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THE ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE. A CASE STUDY OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

BY

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STUDENT'S DECLARATIONS

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work towards the award Masters of Art in Public Relations and that, to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the institution, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of dissertation laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

This research project is submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family for the love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Almighty God for his Grace, Mercies and Favor for making this project a success. I sincerely appreciate my supervisor, Dr. Mrs, Mavis Essandoh for her support, expertise, knowledge, and constructive feedback offered throughout this thesis preparation. To all our friends and course mates, I say thank you for the good time we shared together during our studies. Finally, I express my sincere appreciation to my family for support throughout my stay in school.

ABSTRACT

Organizations can operate successfully, only if effective organizational communication takes place. One major component of organizational communication is internal communication. Internal communication is important for the successful functioning of organizations having various departments as it plays a massive role in organizational development. Internal communication binds the entire communication together and allows employees of various departments to work cooperatively to meet organizational goals. The main aim of this paper was to explore the role internal communication plays in improving employee performance. The discussion was based on series of empirical studies of communication and employee performance. The study shows that internal communication contributes to effective flow of information among employees within an organization, increases trust among employees and management as well as improves employees understanding of organizations and its products, ethics, culture and external environment. Internal communication also contributes significantly to career development of employees. However, the study noted some challenges to an effective internal communication in organizations and thus recommends that it is important for organizations to pay critical attention to internal communication as it influences not just employee performance but overall organizational performance. This is because, internal communication is necessary to monitor company operations, positive job performance and sustain ethical and behavior issues of employees making them dedicated and loyal for implementing outstanding performance to fulfill mission and vision of organization.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document introduces the entire overview of the study which includes background of the study, objectives of the study, problem statement and significance of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In today's corporate world, one of the key factors to attaining high levels of employee productivity and performance is effective internal communication. One of the major components of communication in an organization is internal communication and this is subtly explained by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) in a statement as they referred to internal communication as the lifeblood of an organization. According to them, it is very important for every organization have an effective internal communication because internal communication can act as a source of exchanging knowledge and ideas given that information is the basis of communication.

The importance of internal communication within an organization goes far beyond the training of employees with effective communication skills to also addressing the communication needs and challenges faced by organizations.

Zaremba (2003) defined communication as a central and not a peripheral component of organizational effectiveness. It is not a frill. It is vital; communication is a pervasive activity in organizations. It is not something that only some people in organizations must do or something that occurs infrequently; internal communication is multifaceted and deceptively simple matter".

In relation to our area of study, Graphic Communications group limited, internal communication was not really considered when the company started exactly 70 years ago. The main objective of Graphic as at the time it was established was to churn out news for the masses. Management as at the time did not consider internal communication as something that really mattered since each and every employee was aware of what exactly they were supposed to do. To them, knowing exactly what to do could help them achieve productivity and in turn achieve their set objective. After about 50 years down the line, the company decided it was important to set up a corporate communications department which would not only deal with communicating with their external publics, but also focus more on their internal publics who could be described as the machine that drove the organization.

With the establishment of the organization, the company experienced a surge in employee productivity because communication was mostly tailored with the employees in mind using various tools and channels to communicate to them.

Yates (2006), defined the term communication as the technology and systems used for sending and receiving messages and may include channels such as newsletters, circulation materials, surveys, face-to-face interactions, email, hotlines, suggestion boxes, Intranet, Internet, telephone calls, video conferences, memos, letters, notice boards, formal presentations, reports, open forums, blogs, and wikis (Yates, 2006).

The corporate communications unit of Graphic in a bid to improve upon their communication to drive productivity, adapted to some of these tools and systems outlined by Yates (2006).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Most organizations have very poor internal communication structures and strategies that do not help communicate the organization's visions appropriately. In view of this employees in such organizations become less productive in their jobs thereby affecting the overall performance of the organization (Cornelissen, 2008).

Despite the fact that all organizations have their own structure, certain structures are so rigid that they do allow the employees to be less productive.

Internal communication is often overlooked at organizations, yet it is crucial for all type of organizations (Oliver, 1997). Past research has focused on and provided information on the relationship existing between communication on one hand and general organizational effectiveness and performance on the other.

Most past research has shown internal communication to influence overall organizational efficiency, and has made little reference or completely neglected its impact on individual job performance.

Based on this, the problem of this study would be finding the role internal communication plays in enhancing employee performance in Graphic Communications Group Limited.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research is to mainly describe and explain how internal communication within Graphic Communications Group Limited, enhances the performance of the employees

1. To find out the relationship between employee performance and internal communication.

2. To find out if internal communication has a positive impact on the employee performance effort in the organization.
3. To find out if employees face certain challenges due to internal communication in the organization.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between internal communication and employee performance?
2. Does internal communication have an effect on employee performance effort?
3. What are some of the challenges employees face with regard to internal communication?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is expected to be relevant to members of the dominant coalition of the Graphic Communications Group Limited, who are mostly at the core of decision making process in the organization. It would also enable top management determine exactly what kind of communication strategy to draft in order to bring out the best in their employees which would go a long way to enhance productivity.

In addition, this study is expected to add up to the already existing literature on the area of study, as well as a valuable source off reference for future researchers.

Recommendations that will be provided by this study will help not just corporate communications but public relations practitioners who will know what and how to get the best out of the worker or employees of an organization thus improving upon their efficiency.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This study is divided into major five chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the introduction, background of the study, statement of the research problem, research objectives, research questions, and rationale of the study. Chapter 2 focuses on the review empirical studies done on organizational communication with a focus on internal communication and employee productivity. Chapter 3 gives an account of the methodology that would have been used if the researcher had gone to the field without the outbreak of the novel virus, Covid-19. Chapter 4 focuses on the findings of previous related studies. Chapter 5 finally presents summary of findings, give recommendations and make suggestions for future studies as well as limitations of the study.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the introduction, background and content of the study, statement of the research problem, research objectives, research questions, rationale of the study provides a brief overview of the research questions, the rationale for undertaking the research, and scope of the study.

