



UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION, ACCRA

**CHURCH COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCHES IN GHANA**

BY:

SAMUEL GLOVER ASANTE


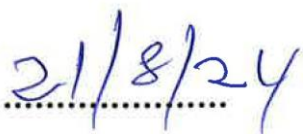
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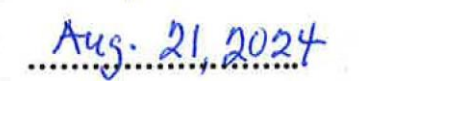
DECLARATION

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

Samuel Glover Asante	MPSPRM22002		
Student	Index number	Signature	Date

DECLARATION BY SUPERVISORS

This Dissertation/Thesis has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation/Thesis laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC)

PROF. MODESTUS FOSU		
DR. EBO AFUL		
(Supervisors)	Signature	Date

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of strategic communication and its implications for the development of churches in Ghana. Specifically, the study was interested in the different communication strategies adopted by orthodox, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches in Ghana to ensure their development and challenges. 'Development' in the context of this study is understood to encompass numerical growth and qualitative and spiritual aspects of a congregation's life and mission. Church development emphasizes nurturing spiritual growth and maturity among existing members, fostering strong relationships within the congregation, and enhancing the church's overall health vitality and community impact. In this study, the researcher defines development to include numerical growth, brand popularity, increased adoption of technology in communication, conversion and retention rate, financial capacity, and infrastructure development.

The study was motivated by the need to investigate the mediating role of communication in developing a critical social agency – the church. The persuasive communication and systems theory paradigms guided the study to support a qualitative research design that sourced data from a purposive sample of 24 communication officers from 12 churches across Accra, Ghana.

The findings made in the study indicate that despite engaging and acknowledging the relevance of communication to the development of churches, none of the churches studied had a communication policy document or guideline document. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a significant integration of digital communication platforms in Ghana's charismatic, Orthodox, and Pentecostal churches. Additionally, the study found that communication was central to the development of the churches in three main dimensions: financial, numerical, and spiritual growth. The study further found that critical challenges inhibited the effectiveness of

communication strategies for developing churches in Ghana. These included language barriers and a need for more training in strategic communications.

The study recommends that churches in Ghana actively train leaders to ensure that development-driven communication strategies are implemented. Furthermore, the study recommends implementing hybrid communication strategies that use both traditional and digital communication approaches and tools.

DEDICATION

I dedicate to the memory of my beloved mother, Madam Georgina Ama Brakowaah Gyasie, whose unwavering love and guidance shaped my journey to becoming a Minister of the Gospel. She was not only my mother but also my soul winner, leading me to the saving knowledge of Christ. Despite being a single parent struggling to raise six children, she tirelessly sacrificed to provide me with the best education and instill in me the values of faith and perseverance.

As a first-born son, she served as my bible teacher, hymn instructor, life coach, mentor, and ultimate supporter. Her profound impact on my life cannot be overstated, and I owe everything I have achieved to her selfless dedication and love. Although she passed away shortly after my commissioning as a minister, I find solace in knowing that she fulfilled her mission on earth. Even in her absence, her legacy lives on, and I am forever grateful for the gift of her life and the profound influence she had on mine.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATION.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.1.1 Religion and Communication	5
1.1.2 The church and organizational communication.....	7
1.1.3 Communication and Church Development	11
1.1.4 Communication Challenges Faced by Churches	14
1.1.5 Contemporary Church Situation in Ghana	16
1.1.6 Current Trends in Church on Focus	18
1.2 Problem Statement	24
1.3 Research Objectives	26
1.3.1 General objective.....	26
1.4 Research Questions	27
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	27

1.6 Significance of the Study	28
1.7 Organization of the Study	29
1.8 Chapter Summary.....	30
CHAPTER TWO	31
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.2 Literature Review.....	31
2.2.1 Communication and Religion.....	31
2.2.2 The Christian Church and Communication	35
2.2.3 Internal Communication within Churches.....	38
2.2.3 The Role of Communication in Church Development	39
2.2.4 Effective Communication Strategies for Church Growth	44
2.2.5 Evolution of Church Communication in Ghana	47
2.4 Theoretical Framework	59
2.4.1 Persuasive Theory.....	59
2.4.2 Systems Theory	62
2.5 Chapter Summary.....	66
CHAPTER THREE	67
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	67
3.1 Introduction	67
3.2 Research Approach and Design	67

