

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS  
AND STUDENTS' FUTURE INTENTION FOR THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF  
JOURNALISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE 2021 MASTER OF ARTS IN  
DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION STUDENTS**

**BY**

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**OCTOBER 2021**

## CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that this dissertation was undertaken by me and under the supervision of Dr. Collins Adu-Bempah Brobbey. Where other people's references are made, full acknowledgement has been given. I wish to state that all omissions and shortfalls in this work are entirely mine.

Therefore, I declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this institution or elsewhere.

  
.....

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## **SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the preparation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of dissertation laid down by School of Graduate Studies and Research, Ghana Institute of Journalism.



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**(SUPERVISOR)**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Emmanuel Gyamra who passed away just before I could complete this course.

I would also like to dedicate this to my mother Vida Oparebea Gyamra and my brother Edwin Mate-Kole who has been by my side through thick and thin.

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>GIJ</b>	<b>Ghana Institute of Journalism</b>
<b>SPSS</b>	<b>Statistical Package for Social Scientist</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the perception of students of Master of Arts in Development Communication (Devecom) class of the 2021 cohort of the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SoGSaR), Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) on the internal communication channels utilized by tertiary institutions in general but GIJ in particular, to communicate with staff and students and future intentions of the students for the Institute after graduation. This study employed a quantitative approach through the use of questionnaire as well as peer reviewed articles selected from reputable journals and internal newsletters and networking /websites to ascertain and analyse Devecom students' perception of the internal communication mechanisms of the GIJ. The study further assessed the future intentions of students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism towards the school upon graduation. Findings revealed however, that there is very little data on the perception students have of such channels and students and that although the Institute had several channels for communication, the students utilised the internet based ones more regularly

and frequently compared to the traditional ones as the traditional ones were seen to be one way with little room for feedback and continuous reaction. Consequently, with regards to students' perception about the future intentions, there was no clear indication of whether graduated students would actively contribute as alumni to the Ghana Institute of Journalism or not.

In conclusion, though findings supported the view that internal communication channels provided by the Ghana Institute of Journalism were not rich enough, this was contrary to the students' future intentions for the University after graduation. It recommends that GIJ should work hard in ensuring that modern channels of communication are utilised by the students to effectively improve communication at GIJ.

Key words: Internal communication channels, Traditional channels; Master of Arts in Development Communication; perception of students; Future intentions, Rich, Ghana Institute of Journalism; School of Graduate Studies and Research; graduation

## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.0.Introduction

Evidence shows that over the past two decades or more universities have been developing communication systems tailored to the application of modern technologies to meet the knowledge-based research needs and the changing and evolving trends within the institutions of higher learning including the development of communication methods relevant to global market needs (Popescu, 2002, cited in Duralia, 2018). This is important because, without an effective communication strategy in place, students may receive too much information which can overwhelm them or receive inadequate information, which may also cause them to get frustrated. Therefore, communication from the management of a university to its internal stakeholders, in this case, students, must employ the latest communication means and models and be readily accessible.

Higher education institutions, serve different stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members. There are many studies on the communication between higher education institutions and their external stakeholders such as donors, alumni and the community; however, there appears to be few studies conducted on the issue of internal communication. It must also be emphasized that there abounds a plethora of work on the importance of internal communication to the continued sustenance of business entities and other commercial organizations only a few of the research seems to focus on examining the internal communication strategies of higher education institutions. (Campbell, 2018). Therefore, there must be more studies on this phenomenon.

Students generally decide on whether they will be of benefit to their institutions or not while they are still students. Sung and Yang (2009) state that to identify students' behavioural intentions towards the university upon graduation, there are several factors to consider, including the internal communication strategies of the university towards students.

Therefore, higher learning institutions must implement an effective internal communication mechanism that remains relevant, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has ensured that communication to students has become vital.

Adding to the above, students perceive that effecting communication is one way of universities being accountable to them. Alutto (2011) and other scholars maintain that although stakeholders of higher education include government entities, students, parents of students, employees and the media, they are all united in their quest for increasing transparency and accountability that they receive from the institution of higher education. They also maintain that, especially for the internal stakeholders, there is an increased need for information and communication of school policies to be concise and released in a timely manner to satisfy their communication needs. The inability of universities to focus on improving their internal communication strategies could also explain why there appears to be a decline in the goodwill people have toward universities, colleges and other institutions of higher education. Some scholars argue that this decline has occurred although enrolment in higher education institutions has increased because there is a general perception that universities and other higher education institutions are not meeting the needs of their stakeholders (Campbell, 2018). This presupposes that for a university to foster public goodwill and also ensure that students have positive future intentions, their communication needs must be met and in a manner that appeals to them.

To continue, LLonch et al. (2016) postulate that universities in different parts of the world have witnessed important and rapid transformations of the environment in which their activities take place and argue further that owing to various phenomena, universities have had to bring in market elements as a way of maintaining the image that they have. A positive image ensures that the higher education institution remains attractive to current and prospective students. It is imperative that universities remain attractive because there is greater competition for students than ever before and without this appeal, enrolment for an institution will decrease.

Zsigmond & Portik (2017) stress the importance of image and perception to an organisation. Citing Palacio et al (2002) and other scholars, they posit that creating a distinct image through communication is one coping strategy adopted by universities in Eastern Europe to ensure that they withstand the fierce competition that abounds in the quest to attract students. They further argued that branding in the higher educational institutions has become a necessity for similar reasons in other geographic regions all over the world. (Wilkins, 2015) however, this is not exclusive to Romania and other Eastern European nations but globally. Universities and other higher educational institutions did not usually consider the impact of their internal communication on students' perception and overall experience on campus but research has shown that neglecting that field could prove detrimental to the overall impression and quality of experiences shared in school.

The process of building an organisational image is influenced factors like the quality of services or products, the public relation activities, behaviours with internal and external stakeholders and overall by any kind of contact between the organisation and its target audience. (Scottt & Jehn, 2003) focusing on communication to build a positive image will therefore affect the success of the institution in several ways. Later research by Alves & Raposo (2010) lends credence to this observation that customer choice of an institution is

strongly influenced by the perceived image of the institution and its services provided. Furthermore, internal communication is defined by Stafford et al. (2010) as the link between top management and employees with important information for the organization. They argue that companies with a strong internal communication strategy are more likely to attain higher customer satisfaction. Given this, it is also imperative that universities apply strategies—geared towards attaining students’ satisfaction and increasing their greater participation and focus on the school after graduation.

In sum, internal communication is to be well thought out and planned in higher learning institutions not merely for dissemination of information but as a way of increasing students and other stakeholders’ engagement with the institution.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Kataria et al. (2013) argue that although internal communication is a vital function of any organization, it remains an underdeveloped function in most higher education institutions. They further state that most high-performing universities have institutionalized their internal communication mechanisms and can boast increased engagement with their internal stakeholders. However, it is not clear if the level of engagement is good enough or not in addressing the needs of the stakeholders. By this, it becomes obvious that developing mastery over internal communication is a must for any tertiary institution that seeks to remain relevant.

Licata and Frankwick (1996), as cited in Nedelea (2007), believe that in the field of higher education, students, graduate, the business climate, society as a whole, academic and related-academic staff constitute what is referred to as the academic stakeholders. They add that any higher education institution which seeks to build a positive and lasting brand must ensure that their relationship with these stakeholders is built on efficient communication

because the stakeholders are the ones to project the institution to outsiders hence their opinion of the efficacy of the institution is relevant and important. They also argue further that meeting these stakeholders' expectations is a must that must not be compromised at all by the institution if it is to survive.

Because of the lack of extensive research concerning higher education institutions' internal communication strategies and practices it is important to investigate the phenomenon on a deeper level. It is also important to understand how students perceive these strategies and how they can affect the intentions of graduate students towards the institution after graduation. Additionally, there is also the need to identify the various channels through which students access information from the institution.