1.8 CHAPTER TRANSITION

After getting an overview of how the research is going to be done, chapter 2 would focus more on reviewing empirical studies done on organizational communication with a focus on internal communication and employee productivity

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This section covers the literature review of the study, discusses the theories that serve as theoretical framework for the study, and review related studies.

2.1 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF EXISTING LITERATURE

2.1.1 DEFINING COMMUNICATION

According to, Shonubi and Akintaro (2019), communication has been defined differently by different scholars hence, there is no single definition of communication agreed upon by scholars. Psychologists, sociologists, medical practitioners, philosophies and communication specialists. They define communication based on their orientations and perspectives. Communication is from a Latin word-*communi*s, which means common or shared understanding.

Communication is a determined effect to establish commonness between a source and receiver (Schramn, 1965). Whatever is being shared could be associated with knowledge, experience, thought, ideas, suggestions, opinions, feelings among others (Shonubi & Akintaro, 2019). Ramah (1985) adds that, communication as the transmission and reception of ideas, feelings and attitudes verbally or non-verbally which is intended to produce a favorable response.

Folarin (2003) defines communication as “any means by which a thought is conveyed from one person to another”. Communication is the process by which any person or a group shares and impacts information with/to another person (or group) so that both people (or groups) clearly understood one another (Soola, 2000). Ode (1999) adds that, communication is not just giving

information, it is the giving of understandable information and receiving and hence, the transferring of a message to another party so that it can be understood and acted upon.

Rogers (1976) presents another definition of communication and perceives it as "a process in which participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding". For Draft (2000), communication is the process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more people usually with the intention to motivate on influence behavior. Communication refers to the exchange of information between a sender (source) and a receiver (destination) so that it is received, understood and leads to action (Obamiro, 2008).

In sum, as noted by Baran (2004), communication is the transmission of a message from a source to a receive or the process of creating shared meaning. The above definitions show that, there are various definitions for communication, as there are different disciplines. While some definitions are human centered, others are not.

2.1.2 FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

According to Shonubi and Akintaro (2019), there are three major forms of communication commonly used by managers in organization which include:

1. **Written Communication**: this refers to the transmission of information in an organization with the use of letters, memos, policy manuals, notices, books, etc.
2. **Oral communication**: this refers to verbal dialogue between two or more parties in an organization. It is a face-to-face interaction and the mostly used kind of communication channel during conferences, seminars, meetings, interviews, etc. It is more effective because there is a high level of interaction between the sender and the receiver.

3. **Non Verbal Communication:** this refers to using any form other than written and oral communication to transmit information. This includes the use of facial expressions, body movement and personal appearance to pass information. Important categories are behavior, physical distance, tone of voice and object language.

2.1.3 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

The following are importance of communication from the study of Moorhead and Griffin (1989) which state that manager transmits information for a variety of reasons as highlighted in Obamiro (2008):

- To achieve coordinated action
- To express feelings and emotion
- To share information regarding:
    - Organizational goals
    - Task directions
    - Results of efforts
    - Decision making
- To achieve effective control
- To encourage staff participation in decision making
- To create a good public image and reputation for an organization

2.1.4 DEFINING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

There have been several definitions in existing literature on internal communication in trying to describe and understand the communication phenomena. Welch and Jackson (2007) observe internal communication from a stakeholder approach and define it as “the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations”.

According to Trahant (2008), internal communication is stated as the exchange of communication (informal and formal) between top hierarchy members and employees within an organization. In order words, it exists between leaders, managers and employees – or peer-to-peer, from leader-to-leader or employee-to-employee.

De Ridder (2004) notes that, the focus of internal communication is geared towards connecting employees as well as groups to simplify the realization of collective interest of an organization in general. For Welch and Jackson (2007), when effective internal communication is critical for successful organization, it affects the ability of managers to engage employees and achieve objectives. Similarly, when the same internal communication is apt, it ensures employee commitment to achieving radical business results by helping improve collaboration, productivity and performance.

According to Otoo (2015), internal communication tends to exhibit what an organization stands for, the purpose of its existence, who the various clients are, the manner in which their workloads are accomplished and the chain of reporting among members. Thus communication in an

organization serves as an adhesive that tightens all acts of the organization and help make its activities clearer (Otoo, 2015).

2.1.5 PATTERNS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication takes place within organizations to coordinate organizational resources. And, it conveys information through letters, memos, circulars, etc, to employees. It is divided into two main dimensions; vertical (upward and downward) and horizontal. The vertical communication transmits information among different levels in the organizational structure. The horizontal communication also transmits information among people, divisions, departments and units within the operational structure.

a) Horizontal Communication:

Horizontal Communication refers to the employee communication across the same level in an organization (Okyere, 2011). It is also called lateral communication. It is the transmission of message along the same level in an organization. This occurs between team members, between different teams and employees on the same or similar level.

Ramdhani et al (2017) note that horizontal communication coordinates the activities of different departments in the organization and this helps in developing stronger relationship for employees in both similar department and different departments. They further add that, an effective horizontal communication decreases misunderstanding and conflict in the organization and increases the network and assists employees in performing their jobs (Ramdhani, et al, 2017).

It usually produces a higher quality of information exchange as it occurs directly between employees working in the same level (Mutuku, et al, 2014). Mutuku, et al, (2014) add that**,**

horizontal communication affords employees the opportunity to express their views and opinions which enhances the involvement of employees in the organization and improves employee performance.