3.3 Population of the Study	68
3.4 Sampling Technique and Size	68
3.5 Data Collection Procedure	69
3.6 Data Analysis	70
3.7 Ethical Issues and Control.....	71
3.8 Chapter Summary.....	72
CHAPTER FOUR.....	73
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS	73
4.1 Introduction	73
4.2 Demographic Analysis of Participants.....	73
4.3 RQ1: What communication strategies are adopted by Ghana's charismatic, Pentecostal, and Orthodox churches?.....	75
4.3.1 Communication Strategies Engaged by the Churches.....	75
4.4 RQ2: What are the implications of the churches' communication strategies for developing charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox churches in Ghana?	88
4.4.1 The Role of Communication on Church Development.....	88
4.5 RQ3: What challenges do churches face in integrating modern communication tools or channels in their internal communication?.....	98
4.6 Chapter Summary.....	106
CHAPTER FIVE	107
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	107
5.1 Introduction	107

5.2 Summary	107
5.3 Conclusion.....	110
5.4 Limitations of the Study.....	112
5.5 Recommendation.....	112
REFERENCES	114
APPENDIX	133

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Interviewees73

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AG	-	Assemblies of God
ICGC	-	International Central Gospel Church
LCI	-	Lighthouse Chapel International
ICT	-	Information Communication Technology

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Religion, globally, has been a catalyst for cultural, social, and political developments (Idowu, 2016). The multifaceted relationship between religion and communication manifests in disseminating religious beliefs, rituals, and practices. According to Smith (2019), religious communication serves as a mechanism for community-building, moral guidance, and transmitting cultural values across generations. This emphasizes the intricate nature of religious communication, including but not limited to sermons, scriptures, and interpersonal interactions, which contribute to disseminating religious messages.

One of the facets of society that remains the oldest institution is religion. For explanation of what religion is, Wiafe and Gariba (2023) note that religion is a difficult concept to explain. Most scholars agree that it is a belief in some form of supernatural happenings or cause. Religion is a discipline of belief in what is supposed to exist in the supernatural world (Nath, 2015; Taliaferro, 2014). Thus, religion is understood as the belief in the existence and the workings of the supernatural and spiritual beings and their implications for both the social and spiritual world of people (Abbink, 2014).

Although the place of religion in society is very contentious among scholars, it is evident that society relies heavily on the ideals of different religions to keep its shape and moral life (Wiafe & Gariba, 2023). For instance, Karl Max (1834), in his book *Introduction to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Rights*, describes religion as the opium of the masses, implying that religion numbs reasoning. Other scholars have also argued that religion is a core affront to the realization of global human rights, noting it as anachronistic and averse to development of societies (Wiafe & Gariba, 2023). Regardless of the contestations within the

literature on the nature and roles of religion in society, it is essential to note that some literature acknowledges the relevance of religion and social activities associated with religious beliefs. Nath (2015), for instance, notes that religion, as an institution in society, holds significance in the proper functioning of the other institutions of society. While being a more naturally instinctive aspect of human society, religion has evolved to be a critical man-made institution that enforces solidarity among social members (Baffoe & Dako-Gyeke, 2013).

Some scholars have argued that the core social function of religion is to actuate or establish social control. Hence, religious institutions are responsible for controlling social behavior and ensuring the moral uprightness of a society (Wiafe & Gariba, 2023; Beyers, 2021). Durkheim (1957, p.10) argues that religion is the soul of society and that societies cannot stand unless they are deeply rooted in some religious elements. Durkheim (1957) explains that religion cannot be delinked from societies as it forms a critical aspect of the cultures of different societies. That is why studying and understanding the workings of religion is crucial, particularly those aspects that directly impact society and its well-being.

As a crucial social institution, religion relies heavily on communication. There is a close relationship between communication and religious activity. Religion or religious leaders employ various types of communication to reveal truth and foster community. These include preaching and prayer, worship and witnessing, reading, and hearing from holy texts, singing and sharing, ritual practice, prophetic discourse, and theological inquiry (Arens, 2011). Ottuh and Jemegbe (2020) argue that the very nature of religion supposes some form of communication between human existence and what exists in the supernatural world. Hence, as the authors argue, an innate element of religion is contingent on many different communication forms. Some authors, such as Basse and Bubu (2019) and Duke and Osim (2020), argue that a critical expression of the role of communication in religion is exhibited in how religious

practices, values, and activities have been transmitted from generation to generation. In view of Ottuh and Jemegbe's (2020) argument, the core of a religious practice or system is deeply engraved in the people's ability to communicate the religion to others and to ensure the religion is accepted within society.

