakeholder analysis and mapping, which allow for a strategic mapping of the landscape of influence and interests. It is important to emphasise that stakeholder management is not limited to mere analysis; it presupposes that continuous dialogue and genuine stakeholder engagement are necessary to build trust and create shared value.

2.2.1a Relationship with Higher Education

In recent years, stakeholder theory has been increasingly applied to universities and educational institutions, as they are also seen as organisations with diverse interest groups. Universities engage not only with internal stakeholders such as students, faculty, and staff, but also with external stakeholders such as government agencies, employers, alumni, and the public. Kettunen (2015) argues that a university's *raison d'être* is ultimately legitimised by the benefits it provides to its stakeholders. The quality of teaching, research activities, and social engagement can significantly influence both internal and external groups. If a university ignores important stakeholders, this compromises, to some extent, its success and value creation. Consequently, higher education practice is showing a trend toward more participatory management: stakeholder involvement has become almost standard in higher education governance, especially in quality management. For example, Beerkens and Udam (2017) emphasise that the involvement of diverse stakeholder groups is now the norm for quality assurance in higher education. Jongbloed (2009) further emphasised that the degree of a university's active engagement with its stakeholders is an indicator of its social responsibility and reputation. This means that universities consciously create opportunities to obtain feedback from students, employers, or the local community and incorporate

their insights into improvement processes. From a strategic perspective, meeting stakeholder needs can also represent a competitive advantage: identifying and meeting stakeholder expectations are important steps in strengthening a university's position in the increasingly competitive education sector.

Stakeholder theory appears to be relevant in the context of postgraduate higher education in Ghana, particularly at the School of Graduate Studies and Research at UniMAC-IJ. Postgraduate institutions have a diverse stakeholder structure: Master's and PhD students, supervisors, administrative staff, funding organisations, alumni, and political bodies all have legitimate interests. An application of stakeholder theory suggests that effective communication serves as a tool for stakeholder engagement: through active information sharing, consultation, and participatory decision-making processes, trust and commitment can be built among these groups. In this context, the importance of digital communication is growing. Universities in Ghana are increasingly utilising email, learning management systems, and social media platforms to engage with stakeholders. For instance, universities use these platforms to inform students about processes or involve alumni and employers in research projects (Yussif et al., 2023). Nevertheless, studies indicate that the systematic involvement of stakeholders in the Ghanaian higher education sector still has room for improvement in some areas. Yussif et al. (2023) found in a case study at a Ghanaian university that certain stakeholder groups were under-represented in official bodies and that the existing legal framework did not cover all relevant stakeholders. This highlights the potential for more practical implementation of stakeholder theory in Ghana – for example, through clearly defined participation mechanisms and targeted communication strategies for previously neglected groups. Digital communication can act as a catalyst in this process by enabling cost-effective, rapid interaction. However, it must be used strategically to create genuine engagement

opportunities rather than simply disseminating information top-down. In essence, stakeholder theory provides a suitable framework for analysing the need for and design of effective communication at UniMAC-IJ: It raises awareness of which groups should be involved and how dialogue and collaboration can be designed to create mutual added value.

2.2.2 Organizational Communication Theory

Organisational communication theory deals with communication processes within and between organisations and their impacts on organisational performance. Communication is understood here as the “link” that connects the different parts of an organisation into a whole. Classically, organisational communication encompasses all areas of communication and information flow that contribute to the functioning of an organisation. The term includes exchanges between members (internal communication) and communication with external stakeholders. Thus, organisations, whether businesses or universities, are formed and maintained through communication; only through continuous interaction and coordination between members of the organisation and the relevant environment does coordinated action emerge (Wick, 1979). This perspective goes beyond the mere understanding of communication as a mere tool for transmitting information and emphasises that communication also creates meaning and shapes organisational culture.

One of the main structural features of organisational communication is its direction within a hierarchy. Traditionally, a distinction is made between top-down communication (from management to employees), bottom-up communication (from employees to management), and horizontal communication (between units or equivalent colleagues). In educational institutions, this corresponds, for example, to the dissemination of university management guidelines to faculty, upward feedback from faculty and students, and the exchange of information between colleagues

(e.g. between departments or between students). The formal organizational structure, often illustrated by organisational charts, specifies who should communicate with whom and thus forms the skeleton of the information flow. In addition to these internal flows, external communication is added as a fourth dimension. This structure describes the exchange of information between members of the organization and external stakeholders. External stakeholders in universities include, for example, ministries, authorities, academic partners, employers, alumni, the media, and the general public. Organisational communication theory assumes that all of these communication flows, internal and external, formal and informal, must be coordinated and aligned with the organisation's goals to ensure effectiveness. For example, Lunenberg (2010) emphasises that the success of university management depends on the smooth flow of communication in all directions: downward, upward, horizontal and external. Failure to achieve this result can lead to information barriers, misunderstandings and inefficiency. Another central concept is the communication climate or culture. This notion includes the implicit norms and attitudes about how communication occurs in the organization – for example, whether open dialogue is encouraged or whether a strong formal distance prevails. A conducive communication climate is characterised by transparency, trust and opportunities for feedback, which increase member satisfaction and commitment. In contrast, a restrictive climate (for example, when communication is completely top-down and one-way) can lead to frustration and low commitment. Modern approaches, such as the semantic approach of Shockley-Zalabek (2015), also emphasise that communication in organisations contributes not only to the exchange of information but also to the creation of shared meanings and organisational knowledge. Therefore, communication builds organisational reality by defining problems, developing solutions, and creating shared values through conversations, meetings,

emails, and other means. This view acknowledges that effective communication is more than simply sending messages – it involves the understanding and participation of all stakeholders.

2.2.2a. Relationship to Higher Education:

Universities are complex organisations with diverse communication needs. This is where management, faculty, and students, often with different information needs, meet. Therefore, effective academic communication should provide structures for the dissemination of information from top to bottom (e.g., communication from management to students and faculty), as well as upward (e.g., feedback from students to management) and horizontally (e.g., exchanges between departments or peer-to-peer communication among students). Empirical studies in the education sector show that well-functioning communication channels contribute significantly to the success of teaching and research. Mamuli, Mutsotso and Namasaka (2013) found that public universities need a variety of coherent channels (meetings, notices, circulars, digital media, etc.) to ensure reliable information reaches all levels. Coordination is a crucial aspect. Overlapping or unclear information channels can lead to confusion (keyword: "channel fragmentation"). Therefore, the literature recommends clear responsibilities, e.g., a central communications department, and coordinated communication plans to ensure consistency and reliability. In universities, in addition to internal exchange, external university communication is becoming increasingly important.

Universities operate in the public sphere and practise stakeholder management in the spirit of the stakeholder theory outlined above. Communication with external partners, be they government agencies, sponsors, or the general public, must be strategically designed to create transparency and mobilise support. University communication also plays a key role in shaping the public perception of science and can strengthen public trust in the institution. Digital media is playing an increasingly

important role in this process. Digitalisation has led universities to increasingly rely on digital platforms, websites, email, and social media, to communicate with their target audiences. While this development enables faster and more widespread communication, it also places new demands on organisational communication (e.g., dealing with information overload, online reputation, and data protection). Overall, organisational communication theory in the higher education context highlights that the quality of internal processes (e.g., course organization, administrative procedures) and the extent of stakeholder engagement depend significantly on how communication is carried out. Open, participatory, and media-appropriate communication practices help reduce misunderstandings, resolve conflicts early on, and foster a shared identity within the university. This has a positive impact on motivation, performance, and willingness to innovate within the institution.