According to Shonubi and Akintaro (2019), the use of horizontal communication is on the increase because of the interactive electronic communication technologies such as e-mail and phone messages that greatly enhance horizontal communication by making it possible to establish leaning communities and virtual teams of employees who work together even different locations.

b) Vertical Communication:

Vertical communication is an organization communication that involves two different movements, that is, from "up down" and from "down to up" along the organizational hierarchy. It comprises downward and upward communication.

i. Upward Communication

According to Okyere (2011), upward communication is a communication from subordinates to their superiors in the organization. In upward communication, communication message is transmitted from bottom to top along the organizational hierarchy. This frequently happens when subordinates request for opinions from their superiors. Giri and Kumar (2010) notes that, upward communications triggers decision from the top management.

Upward communication promotes cooperation and gains support from the superiors. Upward communication enables employees express their feelings about jobs and procedures in the organization (Ince & Gul, 2011). Aside that, upward communication also reflects the ability of employees in performing their jobs (Giri and Kumar, 2010). For example, subordinates know the expectations of their superiors and discuss with them in relation to job interest and future career

development. Thus, superiors and subordinates are able to work cohesively to produce better results and attain excellent performance (Hee et al, 2019).

ii. Downward Communication

According to Okyere (2011), downward communication is a communication from superiors to subordinates in the organization. In downward communication, the message is transmitted from top to bottom along the organizational hierarchy. Also, in downward communication, superiors usually share information with their lower level employees or subordinates (Hartog, 2012). This ensures that employees clearly understand the organization goals clearly (Ajala, 2012).

Verghese (2017) the more information is shared, the more productive the employee is expected. Thus, an effective downward communication improves leadership communication by sharing regular updates in the organization (Shonubi and Akintaro, 2016].

According to Hartog (2012), superiors who provide subordinates with useful and accurate information may possibly reduce uncertainties among them. And, this makes the employees understand the reasons for management decision (Hartog, 2012).

Hee et al, (2019) add that, downward communication transfers work-related information to the subordinates effectively and ensure employees work for the best interest of the organization. In essence, superior could also use downward communication to provide feedback on employee performance so that individuals are able to improve it from time to time (Hee et al, 2019).

2.1.6 EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employee performance involves the achievement of each employee in accordance with the organization's regulations, requirements and expectation. According to El-Zeiny (2012), employee performance is a behavior of an employee when he or she is performing a job or task. Adewale,

Abodunde and Folorunso (2014) adds that employee performance is an outcome produced by the employees in the organization.

The contribution of employees on a job is the most important factor for development and excellence in organizatiosn (Korkaew & Suthinee, 2012). Rich et al, (2010) identified two types of employee performance for organizational effectiveness: *task performance* and *contextual performance*. Task performance refers to behaviors that are directly involved in activities that provide indirect support for the organization's core technical processes (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997). On the other hand, contextual performance refers to the individual efforts that are not directly related to their main task functions (Werner, 2000). However, these behaviors are important because they shape the organizational, social, and psychological contexts serving as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes (Otoo, 2015).

Employee performance helps to enhance the productivity of the organization by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of tasks. Excellent employee performance creates outcomes like high quality and high productivity among employees in the organization (Hee, et al, 2018). The way an organization communicates with its employee reflects the performance of its employees. An effective communication allows employees in an organization to become productive and efficient (Verghese, 2017).

In the operations of organizations, employees perform different jobs depending on the nature of the organization and they mainly perform tasks like production, storage, manufacturing, transportation, marketing, purchasing, distribution, promotion of business, finance and accounting, human resource, research and public relations (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). All these activities

are interconnected to achieve organizational targets. According to Macey and Schneider (2008), the performance of employees on different jobs in close coordination, is needed for success of the organization. These jobs are to be performed by the employees properly so they can give their best output at the job which will in turn have a great impact on the total production and progress of the organization (Otoo, 2015).

2.1.7 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Several professionals have expressed diverse opinions on communication competency used as a predictor of employee success. The importance of communication cannot be denied for organizations as applied to their ability to influence the bottom line as found in growing evidence linked with work productivity (Muda et al, 2014). With effective communication, a company can have a good coordination among the teams or units in an organization whereby the absence of it will reflect problems in running business operations or critically cause the damage between individuals or employees.

According to Chen (2008), the parties involved in communication processes need to possess both basic skills and abilities for the appropriate understanding of communication message, and furthermore, it depends on the facilities available in the organizations and the actions of managers, to see the acceptability of information in order to have an accurate deliverance.

A research by Hunt and Ebeling (1983) found that a relationship existed between communication and improved employee attitudes. The implementation of a structured communication program resulted in a positive change in the workforce. However, they also purported that the change in

attitude could also be attributed to employees feeling appreciated once the communication program was implemented.

Femi (n.d) conducted a study on "The Effect of Communication on Workers' Performance in Selected Organizations. In Lagos State, Nigeria". He saw internal communication as an important component of organization's project. This is because, it was assumed the global world has become widespread that, most organizations lobby to meet their needs with a smaller resource through communication. Femi's (n/d) research examined the substantial relationship in communication and workers' performance in some designated organizations. Statistics for the research were gathered through questionnaire with sample populace of 120 respondents. The outcome of the research revealed the relationship between effective communication and workers' performance, productivity and commitment. Per the outcome showed in the study, a recommendation was made for managers to communicate with employees consistently and regularly to improve workers' commitment and performance.

Ainobushoborozi (2013), similarly did a study which examined the impact of effective internal communication on labor productivity in civil engineering projects with a case study of Kampala Central division. Multinomial logit (MNL) estimation technique was employed to measure the existing relationship between effective communication and labor productivity, and other explanatory variables include work duration spent in a company, educational qualifications, timely information on changes at work, cooperation at work and adequate training provided to employees. The findings showed that asking for clarity in communication, cooperation at work to get tasks completed and timely information about changes affecting work are statistically meaningful to labor productivity in civil engineering projects. He stressed that in order to attain the targeted

productivity level, managers should ensure clarity of any instruction at work, provide adequate training to employees, ensure cooperation at work by providing incentives and finally develop a good communication plan to ensure timely information delivery especially on changes affecting work.