From the above, there is, therefore, the need for an institution of higher education to identify the communication needs of its academic stakeholders and determine the most appropriate and important mediums of communication that it feels will transmit the information that is to be passed across most appropriately and in a manner that also appeals to the stakeholders.

Accordingly this study hypothesises that the communication channels used by the Ghana institute of Journalism have a bearing on the students intentions for the institution after graduation

## **1.2. Research Questions**

This research hypothesises that the communication channels used by the Ghana institute of Journalism have a bearing on the students intentions for the institution after graduation and therefore seeks to also answer the following questions:

1. What communication channels are used by students to access information from the university?

2. How do students perceive the Ghana Institute of Journalism's internal communication channels?
3. What are the future intentions of Master of Arts, Development Communication students towards the Ghana Institute of Journalism after graduation?

### **1.3. Research Objective**

The general objective of the research will be to identify students' perception of internal communication channels and students' future intention for the Ghana Institute of Journalism: A case of the 2021 of Master of Arts development communication students. The specific objectives are:

1. Identify the communication channels used by the Ghana Institute of Journalism to communicate with the students.
2. Examine the students' perception of the internal communication strategies used
3. Identify how the future intentions towards the Ghana Institute of Journalism upon completion of their course or post-graduation.

### **1.4. Scope of the Study**

Kataria et al. (2013) define Internal communication as a collective effort of the organization's group members to gather information and data and achieve employee engagement because of this definition, this research will focus on students' perception of internal communication channels and students' future intention for the Ghana Institute of Journalism: a case of the 2021 Master of Arts Development Communication Students.

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study focuses students' perception of internal communication channels and students' future intention for the Ghana Institute of Journalism: A case of the 2021 of master of arts development communication students. There is a lot of research on external communications however, there appears to be rather limited information on internal communication, especially when compared with external communication. Specifically, there seem to be rather scant studies on the internal communication within the higher education context in Ghana.

This research will be beneficial because the reputation of a university is built from the inside out. Since students form the largest group, communication strategies must be designed to make them feel a part of the organization. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights on improving the university's brand concerning students' perceptions and address any communication gaps that might exist.

### **1.6. Organisation of the Study**

The First Chapter deals with the general overview and background to the study, introduction, statement of problem, research questions, research objectives, scope of the study, significance of the study and organization of the study The Second Chapter focuses on the literature review, the theoretical foundation, review of the related and relevant literature, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms, importance of the study, and the conclusion. The Third Chapter deals with the methodology, methods and research design, population, sampling technique and sample frame and scale, data collection sources and instruments, data analysis techniques, and limitations are also all covered in Chapter Three. The Fourth Chapter, the penultimate chapter provides the empirical analysis

of key findings and the discussions while the Fifth Chapter summarizes the key findings, draws conclusions, and makes some recommendations for further research and praxis.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses some existing scholarly research on internal communication, reviews existing literature on the subject as well as various studies undertaken by other researchers. It is also an exposition of the theories used by the researcher in this study and how they underpin the work.

## **2.1. Theoretical Foundation**

As a theoretical foundation for this study, a review of the Media Richness Theory, the Social Exchange Theory and the Relational Coordination model is made, which highlights the relevance of internal communication. These theories are consistent with internal communication, which is intended to increase employee engagement and satisfaction in an organisation.

### **2.1.2 Media Richness Theory**

As proposed by Daft and Lengel (1984), Media Richness Theory (MRT) states that communication media vary greatly in the extent to which they enable users to communicate and understand information. Therefore, the richness of a media is determined by the extent to which it reduces equivocality or possible misinterpretations. They further argue that a medium of communication can therefore be assessed by the extent to which it meets four criteria, namely:

1. Feedback Capability- the ability for the medium to facilitate feedback and clarification of miscommunication issues that may arise.
2. Multiple Cues/Communication Channels utilised: the range of cues including but not limited to body language, voice inflection, or physical representations facilitated by the medium.
3. Language Variety- the ability of the medium to utilize engagements that involve both numbers and natural language.

4. Personal focus/ source: the ability of the medium to convey the personal feelings and emotions of communicating parties (Daft & Lengel 1987,; Irem Sevinc & D'Ambra, 2021).

Daft and Lengel (1987) add that, for discussions and meetings over simple topics, media that is low in richness could be utilised while high in richness media are important for transmitting complex organisational topics. They showed that face to face meetings are considered the richest media while formal documents such as memos and general meetings are seen as the lowest in richness. Daft et al. (1987) posited that the highest-performing managers were those who paid closer attention to their selection of media in communication. Research by Trevino et al. (1990) further showed that as tasks got more complicated, employees preferred information that was richer when asked to complete tasks.

Farhadpoor (2018) also postulates that Media Richness Theory and the richness of information are considered from two dimensions. First, the value of using a channel of information regarding its content and the active role of the user in using an information channel. He argues further that the structural features of media can affect the ability of users to access information. Managers need to develop their communication skills because they are likely to spend about 75 to 85 percent of their time engaged in communication activities. With increasing globalisation and technological advancements, face-to-face meetings are no longer the sole communication media employed by managers; instead, computer-mediated communication (CMC) could also be well utilised.

In ensuring richness in the modern-day and age, CMC media have to be utilized effectively by managers, which could extend to social media platforms and sites. Therefore it is integral that multimedia environments and digital networks are incorporated into communication channels, especially as face to face becomes more difficult. (Baltes et al., 2002).

### **2.1.3. Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory assumes that people tend to maximize rewards and minimize costs in making decisions and commitments to a cause or organisation. The theory tries to predict the factors that can change the structure of relationships under the assumption that people will restructure relationships to reach a state of equity where the perceived gains are equal to the perceived losses of any affiliation or relationship.

Karanges et al. (2014) posit that internal communication can be examined in the light of the social exchange theory. The social exchange theory assumes that mutual dependence is crucial to the continuance of any relationship. They explain mutual dependence that the parties involved in a relationship have a reason to engage in discourse to obtain resources of value: , a desire to increase gain and avoid loss; and some degree of a continuance of the relationship over time rather than a one-time encounter. (Cook, Cheshire, & Gerbasi, 2006).

Karanges et al. (2014) further argue that in internal communication, a social resource would be information given by the leadership of an organisation, a supervisor, and the employees. They also posit that when employees are satisfied with the quality and quantity of internal communication, they reciprocate by keeping management informed of events. The social exchange theory focuses on achieving two main outcomes such as engagement of employees and commitment. Saks (2006, p.601) defines engagement as the discretionary effort exhibited by employees or the willingness to go beyond the minimal efforts required to keep the job. Engagement comprises three variables, namely:

1. Trait engagement: referring to employees with a positive view on life and work
2. Psychological state engagement: which is associated with job satisfaction, commitment, and involvement and
3. Behavioural engagement: this includes the willingness to assume additional responsibilities and personal initiative. (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

In this vein, Welch (2011) argues that employee engagement is closely linked to organisational commitment, which refers to a decision an employee makes on whether to leave an organisation or not. Verčič, and Vokić (2017) also provide evidence to support this by arguing that effective internal communication can influence engagement and commitment, but poor communication leads to the disengagement of staff and employees. In the corporate world, it is estimated that poor engagement of stakeholders leads to grievances, under-performance, absenteeism, and other losses. Therefore, internal communication is crucial in addressing some of these issues and curbing uncertainty and emotions such as anger, resentment, and frustration (Gallup, 2013; Luo & Jiang, 2014).

#### **2.1.4 Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)**

Baltes et al. (2002) argue that the new media are generally asynchronous and involve text and audio models; however, they still are considered relatively low in terms of media richness compared with face-to-face. This is not to say that these new media are altogether not suitable. They have been shown to reduce the delay in exchanging information, increase coordination, and aid in getting people to work from various geographic locations as groups. Alge et al. (2003) add that virtual teams and modes of communication are now growing and have been adopted as the chosen medium in the current age; however, the traditional communication mediums they have come to replace are not fully established.