At the UniMAC-IJ School of Graduate Studies and Research in Ghana, organisational communication is particularly critical. In a postgraduate environment, processes are complex, and stakeholders (students, faculty, administration, and external partners) are highly specialised, requiring precise and flexible communication infrastructure to some extent. Specific challenges include often hierarchical, one-way communication patterns and fragmented channels (e.g., parallel communication via noticeboards, emails, and WhatsApp groups), which can lead to inconsistencies (see Poku, 2022). To ensure effective communication and stakeholder engagement, SoGSaR should work toward an integrated communication system: clear guidelines on which channel is used for which type of information, regular feedback loops (e.g., surveys or forums), and clear responsibilities for content maintenance. Despite the availability of digital communication tools such as email, learning platforms, and social media, they often remain underutilised. Studies from African higher education contexts show that traditional means such as

notice boards, telephone chains, or personal communication often dominate, while modern channels such as email or LMS remain underused. While digital media open up new opportunities for dialogue, for example, WhatsApp groups for cohorts can promote direct exchange; all participants must have the skills and willingness to use these channels constructively (see Appiah et al., 2023). In the context of this study, organisational communication theory provides the conceptual tools to evaluate the effectiveness of existing communication practices at SoGSaR (information flow, network structures, feedback mechanisms) and to derive evidence-based recommendations, e.g., for establishing more transparent feedback channels or for training in the efficient use of digital tools. This supports the achievement of the university's stakeholder engagement goals.

2.3 Empirical Review on Communication and Engagement

2.3.1 International Empirical Studies

Empirical research from developed systems consistently links communication quality with higher levels of stakeholder engagement and institutional trust. Multi-campus studies in Europe and North America show that dialogic, transparent communication predicts stronger identification with the university and willingness to participate in governance, whereas one-way “broadcasting” is associated with apathy and lower trust (Bryson & Hand, 2021; Carnegie, Parker, & Tsahuridu, 2021). Quantitative designs dominate this literature, including cross-sectional surveys with regression or structural equation modelling to estimate effects of clarity, timeliness, and feedback on outcomes such as satisfaction and participation (Men & Bowen, 2021; Frandsen & Johansen, 2022). Additionally, the pandemic-era evidence base documents how learning management system

announcements and integrated digital channels improved students' sense of inclusion when used interactively, with meta-analytic and systematic reviews confirming moderate positive effects on engagement (Bond, Bedenlier, Marín, & Händel, 2021). Nevertheless, critiques note sample biases toward students and under-representation of staff and administrators, as well as limited longitudinal evidence on causality and sustainability of effects over time (Bond et al., 2021).

2.3.2 West African Empirical Studies

West African studies, while fewer, highlight the salience of cultural and institutional contexts. Survey and mixed-methods research across Nigeria and Ghana finds that communication is frequently hierarchical, with limited feedback channels and a strong reliance on informal networks, which constrains authentic engagement (Appiah, Frimpong, & Boateng, 2023). Comparative work across West African institutions underscores that digital tools enhance participation only when embedded within participatory processes that enable questions, dialogue, and responsiveness; otherwise, tools simply speed up one-way notices (Nwokocha, Adediran, & Badoe, 2022). Infrastructural constraints and uneven digital literacy importantly shape outcomes: where connectivity, device access, and training are weak, engagement gains become smaller and more unequal. These findings suggest that models derived in high-income contexts require adaptation to account for resource constraints and authority relations typical of many West African universities (Nwokocha et al., 2022; Appiah et al., 2023).

2.3.3 Ghanaian Empirical Studies

Ghana-specific evidence converges around three themes: limited feedback systems, fragmented channels, and deficits in transparency. Case studies and campus-wide surveys report heavy dependence on hierarchical dissemination via heads of department, notice boards, and ad hoc

WhatsApp groups, which generates delays, contradictions, and uneven access to information (Adusei Poku, 2024; Anani-Bossman, 2022). Quantitative analyses link these practices to lower student satisfaction and weaker participation in academic processes, particularly when exam schedules, supervision arrangements, and policy changes are communicated late or inconsistently (Mensah & Gyasi, 2023). Although institutions increasingly adopt portals and email, usage is often underenforced and poorly integrated, so stakeholders revert to informal workarounds that bypass official systems (Anani-Bossman, 2022). The empirical picture therefore indicates that Ghanaian universities have not fully transitioned from information transmission to inclusive, feedback-oriented communication, a gap that is especially consequential for postgraduate stakeholders who depend on timely, precise guidance.

2.4 Research Gaps

Existing literature pays limited attention to postgraduate schools as distinct organisational settings. Most studies rely on undergraduate samples or institution-wide aggregates that mask the unique informational demands and engagement patterns of graduate students, faculty supervisors, and administrative staff. Secondly, there is a scarcity of causal or quasi-causal quantitative designs in Ghana and West Africa. While regression and mediation models are growing, longitudinal or experimental designs that can test whether improvements in clarity, frequency, or feedback actually raise engagement are rare (Bond et al., 2021; Appiah et al., 2023). Third, evidence specific to the School of Graduate Studies and Research at UniMAC-IJ is absent. Consequently, there is little empirical basis for deciding which communication levers matter most in this setting. Addressing these gaps requires SoGSaR-focused data that capture multi-stakeholder perspectives,

model the pathways from communication features to engagement, and account for mediators such as communication satisfaction as well as moderators like role and digital literacy. Such evidence would enable context-appropriate reforms that move beyond generic best practices toward targeted, testable interventions.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined theories, concepts, and evidence on communication and stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder theory highlighted the need for universities to address diverse interests through inclusive communication, while organisational communication theory emphasised how communication shapes relationships and institutional cultures. The definitions of communication, stakeholder engagement, and communication satisfaction were clarified. Additionally, global studies were analysed and they showed the increasing use of digital tools. However, African and Ghanaian universities face resource, structural, and cultural barriers that limit effectiveness. Research gaps were noted in postgraduate contexts and in quantitative analysis of how communication practices influence engagement.

The review establishes communication as a central driver of stakeholder engagement and provides the foundation for the study's conceptual framework. The next chapter outlines the methodology adopted to investigate these relationships in the context of the School of Graduate Studies and Research at UniMAC-IJ.

2.6 Definition of Key Concepts

2.6.1 Communication

i. Formal vs. Informal Communication: Formal communication refers to the formal, hierarchical flow of information through designated channels (e.g., circulars, instructions, protocols); this communication is usually documented and binding (Harris and Nelson, 2018; Shockley-Zalaback, 2015). On the other hand, informal communication involves spontaneous and informal forms of exchange (e.g., conversations between colleagues, chat messages) that can strengthen relationships and eliminate room for interpretation (Harris and Nelson, 2018; Lunenburg, 2010). In higher education institutions, both forms complement each other: formal communication ensures reliability and traceability, while informal communication promotes follow-up communication and a positive atmosphere (Shockley-Zalaback, 2015).

ii. Traditional versus digital channels: Traditional channels (meetings, bulletin boards, print media, telephone) are often one-way and slower, but they give messages institutional weight (Lunenburg, 2010). Digital channels (email, portals/LMS, social media, and messengers) enable high reach, speed, and engagement; however, their effectiveness depends on relevance, usability, and feedback options (Metag and Schaefer, 2017; Harris and Nelson, 2018). Empirical findings from West African contexts also suggest that simply introducing digital tools without participatory usage patterns does not automatically solve communication problems (Appiah, Frimpong, and Boateng, 2023).

2.6.2 Stakeholders

i. Internal stakeholders: Internal stakeholders are defined as groups of actors within the university who are directly involved in service provision and governance (students, academic staff, administration/management). Their needs concern information quality, opportunities for participation, and reliable processes (Kettunen, 2015; Bryson, 2004).

ii. External stakeholders: External stakeholders are outside the organization but influence goals, resources, and legitimacy (e.g., ministries, accreditation bodies, employers, alumni, and the public). Their expectations concern, among other things, accountability, quality assurance, and social impact (Freeman, 1984; Jongbloed, 2009). Systematic identification and prioritisation of both groups forms the basis for strategic university development (Bryson, 2004).