In a research by Argenti (1998), he talks of changes in organizations that affect employees and in this regard, identified a study conducted by the Conference Board, a research organization, in which the objective of the study was to determine from over 200 business organizations what they considered effective internal communication and how it affects employees. The opinions gotten from the study indicated that internal communication improve employees' morale, inform them about organizational changes, and establish a significant positive relationship between management and employees. The study further shows that when there is effective internal communication, it will be easier for employees to understand the organization they are working for, hence contributing to improving their performance towards the attainment of the organizations' goals.

For Yamaguchi (2009) there is a significant relationship between internal communication and trust. According to Yamaguchi (2009), the communication of bad news or negative information such as failure of proposals or low organizational outcomes, could indirectly results in the development of a poor and untrustworthy perception of employees about management and the organization as a whole. On the other hand, good communication between management and employees and increasing organizational successes leads to good results in the organization. He further explains that good communication can change the attitude of employees for the desired results, which is invariably, becoming more performant and productive. Thus, an effective internal

communication decreases the levels of uncertainty in the organization and enhances trust, increases job performance and fosters employees' commitment and loyalty towards work.

2.1.8 ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

For communication and information to circulate within an organization, there must be some underlying purposes for which that information moves and this constitutes one of the roles of internal communication.

Erikson (1992), mentioned that internal communication can be divided into five different functions. *Work communication* is the communication needed for each of the employees to conduct their daily tasks. *News communication* deals with informing the employees of the latest news in the company. *Control communication,* deals with piloting the company towards the goals, and is composed of budgets, manuals for production, and policies regarding the working environment. *Change communication* is based on unusual events that are outside the regular news communication, such as changes in goals or strategies. Lastly, *culture communication* is more or less invisible and is shown in the way the company regards leadership, equality and similar issues.

Thus, internal communication serves many different functions in an organization. From the perspective of management, there are three functions of internal communication. The first function is to spread the goals, tasks, and rules of the company. The second function is to coordinate the activities of the company. The third function is to provide management with information regarding the condition of the company and the reliability of downward information flow from the management. Erikson (1992) further argues that an effective internal communication brings a

feeling of belonging to the employees, which increases motivation and the desire to put in an extra productive effort hence increasing their performance.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011), internal organizational communication facilitates the flow of information among members of the organization. The effective flow of information among employees within an organization is facilitated by a vibrant internal communication system. These systems of communication in its various form, is based on the structure of command within an organization. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) add that, internal organizational communication broadly studies corporate life as constituted through discursive processes such as conflict, teamwork and leadership.

Internal communication increases trust in organizations, which is often associated with business success. Thomas et al. (2009) mentions that internal communication plays an important role in the development of trust within an organization. In a research on ducted by Thomas et al. (2009), they found that in the relationships with co-workers and supervisors, it is quality, not quantity, of information that best forecasts trust. Also, they found that trust was closely tied to perceptions of organizational openness, which, in turn, predicted employee involvement. In the light of these findings of Thomas et al., it is important for organizations to pay attention to internal communication as it really affects the organization in a positive way.

Hola (2012) notes that, internal communication facilitates corporate culture that is dynamic, continuous and relevant to affairs of an organization as well as acts as a cornerstone for organizational stability. There is a trait of internal communication in leadership position in an

organization which offers mutual benefit for company and its employees. According to Gondal and Shahbaz (2012), an effective internal communication is present throughout the entire operations in organizations and is used as a base of company management. They add that, managers utilize internal communication for better work performance and employee attitude.

For Ishtique and Habib (n.d), internal communication improves employees understanding of organization and its products, ethics, culture and external environment. In addition, a research result by Gondal and Shahbaz (2012) demonstrates that internal communication is mandatory for employee commitment, performance, social responsibility behaviors and satisfaction as it foster organizational goals and policies among all personnel which is vital to support innovative technology leading towards prosperity. Internal communication is strongly associated with increase in organizational and employee performance (Gondal & Shahbaz 2012).

Internal communication is vital to development of employees' mental inertia making them vibrant, competitive and preparing them to face uncertainty. According to Hola (2012), Internal communication boost employees' morale, strengthens organizations' vision, connects employees to business, advance process improvements, facilitates change and drive business results. And this encourages people to work in teams, enhances decision making processes and eradicating obstacles among different departments (Ishtique & Habib, n.d).

2.1.9 CHALLENGES TO INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND THE WAY FORWARD

Inappropriate communication creates irritation, insecurity, disintegration and the spreading of rumors. Thus, there is the likelihood of the presence of some setbacks or constraints and this is quite true of every organizational structure and it is quite understandable in areas where there are groups and where human interactions occur.

Ludlow and Panton (1992) presented a number of challenges that may affect internal communication processes in an organization and hence result to low productivity and performance of employees. They identified what is known as "*semantic problems*" that is problems that occur when people use the same word in different ways. This is thus bound to cause misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the information or message being communicated. Besides, the poor structural organization or setup might constitute a huge block to smooth internal communication. Such is manifested through what is termed the *status effect*, which occurs when one person, employee in the organization is considerably higher in the hierarchy than the other person involved in the communication process. They further add that, poor choice of communication channels or the unavailability of efficient means and techniques of communication is also a great problem that affect internal communication processes in an organization.

Robson & Tourish (2005) recognized some barriers to effective internal communication practices. There are problems related to how much information people need to do their jobs, problems with the sources from which they receive it, the channels through which it is transmitted and how much information is in turn sent by most organizational members. Robson & Tourish (2005) found that management are often hesitant to investigate their communication practices. This is problematic

as if organizations lack data on how well they are performing and as result, it becomes consistently harder to develop appropriate action plans.