Furthermore, scholars criticised MRT on the premise that Daft and Lengel (1987) did not account for CMC, which has since evolved. As such, it becomes problematic to attempt placing this media on a scale of relative richness. To put into context, emails per the original MRT rank low in richness; however, much research abounds to show that managers have sometimes achieved high results relying on emails for communication and information

dissemination (Valacich et al., 2002). Alge et al, (2003) also found that, where members of a virtual team had a shared history, the CMC were generally rich compared to instances where there was no shared history irrespective of the perceived original relative richness of the medium used.

The richness of CMC, according to research, improves when there is a shared history, training in media usage took place, and teams could build personal relationships in the mediated environment. This case tends to support Fulk et al. (1990) position, who posit that richness is not a fixed feature but changes based on social constructions. .

Mithas et al. (2006) add that the MRT has often been used when examining the sources of information that people choose and use. They further argue that most management members have focused simply on the transmission of information with little regard to the user's satisfaction with the services and source of information or channels used by the receiver.

### **2.1.5 Relational Coordination Model**

De Pablos et al (2012) referencing several scholars postulate that the search for academic excellence is a key issue for Educational Institutions and that this is also of interest to citizens and policy makers worldwide and in this regard, the application of the relational coordination model will help improve results and also explain the higher degrees of academic excellence attained by some universities. Going further they claim that although communication mechanisms seem not to be a problem at the surface level a deeper look reveals that most internal communication lacks a shared objective which could in turn be a barrier in the search for excellence.

The relational Coordination model developed and proposed by Gittell in 2002 is a theory which works with three main propositions:

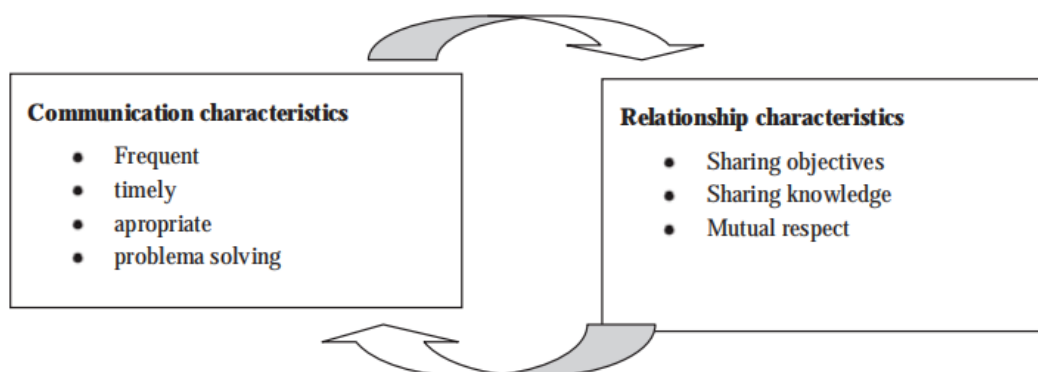
1. Relationship of shared goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect promote frequent, timely, accurate, problem-solving communication and vice versa. These dimensions then lead to relational coordination.

2. Relational coordination leads to useful outcomes for multiple stakeholders when it is strong but if the coordination is weak, it leads to harmful outcomes especially under uncertain and time-constrained conditions.

3. Organisations can design their own relational structures through their human resource practices and mechanisms to reduce subgoal optimisation where subgoal optimisation refers to promotion of individual goals at the expense of the overall goal of the organisation.

Gittel (2009) stresses that the relational coordination model when applied in higher education puts emphasis in understanding the importance of coordinating the relationships and the dynamics of communication in organisations to attain the best results. (Gittel, 2010, 2011). The relational model reaffirms that by providing frequent communication of high quality, supported by shared objectives, knowledge and mutual respect, employees and stakeholders will be more loyal and committed to their organisations.

**Figure 1. The relational coordination model (Gittel, 2010)**



Gittel explains that while other theories stress the importance of sharing knowledge, the relational model argues that although this is necessary, it is not sufficient. Stakeholders must

be connected through shared goals and mutual respect, the model stresses that the manner in which the information is shared is also vital and there must be clearly defined channels and roles of communication with well defined relationships. The model is therefore broken into the communication dimensions and the relation dimensions.

From the communication dimension there are:

1. Frequent communication: frequent communication helps to establish the relations amongst roles by the closeness generated as a consequence of a repetitive interaction ( Gittel, 2010)
2. Timely communication: The communication must be timely and regular, when given at the precise moment it helps to achieve best results. Delayed communication can have negative implications for organisational results.
3. Accurate communication: A precise communication of the relevant details helps in performance of group tasks.
4. Problem solving communication: An effective coordination requires that the professionals involved in some tasks are put in a setting where communication is oriented towards solving the problems that come up instead of shifting blame or eluding responsibility.

Concerning the relational dimension of the model the following are examined:

1. Shared goals: This means that stakeholders must have linkages and targets that will help them arrive at similar expected conclusions irrespective of the methods used to obtain new information.
2. Shared knowledge: Gittel further states that all members of an institution must know the extent to which their work is related to the rest of the work of other profiles in the same

process, everyone must know how their work relates to others and therefore the consequences of shirking their responsibilities.

3. Mutual respect: usually, those in a higher position may tend to merely disseminate information however, they must respect the competence of those who receive information and work at ensuring that all stakeholders are valued and their inputs considered.

This theory relates to higher education in the sense that there is task interdependence in the flow of information. Students rely on management for information while management relies on the feedback from students to improve its practises and activities. Also, there is a degree of uncertainty in the higher education process as students are presented with a group of obstacles such as the high professor to student ration and also time restrictions in completing coursework and other academic activities. It is therefore imperative that information is coordinated to reduce the uncertainties that plague students.

### **2.1.6 Basic Assumption**

Accordingly this study hypothesises that the communication channels used by the Ghana institute of Journalism have a bearing on the students' intentions for the institution after graduation.

## **2.2.0 Review of Related and Relevant Literature**

### **2.2.1 Internal Communication**

Internal communication is regarded as one of the fastest-growing areas that have seen a surge in specialization in public relations. However, scholars argue that there is not enough scholarly research on this field regarding educational institutions (Verčič, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2012). This is mainly attributable to the fact that the concept of internal communication was initially seen as belonging to the commercial and corporate sectors and

was met with scepticism and mistrust by the academic community who regarded it as being nothing more than a glorified form of advertisement. This partly explains why it has taken so long for it to be examined within the contexts of higher education and the educational sector in general.

Internal communication is seen as an integral part of any organisation, and that the members of any organisation, that is, the employees, are to be regarded as the most important publics. (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2009). There has been a noticeable increase in the use of internal communication among organisations and higher educational institutions are also copying this trend from the corporate sector. The importance of stakeholders especially employees and in the case of universities, students means that the university or higher educational institution must consider its internal stakeholders as essential and vital to its continued existence and ensure that the communication to them is effective and rich in order to ensure their continued support.

According to Cutlip et al. (2009), internal communications have three primary purposes. The first purpose is to get employees to understand and internalise the organisation's culture and values. Secondly, internal communication keeps members informed about the current happenings in the organisation, and finally, it serves as a means for the organisation to get feedback from the employees. In achieving these purposes, the organisation must apply all strategies and take advantage of technology to reach its target and objectives.

Kalla (2005), as quoted by Rogalla (2013), defines internal communication as the 'formal and informal communication taking place at all levels of an organisation. Rogalla (2013) further states that internal communication can be referred to as marketing communication and should improve employees' attitude towards the organisation to make them more dedicated and more efficient in marketing the organisation and its product to the intended

audience. They posit that this can be done through employees' daily interactions with others, small talk with family and friends, and even using their company's services. They also help the public choose patronising the company; hence any manager who does not prioritise internal communication does the company, organisation, and themselves a great disservice.