2.6.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement refers to the planned and ongoing involvement of relevant groups in information, consultations, and shared decision-making processes (Greenwood, 2007). Key dimensions include participation (inclusive procedures rather than purely top-down communication), trust (mutual trustworthiness/transparency), collaboration (co-creation of solutions) and feedback (two-way feedback with observability of considerations) (OECD, 2015; AccountAbility, 2015; Beerkens & Udam, 2017).

2.6.4 Effective Communication

Communication is effective when it is understandable, timely, content-accurate, and conversational; it should ensure understanding, coherence, and actionability (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015; Harris & Nelson, 2018). Engagement (questions, Q&A, surveys) acts as quality control and

increases engagement (Hargy, 2011). Barriers include delayed/uncoordinated information sharing, fragmented channels (parallel structures such as email, bulletin boards, and messaging apps), lack of feedback mechanisms, and low transparency (Lunenberg, 2010; Appiah et al., 2023). Findings from Ghana show that hierarchical patterns and disjointed channels can increase uncertainty and mistrust (Anani-Bossman, 2022; Mensah & Gyasi, 2023). In higher education institutions, effective participation improves the quality of decisions, increases acceptance and legitimacy and strengthens accountability (OECD, 2015; Beerkens & Udam, 2017). Previous studies have demonstrated that participatory formats in quality assurance and curriculum development foster trust and a sense of responsibility (Birkens & Udam, 2017; Greenwood, 2007)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to study the relationship between institutional communication and stakeholder engagement at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) at UniMAC-IJ. It describes the research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection methods, instruments used, and data analysis techniques. It also addresses issues of validity, reliability, and ethics. This study adopts a quantitative approach based on the philosophy of positivism, which allows for the collection of empirical data from students, faculty, and administrative staff. This methodology was designed to ensure replicability, objectivity, and alignment with the research objectives and the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopts a positivist research paradigm, which establishes measurable relationships between variables and produces general results applicable to different populations. Positivism rests on the conviction that social phenomena can be objectively studied through systematic observation, measurement, and statistical analysis (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014). This paradigm posits that reality is external and governed by observable patterns, which corresponds to the objective of this study: the examiner comments on communication practices, notably clarity, speed, feedback, and numerical tools, as influencing the engagement of the participating parties in higher knowledge. According to Berkovich (2018), positivism prioritises quantifiable data and

structured methodologies that minimise researcher bias. This aligns with the guarantee of neutrality and focuses on empirical data rather than subjective interpretation. By collecting data from students, teachers, and administrators through structured questionnaires, the study ensures that the perceptions of pregnant parties are measured in a measurable way. These tools also facilitate the standardised assessment of concepts such as communication satisfaction (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Pincus, 1986) and pregnant party commitment (Greenwood, 2007), yielding results that are readily available for statistical analysis. The positivist paradigm also lends itself to the deductive logic of this research. The conceptual framework (see section 2.7) formulates hypotheses regarding the influence of communication dimensions on commitment, specifically the influence mediated by communication satisfaction. These hypotheses are empirically tested with the help of research institutions, in accordance with the positivist paradigm's emphasis on hypothesis verification (Welch et al., 2013). By applying the numerical objectives obtained, this paradigm promotes impartiality and ensures that the results reflect valid statistical trends rather than isolated experiences. Overall, the positivist approach provides a rigorous framework for analysing the relationship between communication and engagement of pregnant women in the SoGSaR (Social, Gestational, and Reproductive Health and Education Network). It seeks to ensure the study's commitment to empirical validation, objectivity, and generalisability, also contributing to the growing body of evidence on the effectiveness of communication within Ghanaian higher education institutions (Appiah, Frimpong, and Boateng, 2023; Nwokocha, Adediran, and Badoe, 2022).

3.2 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative cross-sectional survey methodology to examine the relationship between institutional communication and stakeholder engagement at the Faculty of Educational Science and Technology (SoGSaR) at MAC-IJ University. The quantitative approach allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, ensuring objective measurement and generalisable conclusions regarding observed trends among variables (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2016).

The cross-sectional survey adheres to the positivist paradigm of research (see section 3.1) and facilitates hypothesis testing through statistical analysis (Berkovich, 2018). It enables the collection of data from students, faculty, and administrative staff over the same period, ensuring efficient data collection while also incorporating the perspectives of diverse stakeholders (Denscombe, 2010). This methodology has been widely used in higher education studies focusing on communication satisfaction, digital communication, and stakeholder engagement (Appiah, Frimpong, & Boateng, 2023; Raza, Qazi, Khan, & Salam, 2021).

Statistical models such as correlation, regression, and mediation will be used to test the study's hypotheses, particularly to determine whether communication satisfaction mediates the relationship between communication practices and engagement (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2017). Furthermore, the methodology operationalises abstract concepts such as clarity, relevance, and engagement into measurable variables using validated scales, thereby enhancing the reliability and comparability of the results (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Pincus, 1986). The cross-sectional survey thus offers a practical and theoretically sound framework for analysing communication and engagement within social science and education research programmes (SoGSaR).

3.3 Population

A study's population refers to the set of individuals, groups, or elements that share common characteristics relevant to the research question, from which a sample is drawn (Creswell, 2014; Dulock, 1993). This is a broader group to which the researcher wishes to generalise their findings. Bell and Bryman (2007) also explain that a clear definition of the population ensures that the scope of inference is explicit and that the selected sample adequately represents the diversity of the study context. For this study, the target population includes key internal stakeholders of the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR) of the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ). These stakeholders are directly involved in or affected by the institution's communication practices and therefore offer valuable insights into the influence of these practices on engagement. More specifically, the target population includes:

- i. **Postgraduate students** – Master's, MPhil and PhD students, who depend heavily on timely, clear, and accurate communication for course registration, supervision, thesis submission, and examination processes.
- ii. **Faculty (lecturers and supervisors)** – Academic staff responsible for research supervision, teaching, and mentoring students, whose work is affected by the availability and reliability of institutional communication.
- iii. **Administrative staff** – Personnel involved in academic administration, programme coordination, and student services, who serve as both recipients and facilitators of institutional communication.

The inclusion of these three groups is consistent with the stakeholder theory presented in Chapter Two, which emphasises that universities are multi-stakeholder organisations whose success depends on balancing the interests of various groups (Freeman, 1984; Bryson, 2004). Since effective communication is essential to their interactions, analysing these groups provides a comprehensive understanding of SoGSaR's communication system. Although SoGSaR also interacts with external stakeholders, such as government agencies, employers, and alumni, the scope of this study is deliberately limited to internal stakeholders. This decision reflects the study's focus on internal communication processes, as defined in the objectives (see Chapter One). Furthermore, by limiting the population to SoGSaR's internal community, the study ensures a manageable scope that allows for in-depth analysis while maintaining methodological rigour.

3.4 Sampling and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a basic methodological step that involves selecting a subset of the population to represent the whole, thus allowing the researcher to draw generalisable conclusions about the whole (Creswell, 2014). A well-defined sampling strategy is particularly essential in quantitative research, as it ensures the representativeness, reliability, and relevance of the data collected for statistical analysis (Bryman, 2016). In this study, a stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation of the perspectives of all categories of key stakeholders at SoGSaR: students, faculty, and administrative staff.