Quirke (1996) also found that in authenticity, most managers are poor at evaluating their effectiveness as communicators. Based on Quirke's findings, it is useful for organizations to evaluate if managers are succeeding in communication. More organizational research on this is needed to give managers feedback on their performance. The role of internal communications function is vital in this as the function can help managers to investigate this issue and to give managers tools to improve communication.

Robson and Tourish (2005) further claim that it may be that managers' low level of awareness of their communication climate, combined with an unwillingness to investigate it, become key obstacles to the development of positive communications policies. Since Quirke (1996) and Robson and Tourish (2005) argue that managers cannot handle the internal communication on their own, coordination of internal communications is needed in organizations.

It is worth researching employee perceptions at all levels in an organization as Pollitt & Brow (2008), Goudge (2006) and Smythe (2008) highlight its importance. It is trusted that employee involvement in decision making is a necessity for organizations and crucial for business performance. Employee opinions deliver a lot of understanding for internal communication development. However, it is unexpectedly difficult to find research on internal communication development from researched from the employee perspective. As Goudge (2006) stated above, research should be integral to the strategic development and tactical execution of communications

when managing change. Thus, more research on internal communication development from the employee perspective is needed.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study uses the General System theory and the Human Relation theory.

2.2.1 THE SYSTEMS THEORY

The general system theory was proposed in 1968 by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a biologist in his work, *General Systems Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications*, and was used to explain the relationship between parts and the whole of living organisms (Weckowicz, 2000). This provides a general perspective for viewing an organization. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1968) introduced general systems theory as a universal theory applicable to many field of study which provides a way of examining interrelationship and deriving principles. General system theory describes how to break complex things into parts and then understand how the part work together in systems. General system theory can be referred to as systems theory, theory of open system, system model, and family systems theory.

The system theory focuses on the system's structure instead of on the system's function. It proposes that complex systems share some basic organizing principles irrespective of their purposes, and that these principles can be modelled accurately. This focuses on the relations between parts. Rather than reducing an entity such as the human body into its parts or elements (e.g. organs or cells), systems theory focuses on the arrangement of and relations between the parts and how they work together as a whole. The way the parts are organized and how they interact

with each other, determines the properties of that system. According to Von Bertalanffy (1968), the behavior of the system is independent of the properties of the elements.

The system theory has since been used in various academic fields. According to Booth (1986) the systems theory has more effective and applicable standpoint in internal communication. This is because the systems approach recognizes the role that communication plays in facilitating efficient functioning between the various components of the organizations

In organizational communication research, some main components of the systems theory have been identified that informs how effective communication leads to employee performance or productivity namely; wholeness, hierarchical and feedback. In systems theory, the whole determines the character and functions of parts (Weckowicz, 2002). Wholeness refers to the interdependence of the various elements that constitute the system. This means that individual parts of a system contribute to the existence of the organization.

For Miller (2009), the concept of an organizational structure indicates that components in the main systems are designed into subsystems, making up the whole system, which itself operates within a larger environment. Miller (2009) adds that, feedback enables decision makers in the organization to strategize to be on top of issues thereby building network relationships. Conferring to Salem (1999), the systems theory operates from primary principles of inter-relatedness and interdependence, it can be said that the same basic principles form the basis from which communication audit occurs.

Graphic Communications has a hierarchical structure with the various sections functioning as a whole structure and all the staff working towards a common goal. In order to achieve organizational goals, these sections or departments need to work together in order to achieve these goals. This means that, there should be effective internal communication between the management and staff of Graphic communications. The systems theory is therefore appropriate for this study. In view of this, the researchers would determine the effectiveness of communication leading to employee productivity.

2.2.2 THE HUMAN RELATIONS THEORY

According to Kreps (1990), the human relations theory originated in the 1930s and was introduced as a substitute perspective to the classical theory. The theory was originally put to test by Mayo, Roethlisberger and Dickson and became known as the Hawthorne Studies (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). The Hawthorne Studies brought to bear four major phases namely: the illumination studies, the relay assembly test room studies, the interview program, and the bank wiring room studies.

The human behavior school of thought shifted from the prominence on output and work design to the interactions of individuals (Kreps, 1990). Emphasis of the human relations theory dwells more on the needs of individuals in the organization, the employee's participation in decision-making and the opportunity to send and receive messages. Human Relations asserted that it is vital to determine the individual needs of organizational members and it is achieved within effective organization-worker communication (Kreps, 1990).

According to Skinner, Essen & Mersham (2001), effective management communication can be best accessed through the use of communication audit. Essentially communication is fundamental in the work of human resources. The importance of the human relations theory is that it highlights the role of workers and social factors in the effectiveness of internal communication and the issues such as leadership. To sum up, the human relation theory deals with the interaction between management and employees, their motivation and influence on organizational events. This throws more light on what management and employees ought to do to ensure effective internal communication.

2.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter covered the literature review of the study, discussed the theories that serve as theoretical framework for the study, and review related studies whiles exploring the various concepts in the study.

2.4 CHAPTER TRANSITION

Due to the recent spread of Covid-19, the researcher is unable to visit the field to collect data, thus the researcher reviews previous works on organizational communications, internal communications and employee performance. Thus, the next chapter explores the methodology that would have been used if the researcher had gone to the field

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the methodological approach that would have been used for the study covering research design, population, sample size, sampling technique and data collection methods.

However, due to the recent outbreak of Corona virus, it was impossible for the researcher to go to the field to collect data. Hence this chapter presents a proposed methodology which explains the various process the researcher would have used in collecting data if there was an opportunity to do so.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to the overall strategy that one chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way thereby effectively addressing the research problem. It constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (De Vaus, D.A., 2001). However, the research problem determines the type of research design to be used.

There are three basic types of research design; quantitative (fixed) research design, qualitative (flexible) research design and mixed research methods.

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured,

typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (Creswell, 2014).