### **2.2.2 Internal Communication in Higher Education Institutions**

Saunders (2014) and others argue that although students expect to be treated like customers, the extent to which they expect this treatment is not well researched with knowledge on it remaining scant and research by Koris and Nokelainen (2015) supports this assertion. They further add that students expect to be treated as customers in some but not all categories of educational experience. They do not expect to be treated as customers when it comes to issues such as curriculum design, rigour, classroom behaviour and graduation but when it comes to communication with administrative staff, individual studies and teaching methods they expect to be treated as customers.

Another school of thought holds the view that students are the raw materials, the employers and corporate world make up the university customer and the product being offered is the student but Litten(1980) argues that the student 'is client, part of the process itself and a quasi-product at the end of the process'. This implies that there must be a concerted effort to make the student feel valued and a key member of all the processes that go on. When this notion is taken there is the need to re-evaluate what is meant by the student being a customer as he is not purely a customer in terms of the traditional sense of someone who acquires a product or service but on the other hand students are likened to customers in the sense that they pay for the services they are given and also decide to apply to a particular higher education institution or not.

In addition to the students, other people who pay for the services of the university or higher education institution include the family and the state (Cardoso et al, 2011; Saunders, 2014) if these other stakeholders are considered then some universities begin to wonder if the state and family should also be regarded as customers since the main criteria for considering students as customers is their monetary commitment they make to the university.

Continuing, higher education institutions are increasingly in a competition to attract the best candidates and so they must have some appeal to the stakeholders including the community, state, prospective and current students and sponsors if they are to survive. In light of this, alumni groups are also crucial as they help portray a positive image of the institution through their words and deeds. The university must therefore consider these factors, carefully identify all their stakeholders and establish a system of relations with them and one way is through their internal communication. Llonch et al (2016) argue that having a stakeholder orientation is one way to acquaint students of the internal communication mechanisms of the university. This orientation will help secure competitive advantage and provide better results in terms of reputation if they apply an orientation that is not only sensitive but also proactive and tailor made to suit the needs of the stakeholders.

Alarcon-del-Amo et al(2016) posit that internal communication has normally been looked at as tools that are used for student recruitment and income generation however most universities are unable to apply this effectively owing to the insufficient expertise that the administrators have in the field of Human Resource and Marketing since internal communication was traditionally assumed to be more of a marketing field. In fact, in some higher education institutions, at the management level, management is regarded with suspicion as an alien concept being imported into the education field. Generally, the importation of marketing principles into the field of education is regarded with suspicion by academics and other citizens of the educational sector. (Alnawas, 2015)

The reasons for the reluctance by academics to incorporate internal communication into higher education stems mainly from the misunderstanding that academics have of business as being merely aimed at profit generation and fund raising. This owes to the primary belief that the earliest definitions of marketing philosophy and orientations of its first stages examined marketing purely in entrepreneurial terms aimed at marketing products manufactured by companies and so universities were not comfortable to merely think of their students as commodities. The definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association did not do much to help things. They defined marketing as ‘ the activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large. (AMA 2013). This definition made it clear that marketing was targeted at the customers and this proves problematic for the academic setting because higher education must not necessarily do what the customer wants but maintain the standards needed for competitive academic performance.

In the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, many universities were immersed in unprecedented growth in demand causing a shift to making available places for students however when these dropped owing to the growing number of institutions of higher learning that cropped up, universities were then faced with no choice but to examine their communication strategies with a focus on blending marketing principles aimed at student recruitment (sales orientation) or focused on permanent efforts to improve the enrolment figures and fill up their classrooms. The universities and higher educational institutions therefore have to examine their communication and its effects on student recruitment (sales orientation) or efforts to improve the programmes to be delivered to university students (product orientation). Alnawas (2015) argues that internal communication remains one way

of promoting the product orientation or assuring students of the quality of programs offered by the universities.

Llonch et al (2016) have added that universities in different parts of the world have witnessed enormous transformations in the environment in which their activities unfold and that with these transformations have been marked by increasing degrees of competition in the quest to recruit and gain students thereby introducing the need to bring in principles and techniques that were erstwhile limited exclusively to market and corporate entities. Owing to these, and the growing competition, universities have shown more interest in developing and maintaining an image that that appeals not only to their staff but also students. Additionally, Curtis et al (2009) as cited in Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016, p. 113) opine that image and reputation has been identified as one of the main factors affecting higher education choice and this is also largely influenced by the internal communication channels that exist. Higher education institutions have stepped up their efforts to transmit information to the students however, this has not always been matched in terms of the favourable perception that students have with there being increasing calls for universities to better adapt to the expectations students have as well as the business and social demands of the public that the higher education institution serves.

Furthermore, Llonch et al (2016) have argued that reality and perception do not always match and that the criticisms stakeholders have of the internal communication channels used by tertiary or higher educational institutions stem from the fact that universities may not always be privy to what the different stakeholders expect from them and that it has been taken for granted by higher educational institutions that the main needs of students is the training or attending lectures however, there is little or inadequate research in finding out the importance of other motivations such as improvements in professional expectations, aspirations of students, living experiences on campus, developing of social relations and

other factors which are generally glossed over by the management of higher educational institutions. However, this places most institutions in a conundrum because students are not the only collective public to which the higher education institution has an obligation and that there are various stakeholders who may have different interests and motivations that do not always coincided with those of the students. In some instances, these interests may even be at variance with each other but there is little or inadequate research on these and so universities must begin to tackle their internal communication as an integral aspect of their activities not merely an afterthought.

The origins of internal communication in universities and its subsequent use therefore remain an area very much under contention with much research still to be done to justify its importance but there is no disputing the fact that it has grown and lent itself to several adaptations based on the needs of the university or institution in question .

### **2.2.3 Internal Communication Channels**

Juholin (2006) states that internal communication channels can be divided into two, namely: close and distant. The close channels are usually direct or face to face and are to colleagues or managers on the same hierarchical level. The direct distant channels could refer to meetings and conferences where communication is directly from management to staff or subordinates but not face to face. These could include but are not limited to newsletters, bulletins, and notices, among others (Chmielecki, 2015).

Considering the evolving technological advancements, higher education institutions must adopt new technologies and implement a social media plan aimed at communicating with students and other stakeholders.

In light of the above, it behoves higher education institutions to use media that is more acceptable by their student populace, who are becoming technologically inclined. Lacayo-

Mendoza and Carmen de Pablos-Heredero, (2016) believe that among students, the most preferred mediums for socializing, networking, and receiving information are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. They argue that when such mediums which remain relevant to students even after school are used, it helps them build relationships that last, and they consider the institution as fulfilling its mission to them and remaining relevant.

In communicating with students, it must also be added that frequent interaction, which allows for feedback and correction of errors, helps in the generation of ideas and problem solving and also decreases the levels of uncertainty that may otherwise be found in complex processes. Therefore, frequent internal communication lays the foundation for other factors that may be used to engender loyalty to the institution.

#### **2.2.4. Accuracy of Internal Communication**

Nelson (2010) and other scholars support the study by Roberts and O'Reilly (1979) that accurate communication of relevant information plays a critical role in the effectiveness of group performance. They further argue that there is great evidence that the various aspects of rich and effective communication, such as the frequency and accuracy over policies and organisational routines, positively impact employees' productivity levels. This, therefore, means it is important for team members to have channels of direct communication since the use of intermediaries presents risks of misinformation and causes delays in time. To ensure the accuracy and richness of any communication, there must be a direct channel that bypasses intermediaries, thereby eliminating the possibility of information distortion and misinformation. This is a finding supported by scholars such as Hoegl and Gemuenden (2001). To achieve this openness, there must be openness, and this openness must foster

top-to-bottom communication and bottom-to-top communication. Therefore, members of management are entreated to be open to the staff and try to make it so that the lower-level staff and employees can easily communicate with them as a way of helping build affection for the organisation. .