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was chosen as the most appropriate technique because the study population includes distinct subgroups (strata) with potentially different experiences and perceptions of institutional communication. According to Etikan and Bala (2017), stratified sampling increases the representativeness of the sample by ensuring that each subgroup is included proportionally, thereby improving the precision of the estimates and the generalisability of the results. In this context, the population was divided into three strata:

- Postgraduate students (Master's and PhD)
- Faculty members (lecturers, supervisors, associate professors)
- Administrative staff (program coordinators, secretaries, support staff)

Participants were randomly selected within each stratum to ensure equal inclusion opportunities for all. This approach minimises sample bias and strengthens the validity of the results (Denscombe, 2010). Furthermore, it allows for relevant subgroup analyses, for example, to compare students' and staff's perceptions of feedback mechanisms or the effectiveness of digital communication tools.

3.4.2 Determination of Sample Size

Determining an appropriate sample size is key to guaranteeing statistical power and reliability. In this study, sample size was calculated using the widely accepted formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which provides a statistical method for determining sample size from a known population size:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}$$

Where:

- S = required sample size
- X^2 = chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom at 0.95 confidence level (3.841)
- N = population size
- P = population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 for maximum variability)
- d = degree of accuracy (0.05)

Given that the estimated population of SoGSaR (students, faculty, and administrative staff) is approximately 220 individuals, applying this formula yields a recommended sample size of approximately 140 respondents. However, to account for potential non-responses, the sample size will be increased by 10%, resulting in a target of 154 respondents. This sample size is sufficient to ensure statistical validity and reliable subgroup comparisons.

3.4.3 Distribution of the Sample

To ensure proportional representation, the sample will be distributed across the three strata based on their estimated sizes within the population:

- Postgraduate students: 126 respondents

- Faculty members: 18 respondents
- Administrative staff: 10 respondents

This proportional allocation ensures that each subgroup's views are adequately represented while maintaining balance and diversity in the dataset.

3.4.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain the study's relevance and focus, the following inclusion criteria will be applied:

- Participants must be affiliated with SoGSaR (as students, faculty, or administrative staff) during the 2024/2025 academic year.
- Participants must have received or engaged with institutional communication in any form (e.g., email, LMS announcements, meetings, WhatsApp groups).

Those who don't meet these criteria or are on academic leave during data collection will be excluded.

3.5 Data Collection Method

Data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering information from respondents to answer research questions and test hypotheses (Mazhar, 2021). In quantitative research, this process is usually standardised, ensuring consistency across respondents and allowing for statistical comparisons (Creswell, 2014). For this study, the primary data collection method was the structured questionnaire, widely recognised as one of the most effective tools for collecting

data on attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours in organisational and educational settings (Bryman, 2016; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

3.5.1 Instrument Design

The questionnaire was carefully designed to collect data relevant to the study's objectives and conceptual framework (see Chapter Two). It included closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items, allowing respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. Likert-scale measures were particularly suitable for this study, as they provide reliable quantitative indicators of subjective constructs such as satisfaction, clarity, and commitment (Joshi, Kale, Chandel & Pal, 2015). The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

- **Section A** – Demographics: Basic contextual information such as age, gender, role (student, faculty, staff), and years of SoGSaR membership. This section provided contextual variables for subgroup analysis.
- **Section B** – Communication Practices: Items measuring perceptions of clarity, timeliness, frequency, feedback mechanisms, and digital communication tools used by SoGSaR.
- **Section C** – Communication Satisfaction: Adapted from established scales such as the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Pincus, 1986), focusing on whether respondents felt informed, supported, and able to provide feedback.
- **Section D** – Stakeholder Engagement: Items adapted from Greenwood's (2007) stakeholder engagement framework and contextualised for higher education, measuring factors such as involvement in decision-making, sense of belonging, and participation in institutional activities.

3.5.2 Instrument Administration

The questionnaire for this study will be created using Google Forms, an accessible and user-friendly digital tool that allows for efficient data collection and management. The online format was chosen to ensure convenience, greater reach, and real-time data collection. The survey link will be distributed through multiple channels to maximize participation: UniMAC-IJ's official email system, which ensures direct communication with students, faculty, and staff. Social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp groups, Telegram channels, and other student-faculty communication forums, which are widely used at SoGSaR for academic and administrative communication. This multi-channel distribution approach increases the likelihood of responses from the three main stakeholder groups. Respondents will have two weeks to complete the survey, with reminders sent after the first week to increase participation rates. To ensure ethical compliance, the cover page of the Google Form will contain an informed consent statement describing the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and emphasising voluntary participation.

3.6 Data Analysis Method and Instrument

The data collected from respondents will be processed and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27, widely recognised for its ability to efficiently handle quantitative data sets (Pallant, 2016). SPSS provides a comprehensive set of statistical tools that support descriptive and inferential analyses, allowing the study not only to summarise responses but also to test hypothesised relationships between communication practices and stakeholder engagement.

3.6.1 Data Preparation and Coding

Prior to analysis, the raw data collected via Google Forms will be exported to Excel and then imported into SPSS. Responses will be assessed for completeness, with incomplete or inconsistent questionnaires excluded to maintain data quality. Variables will be coded numerically (e.g., 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree for Likert-scale items), allowing for statistical analysis. Data cleaning will include checks for outliers, missing values, and normality, ensuring readiness for statistical testing (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

3.6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics will be employed to provide an overview of the data set. Frequencies and percentages will describe categorical variables (e.g., gender, role in SoGSaR), while measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and dispersion (standard deviation, variance) will summarise continuous variables. This analysis provides a profile of respondents and provides initial insights into perceptions of communication practices and levels of engagement.

3.6.3 Inferential Statistics

To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, a series of inferential statistical techniques will be applied:

- **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson's correlation coefficient will be used to examine the strength and direction of the relationships between communication practices (clarity, timeliness, frequency, feedback, digital tools) and stakeholder engagement (Cohen, 1988).

- **Regression Analysis:** A multiple regression will test the predictive power of communication practices on stakeholder engagement, identifying the most predictive practices.
- **Mediation Analysis:** Following the procedures described by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Hayes (2017), satisfaction with communication will be tested as a potential mediator of the relationship between communication practices and engagement. This will determine whether satisfaction explains the mechanism through which communication practices influence engagement.
- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** ANOVA tests can be used to compare differences in perceptions between stakeholder groups (students, faculty, and administrative staff).

3.6.4 Presentation of Results

Results will be presented in the form of tables, graphs, and charts generated with SPSS. A clear interpretation of statistical results, such as coefficients, p-values, and confidence intervals, will be provided to connect the results to the study objectives and hypotheses. Effect sizes will also be reported to indicate the magnitude of observed relationships (Field, 2018).

3.6.5 Justification for Analytical Techniques

The combination of descriptive and inferential techniques ensures a holistic analysis of the data set. While descriptive statistics establish a fundamental understanding of respondents' perceptions, inferential techniques allow the study to draw conclusions about relationships and causal links. This dual approach strengthens the robustness and generalisability of the results. Furthermore, the emphasis on regression and mediation analysis is consistent with the conceptual framework of the

study, which places communication satisfaction as a mediating variable between communication practices and stakeholder engagement.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the study. It describes the positivist paradigm and the choice of a cross-sectional quantitative survey to test the relationships between communication practices and stakeholder engagement in SoGSaR. The population consisted of graduate students, faculty, and administrative staff, with a sample of 154 individuals determined from an estimated population of 220 by stratified random sampling.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed in Google Forms and shared via email and social media. The instrument covered demographic data, communication practices, communication satisfaction, and stakeholder engagement, based on validated scales. The analysis was conducted with SPSS, applying descriptive and inferential techniques, including correlation, regression, mediation, and ANOVA. In all, the methodological framework provides a solid foundation for answering the study's research questions. The following chapter presents the results and analyses derived from this methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of quantitative data collected to investigate the relationship between institutional communication and stakeholder engagement at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR), UniMAC-IJ. The data, gathered via a structured questionnaire from a sample of 51 postgraduate students, faculty, and administrative staff, is analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 27). The presentation of findings is systematically structured around the study's specific objectives and research questions, moving from a descriptive profile of the respondents to inferential analyses that test the hypothesised relationships. Each finding is subsequently discussed and synthesised with the theoretical perspectives (Stakeholder Theory, Organisational Communication Theory) and empirical literature reviewed in Chapter Two, providing a coherent narrative that links empirical evidence to existing academic discourse.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding respondents' demographic characteristics provides the context within which institutional communication and stakeholder engagement practices at SoGSaR can be interpreted. The demographic variables captured include gender, role within the institution, years of affiliation, and programme of study. The demographic distribution of the 51 respondents is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=51)