A research design ensures that the evidence obtained enables one to effectively address the research problem logically and unambiguously as possible. In social science research, obtaining information relevant to the research problem generally entails specifying the type of evidence needed to test the theory to evaluate the program or to accurately describe and asses meaning related to an observable phenomenon.

The research design that would have been used in this study is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodology which is the mixed method. This is because, it will allow one to use different methods and approaches in analyzing a particular phenomenon more accurately. Thus it will allow for triangulation that is using both interviews and questionnaires to collect data in

accessing the role of internal communication in employee performance. It also provides a more complete and comprehensive understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone. The quantitative research design will be used to get information from respondents who will mostly be the staff members. While the qualitative research design would be used to get information from the directors and line managers.

3.2 POPULATION

Population refers to a specific group relevant for a particular study. Population is a group or a class of subjects, variables, or phenomena. Mugenda et al (2003) explain that, a population is a group of individuals or objects that have the same form of characteristics. They are the totality of cases that conform to certain specification which defines the elements that are included or excluded in the target group.

This study would have covered Graphic Communications Group Limited. A State-owned press house, which can be described as the leading brand and name when it comes to churning out credible, factual and accurate news content. This organization in Adabraka, a suburb of Accra, in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE

Wimmer and Dominick (2003) define a sample as a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population. A sample is a smaller number or the portion of a population used to make conclusions regarding the whole population. Its purpose is to estimate unknown characteristics of

the population. A sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in the study, it is a fraction of the whole, selected to participate in a study.

The estimated sample size that would have been used for this study would be 50 respondents from all 10 units of the organization including directors, line managers and subordinates of the various units.

Despite the fact that the organization has regional offices, the study would be limited to the Greater Accra regional office because of time constraints and the fact that data could be easily collected and assessed due to the relationship formed with other staff members in the organization.

3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Alvi, (2016) defines sampling as the process where relatively smaller number of people are selected from a population for investigation purpose. Sampling is the systematic process of selecting a number of individuals for a study to represent the large group from which they are selected. Sampling technique is simply the process where a researcher uses a set of techniques to select a sub-group from a target population.

In research, there are two types of sampling techniques. They are the probability sampling technique and non-probability sampling technique. Probability sampling technique is where the chance of each member being selected is known. Non-probability sampling technique is where the chance of selecting a member is not known (Babbie & Baxter, 2003). In this study, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques will be because the researcher have to reach two categories of respondents which are staff members (employees and the management team of the

Graphic Communications, thus, the study will need different sampling approaches for a better result.

Probability sampling technique is when every item in the target population has a known chance of being included in the study sample size. The type of probability sampling technique to be employed in this study is the simple random sampling. Simple Random Sampling is where samples are selected at random (Alvi, 2016). This will be used in selecting respondents who will mostly be staff members. The simple random sampling technique is important to use in this study it provides a better representation of the population and inference drawn from samples can be generalized to the population whiles reducing the chances of systematic errors.

Non-probability sampling is when every unit of population does not get an equal chance of participation in the investigation. The type of non-probability sampling technique to be employed in this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose (Alvi, 2016). This would have been used in selecting the directors and line managers. The purposive sampling technique is important to use in this study because it allows one to pick samples suitable for the research. Thus in this study, respondents must have knowledge in the operations of the company which is Graphic Communications with at least 5 years working experience.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Bryman (2008) defines data collection as the techniques for gathering or collecting information or data for a study. Data collection is the systematic approach to gathering and measuring information from a variety of sources to get a complete and accurate picture of an area of interest (Mclaughlin, 2016). Data collection enables a person or organization to answer relevant questions, evaluate outcomes and make predictions about future probabilities and trends.

For this study, the researcher would have employed interview as a data collection method. Berger (2000) defines interview as a conversation between a researcher (someone who wishes to gain information about a subject) and an informant (someone who presumably has information of interest on the subject). In this study, interviews will be conducted personally from the respondents to obtain information about the topic. Interviews are useful for gaining insight and context into a topic. Also it allows respondents to describe what is important to them. Therefore, the researcher will visit the respondents in person at a location. The data collection tool to be used is interview guide.

Also in this study would have employed survey research as the data collection method and will use questionnaire as a data collection tool. Questionnaires will be distributed to the respondent which will require the individuals to respond to the same set of questions in order to obtain information. Questionnaires are series of written questions asked to individuals or group of individuals to obtain statistical useful information about a given topic (Berger, 2000). Usually, a questionnaire consists of a number of questions that the respondent has to answer in a set format. There is distinction made between survey questions and they are open-ended and closed-ended

questions. According to Berger (2000), an open-ended question asks for an answer that the respondent should construct and writing it down in a space provided for this, whereas a closed-ended question ask respondents to select from lists of answer provided by the researcher. So in this study both open ended and closed ended questionnaires would be used for detailed and in-depth understanding of the study.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involves categorizing, examining, tabulating and or otherwise recombining the collected data (Yin, 2004). Data analysis refers to the description of data collected from the field to make them meaningful. It involves the process of treating data with statistical tool so that the size can be reduced by summarizing, simplifying and compressing.

Data analysis consist of the examining, categorizing, tabulating the evidence or the information gathered from the field to address the initial proposition of the study. There are two types of data analysis and these are the descriptive and inferential data analysis. In this study, both the descriptive data analysis and inferential data analysis would have been used to help describe the data without allowing the researcher to generalize the result from the sample to the target population. It will be used to describe and summarize the content in the data.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methodological approach that would have been used for the study if the researcher visited the field if not for Covid-19. This chapter looked at proposed research design, population, and sample size, sampling technique and methods to have been used to collect data.

3.8 CHAPTER TRANSITION

After looking at the proposed methodology, the next chapter would focus on findings of previous related studies since the research is based on empirical findings and content analysis on internal communication and employee productivity.