Without the avenue for communication to flow both ways, teamwork and cohesion is severely affected. Members of an organisation find themselves at risk of missing out on important information making them feel alienated and not integral to the organisation. This will negatively affect teamwork and can damage the integration of various components of an organisation. The effective application of organisational strategies, human resource policies, and effective alignment of organisational goals and objectives relies greatly on the accuracy and speed of communication. Rich communication is without a doubt an integral part of organisational structure. It also removes the chances of employees hiding important information from one another. (Tourish, 2005).

Lacayo-Mendoza and Carmen de Pablos-Heredero (2016), relying on earlier studies, argue that effective communication is not merely accidental but requires commitment from the various stakeholders involved in a task. The stakeholders should develop and stick to a communication policy that is geared towards problem-solving. In this regard, there should not be a focus merely on blaming others when miscommunication occurs, as this may have negative consequences on their perception of the organisation, ultimately affecting the results they are expected to arrive at. Management members especially must understand that without effectively communicating with their subordinates, they are bound to have issues with coordination and team spirit. This agrees strongly with Laughlin (1988), who posited that communication is a required component to the collaborative solution of problems, and teams will find it much more difficult to resolve an issue without it.

The role of communication in an organisation is so important that when the expectations of one group towards communication are not met, members feel less bound by the collective objectives and goals of the organisation. In the same vein, when the members are of the view that the information flow is geared towards expectations, members have a strong affection for and towards the general group ethos.

### **2.2.5 Internal Communication And Staff Satisfaction**

With the wealth of research available, organizations have recently begun to view internal communication as not just an avenue for the monthly newsletter, but rather as a critical driver of success. Organisations that effectively disseminate their message would have employees who feel valued, and the two could once again be working towards the same goals.

In an attempt to ensure staff satisfaction and affection towards an organisation, there must be an attempt to ensure greater coordination and integration of work in instances where interdependence is needed. To ensure this integration, internal communication must be well implemented. De Pablos et al. (2015) have examined the relationship between work coordination and final results in organisations and found that coordination is integral in getting employees and stakeholders to feel valued in the group. They argued that using a relational coordination model, they identified that communication was absolutely important in helping employees remain loyal to an organisation, among other factors. Their study made it clear that regular and frequent high-quality communication with other support of the organisational objectives and aims also fostered mutual respect among members of an organisation.

Internal communication when well managed is seen as a way of improving the image the employees have of an organisation and an adaptation process that is better tuned to the social

needs and expectations. This is because the whole concept of internal communication is from the management philosophy that is rooted in value creation for stakeholders which requires that management identify what is of importance to each collective, the alternatives that exist to provide it for them and also how to communicate the intentions of management in a way that ensures that the collective feels a part of the group not merely as recipients of information from the top level management. A deeper understanding of the activities and happenings within the organisation will ensure that staff are more satisfied and committed to the goals and ideals of the organisation that they find themselves in. (Alarcón-del-Amo et al. 2016)

Delays in communication tend to have negative implications on the achievement of the final goals of the organisation. It is therefore vital that communication is provided in a timely manner that is, at the moment when it is needed as a way of achieving and fostering teamwork and cohesion among members of an organisation. This pre-supposes that when communication is not timely it affects coordination of group dynamics. Waller (1999) as explains communication as referring to the capacity of team members to understand information, network exchange and the use of these networks to improve the interchange of information. Communication is therefore vital as it serves as the mechanism through which the members of a group interact and bond with each other as a team. The communication style of an organisation has been proven to be directly related to the growth of the organisation therefore a style that is based on open, accurate and transparent communication increases the interest and trust that employees have of the organisation. (Lacayo-Mendoza, A., & Carmen de Pablos-Heredero, 2016).

#### **2.2.6. Barriers to Effective Internal Communication**

Communication is integral to the success of any organisation; however, some challenges mitigate against the effectiveness of communication. These factors go beyond merely recognising them, but there must be an effort to work on them. Koontz (2001) proposes that communication problems are symptoms of more deeply-rooted issues such as poor planning, uncertainty, and others. This lends credence to earlier research by Onuoha (1991), who notes that barriers to effective communication include *overload, badly expressed message, inappropriate language in the working environment, poor listening/decode and premature evaluation arising from lack of understanding, grapevine with informal organisations within organisation, hostility between participants and bureaucracy* (Asma, 2010). If communication barriers are to be tackled, then the perception that communication is easy and simple must be countered, considering perceptual, emotional, language, cultural and physical barriers to communication. A successful address of these barriers is likely to also lead to lasting relationships in the organisation.

### **2.2.7 Internal Communication And Sustenance Of Universities**

In recent years, universities have understood that they need to regard themselves as brands that need to be sold to the community and stakeholders they interact with. They have also realised that they need the goodwill of alumni and students as they help project the institution's visibility and help to generate income or funds for the institution.

In the United Kingdom, it is evident that universities are increasingly using marketing and branding programs to help push themselves as brands (Ivy, 2001; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Bunzel, 2007). Maringe (2010) contends that these attempts by universities to be regarded as marketing brands are largely unsystematic. There is much work to be done on higher education institutions and how they create identity, its impact on academic staff and students as well as the theoretical relationship that underlines these concepts.

It is even more important for universities today to create lasting relationships and endearing memories in students' minds in light of increasing competition for students by the growing number of universities, decreased funding to universities, and government-backed recruitment campaigns. This emphasizes that universities focus on building and developing their brands from inside or internal to outside or external stakeholders.

It is also worth noting that alumni serve many important roles that help to build and grow an institution through word-of-mouth marketing and personal recommendations. It is established that when alumni create positive vibes about an institution on social media, it is highly likely to affect application rates, especially among millennial. At the same time, most institutions also rely on alumni to provide mentoring, internships, and career opportunities to their students. Alumni also contribute positively through donations, attendance to events and payments of dues, and other such affiliation levies that can help institutions to some extent. (*Why Alumni Are Important for Higher Ed Institutions, Signal Vine, 2020*).

As has been noted, there is a lot of research on communication but most of these existing research is largely focused on the communication that occurs between commercial organisations or business managers and their employees mainly ignoring the nature of the relationship that exists between a university and its public usually the graduate and undergraduate students. Existing research has also focused on establishing a link between communication and productivity however, there still remains much to be done with regards to the field of higher education institutions, their internal communication and how it relates to students satisfaction nonetheless, it is an undeniable fact that universities rely a lot on their alumni or students in order to sustain themselves.

### **2.3. Conceptual Framework**

In this study, the Independent Variable is the Communication channels used by the management of the Ghana Institute of Journalism in disseminating information to the students in this case the Master of Arts of Development Communication Students. This study looks at the perception students have of these communication channels.

The channels used by the institution have an effect on the richness of the information being transmitted and this will in turn affect the levels of affection and satisfaction that students have towards the school. This will in turn also affect the future intentions of the students for the institution post graduation.

#### **2.4. Operational Definition of Terms**

Internal communication: This refers to information that is sent out by management intended for students.

Students: this refers to graduate Master of Arts Students for the 2021/21 academic year.

#### **2.5. Relevance of the Study**

The findings from the study contributes to the literature on the the internal communication within the higher education institutions context. The study also provides data to examine further the internal communication strategies aimed at delivering information to students in tertiary institutions. It will help decision-makers identify the perception students have of their communication strategies and help take steps on how to improve them to achieve intended goals and objectives. Finally, the study arouses the interest of other researchers' interest in conducting research in this area of study to add to the existing body of

knowledge. It also provides empirical work on internal communication strategies in the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

## **2.6. Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, literature for the study is gathered from published books, journals, articles, website publications, and other sources and is rightly cited. The theoretical foundation for the study is based on the media richness theory, which outlines the ability of a chosen medium of communication to convey information without the risk of miscommunication. Internal communication is explored, channels of internal communication, as well as the accuracy of internal communication, are all examined.

Literature provides data on the nature of Internal communication, the relevance of internal communication, and the importance of alumni to the sustenance of higher education institutions. Various mediums that can be used for internal communication were also examined, and it was also established that strengthening internal communication mechanisms is a plus to any institution. A conceptual framework is developed based on the evidence gathered from the literature.