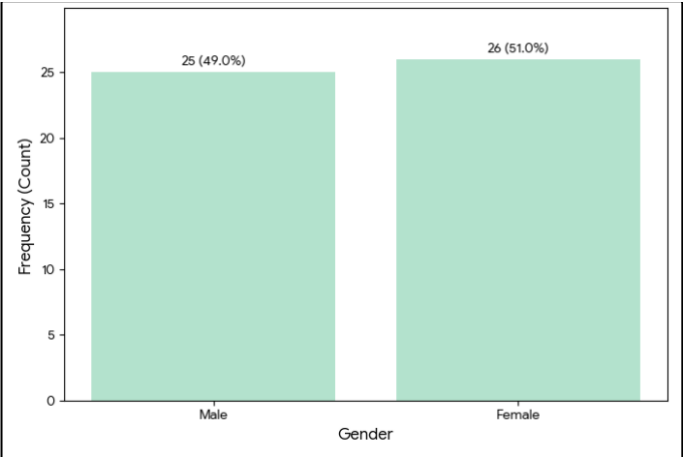
Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	25	49.0%
	Female	26	51.0%
Age Range	20 - 29	35	68.6%
	30 - 39	15	29.4%
	40 - 49	3	5.9%
Role at SoGSaR	Postgraduate Student	38	74.5%
	Faculty Member	8	15.7%
	Administrative Staff	5	9.8%

Years of Affiliation	Less than 1 year	21	41.2%
	1 – 3 years	26	51.0%
	4 – 6 years	4	7.8%

4.1.1 Gender

The sample consisted of 28 males (50.9%) and 27 females (49.1%), showing an almost equal gender distribution. This balance improves the representativeness of stakeholder perceptions across gender lines.

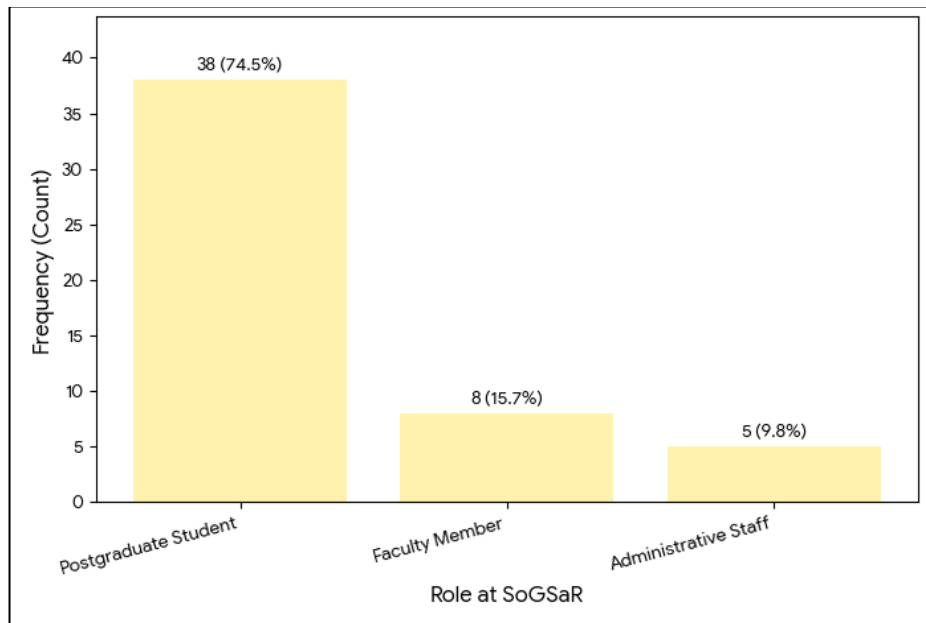
Figure 4.1: Distribution of Gender



4.1.2 Role in the Institution

Most respondents were postgraduate students (69.1%), followed by administrative staff (16.4%) and faculty members (14.5%). This composition reflects the structure of SoGSaR, where students form the largest stakeholder group, but perspectives from academic and administrative actors are also captured.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Role in the Institution



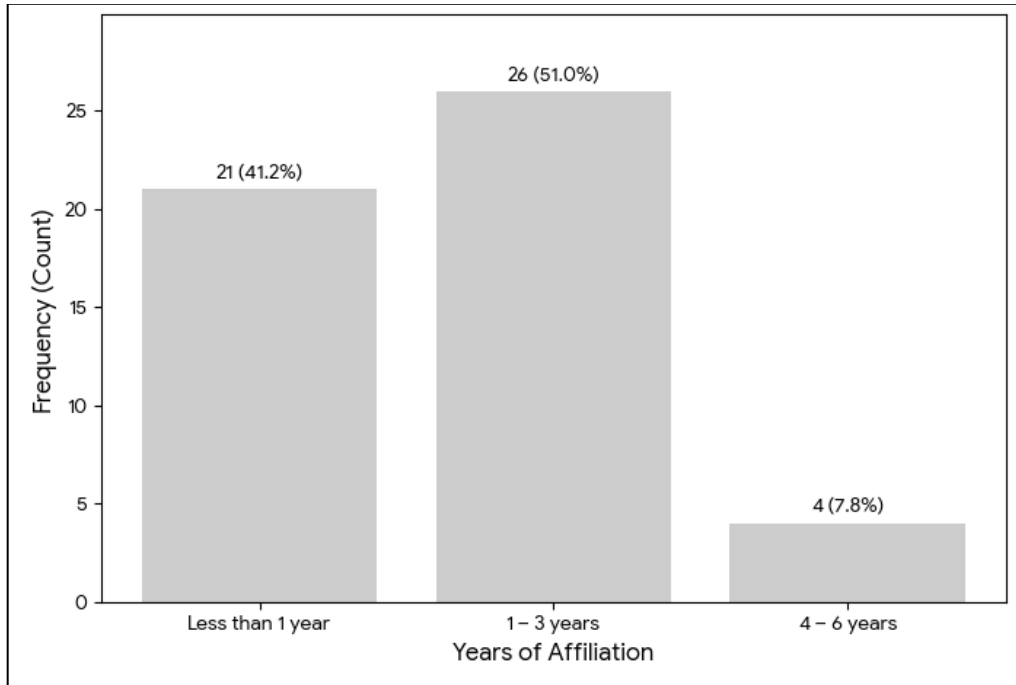
4.1.3 Years Affiliated with SoGSaR

Respondents' duration of association with the institution was as follows:

- Less than 1 year: 47.3%
- 1 to 3 years: 47.3%
- 4 to 6 years: 5.5%

The majority have been affiliated for three years or less, indicating that many respondents are relatively new stakeholders whose perceptions reflect recent communication experiences.

Figure 4.3: Years Affiliated with SoGSaR



4.1.4 Interpretation

The demographic profile reveals a sample predominantly composed of young postgraduate students (74.5%) in the early stages of their affiliation with SoGSaR (92.2% for 3 years or less). This is significant for several reasons. First, from a Stakeholder Theory perspective (Freeman, 1984; Bryson, 2004), it ensures that the data heavily represents the primary internal stakeholder group for whom academic and administrative communication is most critical. This aligns with the conceptual review of stakeholders, which defines students as core internal actors whose needs concern information quality and reliable processes (Kettunen, 2015).