CHAPTER FOUR

DICUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings from previous literature that was used as a secondary data for this study. The findings of the research are discussed in accordance with the research objectives that guided the study:

1. To find out the relationship between employee performance and internal communication.
2. To find out if internal communication has a positive impact on the employee performance effort in the organization.
3. To find out if employees face certain challenges due to internal communication in the organization.

4.1 FINDINGS

4.1a Understanding of the various concept

In other to explore the objectives of this study, it was necessary to understand the concepts and variables in the study as espoused by other researchers.

The study explored the concept of communication and the findings from this study shows that, communication is defined differently by different people and this is based on their orientation and perspective (Shonubi and Akintaro, 2019). This means that what communication may mean to a medical practitioner will defer from what it may mean to to a sociologist, psychologist and even a communication specialist. The study further found that, irrespective of the different perspectives of communication, it is mainly the process by which one group of individuals share an information

with another person or group with both side clearly understanding the message (Soola, 2000). Thus, definitions from the literature review show that, there are various definitions for communication, as there are different disciplines. However, while some definitions are human centered, others are not.

The study went ahead to explore the definition of internal communication as expressed by scholars in literature review. It is important to acknowledge that, just as communication, there have been several definition of internal communication in existing literature. The findings show that observe internal communication is the management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations (Welch & Jackson, 2007). The study also found that internal communication refers to the exchange of communication between top hierarchy members and employees within an organization (Trahant, 2008). The study also saw Otoo (2015), likening internal communication in organization to adhesive that tightens all activities of the organization and help make its activities clearer. Thus, the literature reviewed for this study emphasize that an effective internal communication is critical for successful organization as, it affects the ability of managers to engage employees and achieve objectives as well as, it ensures employee commitment to achieving results by helping improve collaboration, productivity and performance.

The concept of employee performance was explored in literature review and studies show that employee performance is an outcome produced by the employees in the organization (Adewale, Abodunde & Folorunso, 2014). Also, employee performance is a behavior of an employee when he or she is performing a job or task (El-Zeiny, 2012). Thus, employee performance involves the achievement of each employee in accordance with an organization's regulations, requirements and

expectation which helps to enhance the productivity of the organization by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of tasks. Verghese (2017) notes that, the way an organization communicates with its employee reflects the performance of its employees as an effective communication allows employees in an organization to become productive and efficient.

4.1b Relationship Between Internal Communication and Employee Performance

One of the objectives of this study was to find out if there was a relationship between employee performance and internal communication.

The findings of this study reveals that, a relationship existed between internal communication and improved employee attitudes as the implementation of a structured communication program resulted in a positive change in the workforce (Hunt & Ebeling, 1983).

Also, findings by Ainobushoborozi (2013), measuring the relationship between effective communication and labor productivity showed that there is a positive relationship between the two variables. This is because, clarity in communication at work to get tasks completed and timely information about changes affecting work are meaningful to labor productivity which in turn impact employee productivity.

In addition, finding from Yamaguchi (2009) as revealed by this study shows that, there is a significant relationship between internal communication and trust. This means that, when bad news or negative information such as failure of proposals or low organizational outcomes are communicated to employees, it indirectly leads the development of a poor and untrustworthy perception of employees about management and the organization as a whole and this could affect employees' productivity in one way or the other. On the other hand, good communication between management and employees increases organizational successes leads to good results in the

organization. This is because good communication can change the attitude of employees for the desired results, which is invariably, becoming more performant and productive.

Again findings from this study shows that there a positive relationship between internal organizations and employee performance as an effective internal communication improves employees understanding of an organization's products, ethics, culture and external environment and thus, it is required for employee commitment, performance, social responsibility behaviors and satisfaction as it foster organizational goals and policies leading towards prosperity (Gondal & Shahbaz, 2012).

Findings from the literature review in this study further shows that internal communication is strongly associated with increase in organizational and employee performance. This is because, internal communication is vital to the development of employees' mental inertia making them vibrant, competitive and preparing them to face uncertainty as it boost employees' morale, strengthens organizations' vision, connects employees to business, advance process improvements, facilitates change and drive business results (Hola, 2012).

Findings from Otoo (2015) indicate a significant relationship between effective communication and performance. And so, when the experience of workers increases, their performance also increase which shows support for training and systems support for all staff of organizations. Also, an increased effectiveness of communication in factors of consistency, concreteness, and completeness account for improvement in workers' performance.

4.1c Impact of Internal Communication on Employee Performance in Organization

Another objective of this study was to find out if internal communication has an impact on employee performance effort in organizations using empirical research findings.

Findings in this study shows that an effective communication positively impacts workers' performance, productivity and commitment as internal communication forms an important component of every organization's project. This is because, when managers communicate with employees consistently and regularly, it improves workers' commitment and performance.

Also, findings by Argenti (1998) as discussed in this study shows that internal communication improve employees' morale, inform them about organizational changes, and establish a significant positive relationship between management and employees. And this means that, when there is an effective internal communication, it is easier for employees to understand the organization they are working for, hence contributing to improving their performance towards the attainment of the organizations' goals.

This study further noted the impact internal communication has on employee performance. Findings from this study shows that, an effective internal communication brings a feeling of belonging to the employees, which increases motivation and the desire to put in an extra productive effort hence increasing their performance (Erikson, 1992).

Another impact this study came across is that internal communication in organizations facilitates the flow of information among members of the organization through various communication systems (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). These systems of communication are based on the structure of command within an organization which in turn improves teamwork and leadership.

Again, the findings from this study revealed that internal communication plays an important role by increases trust in organizations, which is often associated with business success. This is because, in the relationships with co-workers and supervisors, it is quality and not quantity of information that best forecasts trust (Thomas et al., 2009). Thus, trust is closely tied to perceptions of organizational openness, which, in turn, predicts employee involvement in operations.