From the literature reviewed, it is clear there is limited data on internal communication strategies employed by higher education institutions compared to internal communication strategies of corporate organisations and how these communication mediums help foster affection towards the institution. It is, therefore, necessary to undertake a study of this nature to address this existing gap.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology for the study, the source from which the data were collected, and the related issues addressed in the research processes. Mention is also made of the description of the population and the sampling procedures, the instrument used for collection of data as well as data analysis.

#### **3.1. Methods**

This study used a quantitative approach to explore the students' perception of internal communication and how it affects the intentions and attitudes of the students towards the university post-graduation. A quantitative research approach is used for this study to identify the characteristics of the study variables through the description. The study used a well-

designed questionnaire administered to sampled respondents to provide information to aid in further analysis. The information gathered was expressed in descriptive terms to aid in better understanding and displayed in tables in percentages and frequencies. This method will be ideal because it provides an easy and effective method of collecting data on a range of research questions that can be expressed for better interpretation and comprehension.

### **3.2.0. Research Design**

This design investigated possible relationships among variables without trying to influence those variables. It determined whether and to what extent or the degree a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. This study adopted a survey design. Pilot and Hangle (1995) stipulated that a descriptive survey aims predominantly at observing, describing, and documenting aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs rather than explaining them. This study is quantitative, and selected respondents were allowed to provide responses and data related to the variables of the study and the study objectives for content analysis. A quantitative cross-sectional study approach was used to collect data on study variables at a particular time. The advantages of this study design are that it is economical and efficient; provides descriptive, inferential, and explanatory information, and provides standardized information. A disadvantage of this design is that it results in the likelihood of having a low response rate.

### **3.2.1. Population**

This study's population consists of all 112 Master of Arts Development Communication students at the Ghana Institute of Journalism for the 2020-21 Academic year. These students are of different qualifications with different characteristics and backgrounds but offer a

common programme run by the Institute and rely on the same internal communication mechanisms.

### **3.2.2. Sample Frame**

This is the list from which the sample units will be drawn. The sample frame to be used in the study is the list containing names of students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism. This will aid in ensuring comprehensiveness and accuracy with the sample selected.

### **3.2.3. Sample Techniques**

A probabilistic sampling method, specifically the Simple Random Sampling technique, is employed in this study. It relies on population members who have been randomly selected to respond to the variables of the study. This method ensures less bias in selecting respondents for the survey and ensures the generalization of study findings.

### **3.2.4. Sample Size**

The sample size is a portion out of the study population selected to represent the entire population and is known as the study participants. Since the quantitative approach is employed in this study, the sample size is determined using a well-derived formula.

Using Slovin's formula, 87 respondents were sampled with a well-structured questionnaire. It is computed as  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$ .

Where  $n$  = sample size,  $N$  = study population,  $e$  = Significance level (Margin of error of 0.05 or 95% confidence interval).

### **3.2.5. Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique adopted for this study is the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was used for the institutional survey. Thus, Master of Arts,

Development Communication students at the Ghana Institute of Journalism for the 2020-2021 academic year was identified and contacted specifically for the required data.

### **2.2.6. Data Analysis Techniques**

The results from the respondents were analysed using the SPSS computer software, where data collected was coded into the software and commands given to provide results. Care was taken in entering data, that is, data entered was cross-checked to prevent inputting wrong data. Data was analysed to provide descriptive, inferential, and explanatory information and provides standardized information. The results was displayed in tables in numerical form with accompanying explanations given. The results were then properly classified under each of the objectives of the study to aid in discussions drew conclusions and made some recommendations.

### **3.3 Sources of Data**

The study used both primary and secondary data sources to provide the required responses to the research questions. The primary data source is a questionnaire administered to Master of Arts Students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism. The secondary sources will include literature on the research scope. When gathering information for research, there are two empirical alternatives. (1) Primary data; gathers relevant information for a specific purpose or study, done through interviews, surveys, experiments, or observations. (2) Secondary data; using statistics or information made by some else (Bell, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

This study will use both primary and secondary data sources to provide the required responses to the research questions. The primary data is usually acquired by administering questionnaire, while secondary data is obtainable through related literature on the research scope.

### **3.4. Ethical Issues**

This study involves sensitive issues, and as such, clearance will be sought from appropriate authorities. Permission will be firstly sought from the Ghana Institute of Journalism for clearance to undertake the research. Also, participants will be assured of confidentiality and that their identities will not be revealed.

### **3.5.0 Limitations/ Delimitations**

#### **3.5.1. Limitations**

The research will add to the body of knowledge on internal communication within higher education institutions; however, a possible limitation is that it explores internal relations only within the context of a higher education institution in a public university. It examines a purposeful sample and may not be generalizable to other contexts or types of higher education. One major limitation of the research is that it is a case study survey focusing on one university. The conclusions and results may not be easily applicable to other institutions.

Also, since all lessons are being conducted online, the administration of the questionnaire may not achieve a hundred percent retrieval.

#### **3.5.2. Delimitations**

Internal communication is a broad term used to describe the exchange of information among people of different levels or internal members within the same organization. The study is delimited to the communication between management of the Ghana Institute of Journalism and Graduate Students. The study does not consider undergraduate students or employees of the institution, such as lecturers and administrative staff.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND STUDENTS' FUTURE INTENTION FOR THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM: A CASE THE 2021 OF MASTER OF ARTS DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION STUDENTS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the analysis from the data obtained. The discussions of the findings from the study was done under the following sub headings: the mediums through which students access information from the University; The perception students have of the University's internal communication mechanism; How students authenticate the information they receive.

#### **4.1.0 Analysis of Key Findings.**

##### **Demographic Data**

This section presents data on the background characteristics of respondents such as sex, student status and age of respondents .

The sex of the respondents were coded as follows

**Table 1**  
**Sex of Respondents**

Description (Sex)	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	44.8%
Female	48	55.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

From Table 1 above, it is clear that out a total of 87 respondents, Males were 39 representing a 44.8% of respondents while the Females were 48 representing a percentage of 55.2% of the respondents.

The study also sought to find out the status of the students with regards to whether they were Regular or Weekend students and the results have been coded in Table 4.2 below as follows

**Table 2**  
**Status of Student**

Description (Student Status )	Frequency	Percentage
Regular	28	32.2%
Weekend	59	67.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

From Table 2 above, it is evident that 59 of the respondents representing 67.8% are Weekend students while 28 representing 32.2% of the respondents are Regular students. This shows that the more Weekend Students filled the questionnaire as compared to Regular students.

Also, the age ranges of the respondents were taken and recorded in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 3**

**Age of Respondents**

Description (Age range of respondents )	Frequency	Percentage
21-30	40	46%
31-40	39	44.8%
41-50	8	9.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

The age ranges were classified into four groups namely ages 20-30, ages 31-40, ages 41-50 and 51 to 60. In answering the questionnaire, it became obvious that 40 people representing 46% of the respondents were in the age range of 21-30, 39 people representing 44.8% are

in the age bracket of 31-40 years of age and 8 that is 9.2% are in the age bracket of 41-50. There were no respondents in the age bracket of 51-60.

#### **4.2 Research Question 1: What are the mediums through which students access information from the University**

This question sought to find out the various channels that are utilized by students to access information from the University. To answer this question, data from the first section of the questionnaire was used and respondents were to tick from a list of given options.