Secondly, their relative newness makes them highly dependent on effective communication to navigate complex postgraduate processes, making them acutely sensitive to communication failures. This directly addresses a key research gap identified in Chapter 2, which noted that "existing literature pays limited attention to postgraduate schools as distinct organisational settings" (Bond et al., 2021; Appiah et al., 2023). By focusing on this specific group within SoGSaR, this study provides the context-specific data that was previously absent.

4.2 Analysis of Communication Practices at SoGSaR

This section addresses *Research Objective 1: To analyse the current communication practices at SoGSaR*, including channels used, information frequency, feedback processes, and perceived clarity. Descriptive statistics for the key dimensions of communication practices are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Communication Practices (N=51)

Statement	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (s.d.)	Interpretation
5. Communication from SoGSaR is clear and easy to understand.	3.24	1.14	Neutral
6. Important information is communicated in a timely manner.	3.16	1.39	Neutral
7. Communication from the institution is frequent enough to keep me updated.	3.18	1.27	Neutral
8. Feedback mechanisms are effective.	2.71	1.31	Leaning to disagree

9. Digital platforms are used effectively for communication.	3.33	1.22	Neutral
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The data presented in Table 4.2 paints a picture of communication practices that are, at best, perfunctory. The consistently neutral ratings for clarity, timeliness, and frequency (Means: 3.16 - 3.24) indicate a communication system that is not failing catastrophically but is far from optimal. This finding resonates with Organisational Communication Theory, which posits that communication is the lifeblood of an organisation (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015). A neutral climate, as evidenced here, often reflects a lack of strategic intent and can lead to mediocrity in institutional performance. The most striking finding is the significantly low rating for feedback mechanisms (Mean = 2.71). This is a critical deficit. It reflects a predominantly one-way, top-down communication flow, which aligns with the models criticised by Grunig and Hunt (1984) and the empirical findings of Appiah et al. (2023) in the Ghanaian context. The inadequacy of feedback loops prevents the "two-way symmetrical communication" necessary for building trust and legitimacy. This finding directly echoes the problem statement, confirming that despite the availability of digital tools, SoGSaR has not yet cultivated a participatory communication culture, a common issue in West African universities, as noted by Nwokocho et al. (2022).

4.3 Levels of Communication Satisfaction

This section examines the mediating variable of communication satisfaction. A composite score was created from five items, demonstrating excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.923).

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Communication Satisfaction (N=51)

Statement	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (s.d.)	Interpretation
10. I am satisfied with the overall communication I receive from SoGSaR.	3.10	1.40	Neutral
11. Communication makes me feel well-informed.	3.41	1.22	Neutral
12. I am satisfied with opportunities to give feedback.	2.82	1.42	Leaning to Disagree
13. Communication channels meet my expectations.	3.06	1.33	Neutral

14. I trust the communication I receive.	3.43	1.15	Neutral
Composite Satisfaction Score	3.16	1.16	Neutral

The neutral composite satisfaction score (Mean=3.16) indicated in Table 4.3 is a logical consequence of the neutral communication practices. This finding is consistent with the multi-dimensional model of Communication Satisfaction by Downs and Hazen (1977), which formed part of the conceptual review of this study. The data shows that stakeholders do not feel positively satisfied, largely because a key dimension, feedback, is deficient, directly linking a specific practice to an overall satisfaction outcome. It is worth noting that the highest satisfaction score is for trust in the communication received (Mean=3.43). This suggests a nuanced situation that adds depth to the empirical review.

While studies like Mensah and Gyasi (2023) emphasise the mistrust resulting from poor communication, this finding suggests that at SoGSaR, a baseline of credibility exists despite procedural flaws. This could be an area for institutional resilience. However, this finding partially contrasts with the conceptual review on trust and transparency (Rawlins, 2008; Men, 2015), which posits that transparency is a direct antecedent to trust. Here, trust exists alongside neutral perceptions of transparency and clarity, suggesting other factors, such as source credibility or institutional reputation, may be at play, a nuance that could be explored in future research.

4.4 Assessment of Stakeholder Engagement Levels

This section addresses *Research Objective 2: To assess and evaluate the engagement levels of key stakeholders.*

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics for Stakeholder Engagement (N=51)

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation (s.d.)	Interpretation
15. I feel engaged in institutional activities and decision-making.	2.65	1.33	Leaning to Disagree
16. Communication motivates me to actively participate.	2.94	1.27	Neutral
17. I feel a sense of belonging.	2.96	1.33	Neutral
18. The institution values my input.	2.71	1.45	Leaning to Disagree
19. Communication encourages collaboration.	3.41	1.18	Neutral
Composite Engagement Score	2.93	1.18	Neutral

The neutral-to-low engagement levels, particularly the clear disagreement with feeling engaged in decision-making or feeling that one's input is valued, are a direct manifestation of the communication deficiencies identified. This finding strongly supports the conceptual link between communication and engagement established in the literature review (Greenwood, 2007; Men & Bowen, 2021).

From a Stakeholder Theory lens, this indicates a failure in the university's normative obligation to engage its key internal stakeholders, moving beyond a narrow, managerialist approach. The data provides empirical evidence for the empirical review's claims about West African universities, where "hierarchical communication structures" constrain "authentic engagement" (Appiah et al., 2023; Nwokocha et al., 2022). The higher score for collaboration (Mean=3.41) is intriguing. It implies that peer-to-peer horizontal communication may be more effective than vertical communication. This underscores a distinction within Organisational Communication Theory (Lunenburg, 2010) and suggests that while formal systems are weak, informal networks, a point raised in the West African empirical review, may be sustaining some level of cohesion.

4.5 Testing the Relationships between Communication and Engagement

4.5.1 Correlation Analysis

This core section addresses *Research Objective 3 and the main research question concerning the influence of communication on engagement*. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the bivariate relationships between the key composite variables.

Table 4.5: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (s.d.)	1	2	3
1. Communication Practices	3.12	1.03	—		
2. Communication Satisfaction	3.16	1.16	.854**	—	
3. Stakeholder Engagement	2.93	1.18	.782**	.866**	—

Note: * $p < .01$.

The Pearson correlation matrix provides critical statistical evidence for the core relationships in this study. Analysis reveals strong, positive, and statistically significant relationships between communication practices, communication satisfaction, and stakeholder engagement at SoGSaR. These findings offer empirical validation of the conceptual framework and illuminate key mechanisms in institutional communication.

A very strong positive correlation exists between Communication Practices and Communication Satisfaction ($r = .854, p < .01$). This indicates that technical aspects of communication at SoGSaR are directly linked to stakeholders' affective appraisal of communication processes. This finding

empirically validates the conceptual model proposed by Downs and Hazen (1977), where communication satisfaction depends on organisational communication quality. It demonstrates that operational elements like message clarity and feedback mechanisms (Welch, 2012) fundamentally shape stakeholder experience, providing quantitative support for Appiah, Frimpong, and Boateng's (2023) qualitative observations about channel quality.

Additionally, a strong correlation between Communication Practices and Stakeholder Engagement ($r = .782, p < .01$) directly addresses the primary research question. This confirms communication quality substantially determines engagement levels at SoGSaR, supporting Stakeholder Theory principles (Freeman, 1984; Bryson, 2004) about addressing constituency interests. It quantitatively corroborates international studies linking dialogic communication to institutional commitment (Bryson & Hand, 2021; Carnegie, Parker, & Tsahuridu, 2021) and provides empirical weight to Ghanaian research identifying communication breakdowns as causes of administrative inefficiency (Anani-Bossman, 2022).