Lastly the findings from this study shows that, internal communication facilitates corporate culture that is dynamic, continuous and relevant to affairs of an organization as well as acts as a cornerstone for organizational stability (Hola, 2012). Thus, there is a trait of internal communication in leadership position in an organization which offers mutual benefit for company and its employees and used in management to facilitate better work performance and employee attitude.

4.1d Internal Communication Challenges Faced by Employees in Organization.

The need to find out employees face challenges with internal communication in organization was also another objective of this study.

The study findings noted semantic problems as one challenge that may affect internal communication processes in an organization and hence result to low productivity and performance of employees (Ludlow & Panton, 1992). This is when people use the same word in different ways thereby leading to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the message being communicated. And so, emotions like anger and stress may lead to communication breakdown as messages may be interpreted in wrong manner when a person is angry and frustrated than when he is relaxed.

Another challenge noted in the literature reviewed for this study is poor organizational structure or setup which constitute a huge block to an effective internal communication. This is exhibited through what is termed the status effect, which is, when one person or employee in the organization is higher in the hierarchy than the other person involved in the communication process (Ludlow & Panton, 1992).

Also, findings from this study reveal that, poor choice of communication channels or the unavailability of efficient means and techniques of communication is also a great problem that affect internal communication processes in an organization. This is because there are various channels of communications in organizations and not effectively selecting the appropriate one to communicate, can hinder the understanding of the message.

Findings from Robson and Tourish (2005) reveal that information overload can be a challenge to effective internal communication practices as well as the hesitation for management to constantly evaluate their communication practices. This is a problem related to how much information employees need to do their jobs and how much information is in turn sent by most organizational members and management. Also, when organizations do not evaluate their communication process, it becomes consistently harder to develop appropriate action plans as well as develop positive communications policies.

Again, findings from this study shows that poor listening and leads to ineffective communication thereby making it a challenge (Miller, 2006). This is when the receiver is not focused on what the sender of message is communicating.

Lastly, linguistic differences are a great obstacle to effective communication. This is due to ambiguity of language and the difference in language understood by the parties communicating like members in the organization. This makes it difficult for employees to interact efficiently to ensure productivity.

4.2 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the findings from the previous related studies on internal communication and employee productivity that was reviewed in this study. And this was done in accordance the objectives of this study.

4.3 CHAPTER TRANSITION

After discussing the findings, the next chapter would focus summary of findings, conclusion, recommendation and limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose or objective of the study was to explore the role of internal communication in employee performance. This chapter highlights the summary of findings of the study, its conclusions and recommendations as well as the limitations.

5. 1 SUMMARY

Communication is the process of sharing information messages between two individuals or groups with the purpose of clearly understanding the message. Organizational communication is when organizations communicate with their employees, members or stakeholders. Internal communication is the management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations that is, exchange of communication message between top hierarchy members and employees within an organization. Employee performance refers to the achievement of each employee in accordance with an organization's expectation which helps to enhance the productivity of the organization.

This study revealed that, there is a positive relationship that exist between internal communication and employee performance as the implementation of a structured communication program can result in a positive change in the workforce as well as clarity in communication to get tasks completed are important to labor productivity which in turn impact employee productivity. Also an effective internal communication improves employees understanding of an organization's products and service which is vital for employee commitment and performance thereby fostering organizational goals and policies.

Also, the findings show that, internal communication has an impact on employee performance impacts workers' performance, productivity and commitment by forming an important component of every organization's project. Internal communication improves employees' morale, inform them about organizational changes, and establish a significant positive relationship between management and employees. Again, an effective internal communication impacts employee performance by bringing them a feeling of belonging which increases the motivation and desire to put more productive effort. Another impact worth noting is internal communication increases trust in organizations, which is often associated with business success as well as facilitates the flow of information among members of the organization through various communication systems.

Finally, inappropriate communication creates the likelihood of the presence of some setbacks especially in areas where there are groups and where human interactions occur. The findings show that, there are challenges faced by employees with internal communication which hinders employee performance. And they include, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of message being communicated, poor organizational structure, ineffective choice and use of appropriate communication channels which could hinder understanding of message, information overload and linguistics difference.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Internal communication is important for the successful functioning of organizations having various departments as it is used to streamline organization procedures to optimize productivity and performance of employees with increase satisfaction for various stakeholders. This study used empirical research findings to explore the role internal communication play in improving employee performance. The study shows that effective internal communication has the tendency

to impact employee performance by contributing to effective flow of information among employees within an organization. And decreases the levels of uncertainty in the organization and enhances trust, increases job performance and fosters employees' commitment and loyalty towards work. The study suggests that, it is important for organizations to pay critical attention to internal communication as it does not influence just employee performance but also, the overall organizational performance. Also, proper attention needs to be paid to nurture and enhance the value of internal communication and to prevent misunderstanding about its implications and outcomes. Lastly, while this paper is not a complete view of the impact and role of internal communication on employee performance within an organization, it however provides an opportunity to identify and absorb some of the insights provided by the collection of empirical study.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that further research on the communication climate among employees and their supervisors and how it affects employee performance. This would provide organizations information on a valuable internal resource. Also, other areas which could be considered for future research includes the new innovations in technology, the efficacy of face to face communication in the light of new technology and internal/external integrated communication.

5.4 LIMITATION

This research encountered various limitations of which the most notable is the methodological approach chosen, the participants of the study and the form of analysis utilized. The qualitative design of this project required subjective data to be collected and analyzed. However, the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID 19) in the middle of March, 2020 and the imposition of restriction orders by the Ghanaian Authorities constrained engagement with the sample population and data collection. Hence, this study resorted to obtaining data from previous published works which were analyzed in accordance with scholarly literature in order to satisfactorily answer the research questions and objectives.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the summary of findings, conclusion, recommendation and limitations.

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