**Table 4**

#### **Channels used to access information related to GIJ**

Medium of Communication	Frequency	Percentage
Academic Affairs Unit	5	5.7%
Bulletin Boards	1	1.1%
Facebook	2	2.3%
Course/ Class Representative	1	1.1%
GRASAG Secretariat	12	13.8%
Official Website	14	16.1%
WhatsApp	52	59.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

From the data above, it is clear that 52 of 87 respondents representing a percentage of 59.8% respondents relied on WhatsApp to access information from the Ghana Institute of Journalism while 1 each representing 1.1% relied Bulletin Boards and Course Reps. 2 respondents representing 2.3% also relied on Facebook while 12 respondents representing 13.8% relied on Facebook and 14 representing 16.1% relied on Official Website. It can thus be deduced that overall, most respondents relied on Internet and Social Media that is Facebook, The Website and Whatsapp platforms as opposed to the traditional means such as Bulletin boards and the Academic Affairs unit. This is in line with earlier research by Lacayo-Mendoza and Carmen de Pablos-Heredero (2016) which proposes that higher education institutions must use media that is more acceptable to the student with Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and messaging applications more commonly used by students. They further argued that such media are relevant because they allow students to give and receive instant feedback thereby making it a popular choice for students. Alge et (2003) also added that virtual modes of communication are growing and have become more acceptable to the upcoming student generation and the data from the table above seems to lend credence to this.

Furthermore, the greater reliance on WhatsApp which offers the opportunity for instant feedback and questioning is in line with Hoegl and Gemeunden (2001) that students would rather use mediums that provide instant feedback.

#### **4.3 Research Question 2: How do students perceive the University's Internal Communication Mechanisms?**

The next research question was centred on identifying the perception students have of the Internal communication mechanisms of the University and to identify these, the second section of the questionnaire was relied upon. Most questions in this category were examined using the Likert scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

First, respondents perception of the University Official website was examined to determine how relevant they thought it to be.

**Table 5**  
**Students Perception of the University Website**

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Frequency (Out of 87)</b>				
	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>NAND</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
Range of information is high	2	12	54	9	10
Information on the site is current	2	16	38	19	12
Information on the site is useful	5	26	36	9	11
The website is engaging and attractive	1	6	59	9	12
The website is compatible with any device	2	20	32	18	15

Source: Field Data, September 2021

**Key:** SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NAND= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

From the table above, it is evident that for the various parameters that were examined, higher number of respondents Neither Agree nor Disagree with the parameters that were examined. This gives the impression that a larger number do not rely a lot on the University Official Website for information and this agrees with the information from Table 4.3.1 where only 14 out of 87 respondents admitted relying on information from the Website. This agrees with earlier findings by Alarcon-del-Amo et al who posit that universities internal communication should be engaging and entertaining as though customer oriented if it is to be patronised by students. Under the parameter which sought to examine how entertaining the university website is, 1 respondent strongly agree, 6 agreed while 59 were indifferent. 9 respondents disagreed while 12 disagreed this shows that among the student populace, the website is perceived to be non engaging or entertaining.

**Table 6**

**Timely nature of information Release**

GIJ issues information in a timely manner	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	1	1.1
Agree	6	6.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	39	44.8
Disagree	19	21.8
Strongly disagree	22	25.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

De Pablos et al. (2015) argue that when information is perceived to be timely and constant, it increases the loyalty and feelings of belonging that are likely to be felt by members of an organisation towards it and table 4.6 shows that out of 87 respondents, 1 strongly agreed and 6 strongly agreed that the information from the school was received in a timely manner while 19 disagree and 22 strongly disagreed. A total of 39 respondents neither agree nor disagree.

The Media Richness theory posits that the richness of a Media is also determined by the ease or frequency for feedback to be received from both the issuer and receiver of information therefore to measure the extent to which students receive feedback when they make enquiries from the school. A Likert scale was used to measure this variable and the results of which have been computed in Table 4.7 below:

**Table 7**

**Feedback on enquiries made**

There is instant feedback for enquiries made	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	1	1.1
Agree	2	23
Neither Agree nor Disagree	51	58.6
Disagree	15	17.2
Strongly disagree	18	20.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

From the Table 7 above, it 3 respondents (1 strongly agree, 2 agree) that there is feedback for enquiries that are made with the Ghana Institute of Journalism while 51 did not agree or disagree. 15 disagree while 18 strongly disagree. The findings of this table would indicate

that a greater number of students do not believe that there is prompt feedback. Considering the Media Richness Theory by Daft and Lengel (1984), that Media must provide feedback in order to be considered as Rich by the recipients, it would suggest that the media is seen as low in richness with regards to feedback. This further supports Daft and Lengel (1987) that formal documents such as memos are generally seen to have little room for feedback and are therefore seen as low in media richness while face to face meetings are considered the richest form of media that exists.

#### **4.4 Research question 3: How do students authenticate the information they receive**

The third research question sought to determine if students perceived there were ways and means of authenticating information they receive from the school.

**Table 8**

**Processes for accessing official information**

There are well-established processes for accessing official information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	1	1.1
Agree	4	4.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	43	49.4
Disagree	22	25.3
Strongly disagree	17	19.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

From Table 8 , 17 respondents strongly disagree that there are well established procedures for accessing official information, 22 disagreed, while 43 neither agreed or disagreed. 1 respondent strongly agreed while 4 agreed thereby showing that most of the respondents were not convinced that there were clear cut methods for accessing official information from the Institute.

#### **4.5 Discussions of Key Findings**

In the previous chapters, i.e. chapters 1,2 and 3, this study diagnosed the research problem by providing the general overview and background to the study including statement of problem, research objectives and questions, scope of the study, justification of the study as well as the broad narrative of the study. It also examined the existing empirical literatures with the intention of establishing the knowledge gaps. It provided methodological rigour, setting out the research design including methods, population and sample size and sampling techniques. Here it is right to do some prognosis in the light of the objectives and the guiding assumption of this study as follows. This study has two-fold objectives namely, broad and specific. Broadly speaking,

The research sought to identify the following:

1. What communication channels are used by students to access information from the university?
2. How do students perceive the Ghana Institute of Journalism's internal communication channels?
3. What are the future intentions of Master of Arts, Development Communication students towards the Ghana Institute of Journalism after graduation?

Moreover, the basic assumption of this study is that, the communication channels used by the Ghana institute of Journalism have a bearing on the students intentions for the institution after graduation

Accordingly this study hypothesises that the communication channels used by the Ghana institute of Journalism have a bearing on the students intentions for the institution after graduation

Going by the literature already discussed in the second chapter of this work, Media Richness of a communication medium is examined based primarily on some criteria which include: Feedback Capability, utilisation of multiple cues/ various communication channels, language variety and personal focus/ source. (Daft & Lengel, 1987, Sevinc & D’Ambra, 2021).

The various responses by respondents in relation to the various parameters and the numbers that indicated strong disagreement would support the media being low in terms of richness.

**Table 9**

**Intention to register officially with the alumni association**

<b>I will register with the alumni association</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agree	1	1.1
Agree	11	12.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	51	58.6
Disagree	10	11.5
Strongly disagree	14	16.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

The table above indicates the extent to which respondents were willing to register with the alumni association on their own volition. 1 respondent strongly agreed and 11 agreed while 10 disagreed and 14 showed strong disagreement. 51 respondents did not show either agreement or disagreement. This indicates that the number of people who choose not to join the association comes to 24 while those who will join comes to 12, which is half of those who indicated a willingness to join the alumni association

**Table 10**

**Willingness to attend events on campus**

<b>I will attend events on campus</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agree	1	1.1
Agree	10	11.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	46	52.9
Disagree	12	13.8
Strongly disagree	18	20.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

From Table 10 the number of respondents who indicated a willingness to attend events on campus as alumni is 11 (strongly agree and agree) while those who disagreed add up to thirty (disagree 12 and strongly disagree 18). 46 respondents did not agree or disagree.

**Table 11**

### Possible financial commitments to the school

Parameter	Frequency (Out of 87)				
	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
I will make financial contributions to the school	1	5	49	13	19
I will patronise GIJ paraphernalia and souvenirs	3	8	52	5	19
I will offer mentor-ship to students	6	19	42	8	12

Source: Field Data, September 2021

**Key:** SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, NAND= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, D=Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The table 11 above shows that with the financial contributions to the school respondents did not show much agreement. 1 respondent strongly agreed and 5 agreed however, 13 disagreed and 19 strongly disagreed. 49 respondents did not agree or disagree. This shows that with regards to financial contributions, the number that expressed readiness to help is not as high as those who disagreed.