Most significantly, the strongest correlation emerges between Communication Satisfaction and Stakeholder Engagement ($r = .866, p < .01$). This reveals that stakeholders' personal satisfaction with communication predicts their engagement more powerfully than objective practice characteristics. This elevates communication satisfaction from outcome to central psychological driver, a concept previously implicit in literature but lacking strong quantitative support in Ghanaian contexts. It suggests the psychological experience of being well-informed and heard (Men, 2014) matters more than procedural efficiency, addressing the research gap noted by Cummings, Kalelkar, and Wilkerson (2022) regarding which communication variables actually promote engagement.

Collectively, these correlations establish the foundation for mediation analysis. The pattern where Practices correlate strongly with Satisfaction, and Satisfaction shows a stronger correlation with Engagement, indicates mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This demonstrates communication practices influence engagement primarily through the psychological filter of communication satisfaction, moving beyond direct effects to identify the key mechanism. This addresses a significant gap in West African higher education research, which has focused on communication tools without sufficiently analysing mediating perceptual factors (Nwokocha, Adediran, & Badoe, 2022).

4.5.2 Mediation Analysis

A mediation analysis was performed to test whether Communication Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Communication Practices and Stakeholder Engagement.

Table 4.6: Results of Mediation Analysis for Communication Satisfaction

Path in the Model	β Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Total Effect (c-path)					
Practices →	0.782	0.089	8.774	< .001	[0.603, 0.961]

Engagement					
Direct Effect (c'-path)					
Practices → Engagement (controlling for Satisfaction)	0.200	0.123	1.629	0.112	[-0.047, 0.447]
Indirect Effect (a*b path)					
Practices → Satisfaction → Engagement	0.582	0.129	-	-	[0.343, 0.851]

The results of the mediation analysis, presented in Table 4.6, confirm that Communication Satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between Communication Practices and Stakeholder Engagement. This conclusion is supported by the following evidence:

1. The total effect (c-path) of Communication Practices on Engagement is significant ($\beta = 0.782, p < .001$), establishing the initial relationship.

2. The direct effect (c'-path) becomes non-significant ($\beta = 0.200$, $p = 0.112$) when the mediator, Communication Satisfaction, is introduced into the model.

Crucially, the indirect effect (a*b path) is statistically significant, as indicated by a bootstrap confidence interval that does not include zero ($\beta = 0.582$, Boot SE = 0.129, 95% CI [0.343, 0.851]). This pattern fulfils the criteria for full mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2017). It demonstrates that the positive influence of Communication Practices on Stakeholder Engagement is entirely explained through Communication Satisfaction. In other words, effective communication practices lead to higher engagement because they first enhance how satisfied stakeholders are with the communication process itself. This finding provides a powerful, empirically tested mechanism that explains how communication influences engagement at SoGSaR, moving beyond a simple correlation to reveal the underlying psychological process."

It also directly addresses a major research gap: the scarcity of quantitative, causal-pathway models in the West African context (Cummings et al., 2022; Appiah et al., 2023). By empirically validating that effective practices boost satisfaction, which in turn drives engagement, this study provides a quantitative evidence base for prior qualitative assertions (Welch, 2012) and offers a more sophisticated, testable model for future research. For SoGSaR, this pivotal finding implies that improving engagement requires a strategic shift beyond merely fixing technical channels to actively managing the subjective satisfaction stakeholders derive from them.

4.6 Evaluation of Digital Communication Tools

This section addresses *Research Objective 4*. From Table 4.2, the mean score for the effective use of digital platforms was neutral ($M=3.33$, $SD=1.22$). Cross-tabulations suggest that while tools like email and WhatsApp are ubiquitous, their use is fragmented and not strategically integrated into a cohesive communication strategy. This finding of neutral effectiveness, despite high usage, is a classic example of the "channel fragmentation" critiqued by Anani-Bossman (2022). The data supports the international and West African literature (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Nwokocha et al., 2022), which argues that the mere presence of digital tools is insufficient. Their effectiveness is contingent on strategic integration, user literacy, and, most importantly, their use for dialogue rather than monologue. The neutral rating suggests that SoGSaR is experiencing the challenges but not yet reaping the full engagement benefits of digital transformation.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the collected data, revealing several key findings that address the research objectives. The demographic profile confirms that the study accurately captured the perspectives of SoGSaR's main internal stakeholder groups, primarily graduate students. The analysis revealed that communication practices at SoGSaR are generally perceived as neutral; however, a major weakness was identified regarding the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms.

Similarly, overall satisfaction with communication was rated as neutral, and the data indicate that it constitutes a crucial psychological link between communication practices and engagement levels. Furthermore, stakeholder engagement was rated as neutral or low, and respondents felt particularly excluded from institutional decision-making processes. The inferential analysis established very strong and statistically significant relationships between communication practices, satisfaction with communication, and stakeholder engagement. A key finding was that satisfaction with communication plays a fully mediating role in the effect of communication practices on engagement, identifying it as the primary influencing mechanism.

Finally, despite their prevalence, digital communication tools are not perceived as being used effectively, indicating significant problems in their strategic integration. The following chapter will translate these findings into definitive conclusions, practical recommendations for SoGSaR, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter synthesises the empirical findings of Chapter Four into definitive conclusions and practical recommendations. The study quantitatively analysed institutional communication and stakeholder engagement within UniMAC-IJ's School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR), revealing crucial information about communication practices, satisfaction levels, engagement patterns, and their interrelationships. This chapter presents a concise summary of the main findings, outlines general conclusions that answer the research questions, and translates them into practical recommendations for managing SoGSaR programmes. It concludes by acknowledging the study's limitations and suggesting avenues for future research.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The analysis revealed several important findings illustrating the communication landscape at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Research (SoGSaR). The demographic profile confirmed adequate representation of the main stakeholder groups, predominantly graduate students. Communication practices generally received neutral evaluations, with feedback mechanisms identified as a major weakness. Satisfaction with communication was also neutral, while stakeholder engagement ranged from neutral to low, particularly regarding participation in decision-making processes. Statistical analysis revealed strong positive correlations between communication practices, satisfaction, and engagement. Most importantly, satisfaction with communication was identified

as a key mediator between practices and engagement. Digital communication tools, although commonly used, were perceived as having shortcomings.

5.2 Discussion of Findings in Relation to Literature and Theory

The results of this study provide strong empirical confirmation of the key theoretical assumptions and, at the same time, offer nuanced perspectives that broaden and deepen the existing literature on communication in higher education. The analysis focuses on the core components of the research framework, the state of communication practices, the mediating role of satisfaction, and the resulting level of engagement, and contextualises them within the Ghanaian graduate school environment.

5.2.1 Communication Practices: Confirmation of Structural Deficits and Conceptual Models

The finding that communication practices in SoGSaR are perceived as neutral, along with a marked weakness in feedback mechanisms, provides precise quantitative confirmation of widely accepted qualitative findings in the literature. This directly supports the conceptual critique of one-sided and asymmetric communication models (Grunig and Hunt, 1984) and illustrates their relevance to the reality of an African graduate school. The data empirically confirm the findings of Ghanaian scholars such as Anani-Bossman (2022) and Mensah and Gyasi (2023), who identified top-down communication and fragmented channels as systemic weaknesses. However, this study goes beyond general institutional critiques by identifying feedback as the most critical weakness within the communication spectrum. This aligns with the conceptual distinction between communication as mere information transfer and communication as a relational and dialogic process (Shockley-

Zalabak, 2015). The neutral scores for clarity and timeliness further suggest that, while communication at SoGSaR fulfils a basic administrative function, it lacks the strategic clarity and responsiveness required in a complex academic environment, a deficiency highlighted in organisational communication theory (Welch, 2012).