Also, with regards to the patronising of paraphernalia, 3 strongly agreed while 8 agreed to patronise paraphernalia from the Ghana Institute of Journalism. 5 respondents disagree and 19 showed strong disagreement with the intention to purchase paraphernalia.

Concerning the offering of mentor-ship to students which is seen as being of benefit to the students but not the school specifically, it is seen that 6 respondents strongly agree and 19 agree making a total of 25 respondents, 42 respondents chose not to either agree or disagree, 8 respondents disagreed and 12 strongly disagreed making a total of 20 respondents.

**Table 12**

### Intentions to pursue another degree at GIJ

<b>I will pursue another degree at GIJ</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Agree	7	8.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	51	58.6
Disagree	8	9.2
Strongly disagree	21	24.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Source: Field Data, September 2021

From the table above which was aimed at identifying the intentions of students to pursue further degree at Ghana Institute of Journalism, no respondent chose strongly agree, 7 chose to agree, 51 respondents neither agree nor disagree, 8 disagreed and 21 strongly disagreed.

A critical examination of the responses by students shows that the Ghana Institute of Journalism utilises several channels for communication including both the traditional and electronic media which is indicative of their willingness to apply varied techniques in a bid to be more responsive to the needs of their public that is the student population however, irrespective of this, the low responses indicate general dissatisfaction by the student populace with the information channels used and this is in tandem with existing research by Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2016, p. 113) who argue that although image and reputation has been identified as one of the main factors affecting higher education choice and this is also largely influenced by the internal communication channels that exist. Higher education institutions have stepped up their efforts to transmit information to the students however, this has not always been matched in terms of the favourable perception that students have with there being increasing calls for universities to better adapt to the expectations students have as well as the business and social demands of the public that the higher education institution serves.

## **4.6 Conclusions**

The presentation and analysis of the findings demonstrate that items in the questionnaire, identified to measure the channels of communication used by the Ghana Institute of Journalism, the perception students have of the University's internal mechanism measures and how students perceive the feedback mechanisms of the University. The number of respondents who chose to agree with the items that were being measured indicate low levels of satisfaction with the University internal communication mechanisms.

In identifying the students' perception of feedback it was generally observed that the respondents exhibited low levels of satisfaction with the feedback mechanisms in place in the University with regards to communication with students.

The findings also showed that there was general apathy or low levels of intention to help the tertiary institution upon completion. This is evident in the low level of response towards intention to join the alumni association, patronise the paraphernalia of the university and also attend events on campus that are meant for alumni to attend.

However, the large number of respondents who did not choose to either agree or disagree with the parameters being measured shows that must in line with existing data on Internal Communication in Higher Education; the responses do not provide enough evidence to form conclusive arguments.

The next chapter will draw conclusion on the major findings in the study and recommendations will also be made.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0. Introduction.**

In chapters 1,2,3 and 4, this study diagnosed the research problem and provided some predictions in chapter 4 in order to suggest appropriate suggestions to address the research problem here in chapter 5.

This research hypothesises that the communication channels used by the Ghana institute of Journalism have a bearing on the students intentions for the institution after graduation and therefore sought to answer the following questions:

1. What communication channels are used by students to access information from the university?
2. How do students perceive the Ghana Institute of Journalism's internal communication channels?
3. What are the future intentions of Master of Arts, Development Communication students towards the Ghana Institute of Journalism after graduation?

## **5.1 Summary of Key Findings**

This study focused on identifying the internal communication channels of the Ghana Institute of Journalism, students perception of the internal communication mechanisms and the intentions of the students for the school post graduation. In this study, questionnaires were constructed, administered and data collated and analysed to prove a significant relationship between internal communication channels and students intention for the school post graduation.

The findings reveal that there were more females (48) than males (39), the number of weekend students (59) were more than the regular students (28) and also only eight respondents were in the age bracket of 41 to 50 years. The study showed that among the respondents of the study, a greater number relied on social media specifically WhatsApp to access information from the school while some also relied on the Website with the least numbers relying on the information from the course rep and the bulletin boards. However, what was observed was that when it came to assessing the effectiveness of various channels of communication, most respondents would rather choose to neither agree nor disagree with the comments given while those who tended to choose the information as being low in richness were perceived to be more than those who saw information to be rich. Nonetheless, absolute conclusions cannot be reached unless a more extensive study is done to ascertain the impact of the communication mechanisms on students satisfaction and intentions for the school.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that;

The Ghana Institute of Journalism has various channels by which it disseminates information to the students populace including both computer mediated medium and the

traditional ones however, there are less face to face interactions which could be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. The channels of communication are varied however, their main drawback is that their mode of transmission is mainly one - way sender to receiver medium instead of two way hence feedback and means for transmitting information to the management is not well known to the students.

The researcher noticed that the number of students who strongly disagreed to pursue another degree at the Ghana Institute of Journalism is higher than those who agreed and so there must be efforts to identify why this is so and also improve the communication mechanisms of the university.

It must be stressed that the origins of internal communication means it is treated with mistrust by academics who see it as a purely Public Relations Stunt meant for the corporate world however, if we can foster students satisfaction for their institutions of higher education then efforts must be made to treat internal communication as a key component of the activities of any institution of Higher Education.

### **5. 3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study it is deemed necessary to make the following recommendations:

The Ghana Institute of Journalism consciously inform students of the channels of communication available to them and officially notify them of the channels that the school provides for feedback and information dissemination. This would reduce the feelings of apathy on the part of the students

Secondly, the university can also set up dedication social media channels that are geared towards disseminating information to the entire student populace as a means of getting more

up to date with current trends as social media pages provide room for immediate feedback and real time interactions which will help foster greater satisfaction towards the institution.

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**APPENDIX**

**SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE/ INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS OF MASTER OF ARTS OF GHANA  
INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, ACCRA.**

I am a postgraduate student of the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) currently pursuing an M.A in Development Communication. The subject of my dissertation is “Students’ Perception of the Internal Communication Mechanism of the Ghana Institute of Journalism and how this affects their intentions for the school after graduation.

This questionnaire will take approximately **five (5)** minutes to fill out. This work is purely for academic purposes and you are assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of all responses.

**SECTION A**

Please tick to indicate the channels you use to access information related to GIJ

	Yes	No
WhatsApp		
Facebook		
Bulletin Boards		
Official Website		

GRASAG Secretariat		
Academic Affairs		

Please indicate any other channels you use to access information that are not indicated in the table above.

.....

### SECTION B

You are encouraged to visit the university website to answer the questions in this section.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The range of information on the site is high					
Information on the website is current					
Information on the site is useful					
The website is entertaining					
The website is easy to navigate					
The website is engaging and attractive					
The website is compatible (loads properly) on any device					

## SECTION C

### STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
GIJ issues information in a timely manner					
There are well established processes for accessing official information					
Information from GIJ is clear and easy to understand					
There are clear channels for receiving feedback from the school					
There is instant feedback for any enquiries made					

**SECTION D**

**STUDENTS' POST-GRADUATION INTENTIONS**

Based on my experience at GIJ as a student, I am likely to participate in these events as an alumnus

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Register officially with the alumni association					
Attend events on campus					
Make financial contributions to the school					
Promote GIJ/ GIJ related content on my personal social media handles					
I will offer mentor-ship to students if I am in the position to do so					
I will patronise GIJ paraphernalia and souvenirs					
I will pursue another degree at GIJ if the opportunity avails itself					

**SECTION E**

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Please Indicate your sex**

Male( )

Female ( )

**Kindly tick to indicate your age range**

20 - 30 ( )

31- 40 ( )

41- 50 ( )

51-60 ( )

**Kindly indicate whether regular or weekend option**

Regular ( )

Weekend ( )

**Do you have intentions to pursue further degrees?**

Yes ( )

No ( )

Maybe ( )