5.2.2 The Centrality of Communicative Satisfaction: From Outcome to Mechanism

The identification of communicative satisfaction as a comprehensive mediator is arguably the most significant theoretical contribution of this study. While conceptual literature defines satisfaction as a multidimensional outcome (Downs & Hazen, 1977) and empirical studies have linked it to positive outcomes, this study provides causal evidence of its role as a central mechanism. This finding significantly expands our understanding by demonstrating that communication practices do not directly "cause" interaction but rather must first be processed through the perceptual filter of satisfaction. This provides strong empirical support for the theoretical arguments of authors such as Men (2014), who posits that the quality of communicative relationships determines communicative outcomes. Furthermore, the finding provides a quantitative response to the research gap identified by Cummings et al. (2022), who asserted the lack of studies on the causal pathways between communication characteristics and outcomes. The complete mediation model implies that initiatives focused solely on channel efficiency (e.g., faster emails, a new LMS) without considering the relational and perceptual dimensions of satisfaction will have little impact on interaction, a key indicator for strategic planning.

5.2.3 Stakeholder Engagement: Quantifying the Engagement Gap

The neutral to low levels of engagement, particularly regarding co-determination and the perceived value of individual contributions, provide clear quantitative evidence of the engagement gaps

described in the literature. These findings align strongly with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Bryson, 2004), which argues that organisational legitimacy and sustainability depend on recognising and addressing stakeholder interests. The low levels of engagement suggest that SoGSaR's approach aligns more with a managerial perspective, treating stakeholders simply as target groups to be informed, rather than as partners in a collaborative process (Greenwood, 2007). This empirically confirms criticisms of West African higher education systems, described as hierarchical and lacking opportunities for authentic participation (Appiah et al., 2023; Nwokocha et al., 2022). Notably, the slightly higher score in collaboration indicates that horizontal peer interaction persists despite vertical institutional deficits, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of engagement.

5.2.4 Digital Tools: The Gap Between Adoption and Strategic Integration

The neutral perception of the effectiveness of digital tools, despite their widespread use, perfectly illustrates the problem of channel fragmentation (Ofori and Boateng, 2022). This observation establishes a link between the conceptual debate on digital communication (González-Rodríguez et al., 2020) and the empirical reality in resource-constrained contexts. It confirms that the simple adoption of technology, a trend observed globally and in West Africa (Nwokocha et al., 2022), does not guarantee effective communication. The data suggest that, in SoGSaR, digital tools have been incorporated into existing and imperfect communication processes, rather than being strategically integrated to foster interactivity and dialogue. This fills a gap in research by shifting the debate from the mere availability of tools to how they are perceived and used within a specific stakeholder ecosystem.

5.2.5 Bridging the Research Gaps

These findings provide a comprehensive and evidence-based response to the research gaps described in Chapter Two. First, they offer a school-specific analysis that goes beyond aggregated undergraduate or institutional data to reveal the unique communicative dynamics of a doctoral school. Secondly, they provide a causal and quantitative model (mediation analysis) that clarifies the link between communication and engagement, thus addressing the scarcity of such models in the context of Ghana and West Africa. Third, they generate contextual empirical data for higher education research, offering a previously unavailable diagnostic framework. Finally, by validating and refining the concepts of stakeholder theory and organisational communication theory in this specific context, the study demonstrates the contingent application of global theories, suggesting that, while the principles remain valid, their implementation must take into account local structural and cultural realities, such as hierarchical traditions and resource limitations.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the comprehensive data analysis, this study concludes that:

1. Institutional communication at SoGSaR is characterised by adequate frequency but insufficient quality, particularly regarding feedback mechanisms and message clarity.
2. Stakeholder engagement remains suboptimal due to limited participatory opportunities and a perceived lack of input valuation.
3. Communication satisfaction serves as the crucial psychological mechanism through which communication practices influence engagement.

4. Digital communication channels suffer from strategic fragmentation rather than technological deficiency.

These conclusions definitively answer all the research questions.

5.4 Recommendations for Practice

To address the identified barriers and enhance communication effectiveness, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed:

1. SoGSaR management should prioritise developing a structured feedback culture by implementing mandatory response mechanisms and regular stakeholder forums. This addresses the critical feedback deficit while fostering participatory decision-making.
2. The institution should formalise stakeholder representation in key committees to enhance engagement and demonstrate value for input. This operationalizes Stakeholder Theory principles while addressing feelings of exclusion.
3. A comprehensive channel audit and subsequent consolidation are necessary to reduce digital fragmentation. Clear communication protocols should define specific purposes for each platform to enhance strategic integration.
4. Training programmes focusing on message clarity and transparency should be developed for administrative staff. Standardised templates for official communications would improve consistency and comprehension.

5. SoGSaR should also adopt a satisfaction-oriented communication strategy that prioritises stakeholder perceptions and experiences, recognising that satisfaction drives engagement more powerfully than practice characteristics alone.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides valuable information, it has several limitations. Its cross-sectional design only captures perceptions at a specific point in time, thus limiting the understanding of longitudinal trends. The sample, although representative, focused on a single institution, limiting its generalisability. The exclusive use of quantitative methods, despite its methodological rigour, restricted the exploration of subtle contextual factors. Self-reported data can be biased by social desirability, and the study did not control for all potential confounding factors.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should adopt longitudinal models to track the evolution of communication and engagement patterns over time. Mixed-methods approaches would allow for a deeper contextual understanding of quantitative trends. Comparative research across multiple institutions would improve the generalisability of findings. Research on specific communication interventions would allow for the evaluation of the effectiveness of recommended strategies. Research exploring the role of leadership communication styles and digital skills would significantly enrich our understanding of communication effectiveness. Finally, studies examining the perspectives of external stakeholders would provide a more comprehensive view of institutional communication.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A STUDY OF SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION – INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (UNIMAC-IJ)

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in a research study titled “The Impact Of Communication and Stakeholder Engagement in Tertiary Institutions: A Study of School of Graduate Studies and Research, University Of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute Of Journalism (UniMAC-IJ)” The purpose of this study is to examine how institutional communication practices influence stakeholder engagement at SoGSaR. The findings will contribute to improving communication strategies within postgraduate education.

Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw at any point without penalty. Responses are anonymous, and data will be kept strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only. By clicking “Next” and completing this questionnaire, you indicate your informed consent to participate in the study. Thank you for your cooperation.

Section A: Demographics

1. Age:

- 20–29

- 30–39
- 40–49
- 50 and above

2. Gender:

- Male
- Female

3. Role at SoGSaR:

- Postgraduate Student
- Faculty Member
- Administrative Staff

4. Years of affiliation with SoGSaR:

- Less than 1 year

- 1–3 years
- 4–6 years
- More than 6 years

Section B: Communication Practices

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. Communication from SoGSaR is clear and easy to understand.
2. Important information is communicated in a timely manner.
3. Communication from the institution is frequent enough to keep me updated.
4. Feedback mechanisms (e.g., opportunities to respond, ask questions) are effective.
5. Digital platforms (emails, LMS, WhatsApp, social media) are used effectively for communication.

Section C: Communication Satisfaction

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. I am satisfied with the overall communication I receive from SoGSaR.

2. Communication makes me feel well-informed about academic and administrative matters.
3. I am satisfied with the opportunities available to give feedback to the institution.
4. Communication channels meet my expectations in addressing my concerns.
5. I trust the communication I receive from the institution.

Section D: Stakeholder Engagement

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. I feel engaged in institutional activities and decision-making processes.
2. Communication motivates me to actively participate in SoGSaR programmes.
3. I feel a sense of belonging as a stakeholder of SoGSaR.
4. The institution values my input and contributions.
5. Communication encourages collaboration between students, faculty, and staff.

Thank you for your time and participation. Your responses will help improve communication and stakeholder engagement at SoGSaR.