To this effect, scholars who have researched the link between communication and religion have argued that the relevance of communication in religion is expressed in two main ways: Communication to ensure the survival of the religion and communication to ensure that the religion is transmitted among generations (Berko, 2010; Bassey & Bubu, 2019; Ottuh & Jemegbe, 2020). Ottuh and Jemegbe (2020) aver that the nature of religion itself is communicative. Thus, the study of religion should be rooted in a communicative analysis of human interactions with the divine and humans within society.

Historically, Howe (1999) was of the view that regardless of the complexities that characterize religion and its role in society, communication, and increased movement of persons within societies have contributed effectively to the evolution of religion. This expresses the idea that communication is relevant in the development of any form of religion. In recent times, however, newer forms of communication have evolved, which have influenced religion to assume new forms of religious activities, systems, and beliefs. Religion is also communicated through festivals, rituals, sacrifices, email, radio, print and literary evangelism, open-air evangelism, educational evangelism, hospital evangelism and tele-evangelism. The channels listed above are used to spread religious beliefs and values in contemporary human civilization (Ottuh & Jemegbe, 2020).

It is essential to note that in developing nations such as Ghana, issues of religion are considered critical as they form an essential aspect of the people's cultural dynamics, history, and civilization (Opoku, 2016). Authors have argued that Ghanaian society is largely reliant on the

activities of religion, and the history of the Ghanaian people is closely linked to historical events of religious activities. Pobee (1992) explains that the typical Ghanaian is and exhibits characteristics that portend him as *homo radicaliter religiosus*, which literally means that the nature of the Ghanaian is radically a religious man. Thus, Pobee (1992) contends that the Ghanaian is, at the core, a religious being. Quashigah (2015) acknowledges that the native people of present-day Ghana include religious activities in every social and political undertaking. To illustrate the relevance of religion in Ghanaian society, political leaders also acted as religious leaders or were often in close contact with spiritual leaders to offer them knowledge on how to rule. This has shaped the country's close linkage between socio-political and economic activities and religion, making it a strongly multi-religious state. Furthermore, Quashigah (2015) accounts for the beginnings of colonialism in the country and the inclusion of Judeo-Christian worship as a strategic means of entry, which gives evidence of the long-standing historical link between religion and Ghanaian society.

Ghana is a multi-religious state with three main religions (Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional religions) that form the basis of a highly polarized religious space in the country (Wiafe & Gariba, 2023). The existence of different religions in the country, as well as the existence of some freedom of religious affiliation and association, has been grounded in the national constitution (Quashigah, 2015). This shows the relevance the Ghanaian state places on religion and how its importance is reflected in the socio-political and development contexts of the country (Dickson, 2003). According to Sasu (2023), with over 70% of Ghanaians belonging to a host of different Christian denominations in the country, Christian religious worship forms the largest religious group in Ghana, an observation confirmed by the US State Department. Christians, because of the different religious practices (such as tithe paying, among other things) they engage in, contribute the largest to the Ghanaian economy.

As a social institution, the Church occupies a pivotal and central space within Ghanaian society. Ghana has a rich history of religiosity, with a significant proportion of its population identifying as Christians (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). This prominence is rooted in the multifaceted roles that the Church plays, making it an integral part of Ghanaian life. Scholars have emphasized the substantial influence of religion and religious institutions in Ghana (Opoku, Manu & Wiafe, 2015). The Church is a place of worship and a source of moral guidance, social support, and community engagement. It provides a spiritual anchor for individuals and communities, offering solace in distress and acting as a beacon of hope (Prempeh, 2021). Moreover, the Church has been instrumental in addressing social issues, such as healthcare and education, in Ghana (Opuni-Frimpong, 2023). It plays a significant role in providing essential services and contributing to society's overall well-being. Therefore, the Church's influence extends beyond the spiritual realm, impacting various facets of Ghanaian life.

Authors such as Pobee (1992), Quashigah (2015), and Dickson (2003) have all expressed the relevance of religion in Ghana even beyond the spiritual well-being of Ghanaians. These authors have shown the politico-economic importance of religion (most notably the Christian Church) in the development of Ghana. This suggests that religion in Ghana (especially the Christian religious group) has critical socio-economic relevance and implications for Ghana. This study, thus, focuses on studying the communication dynamics and cultures of the biggest religious groups in Ghana.

1.1.1 Religion and Communication

Understanding the intricate relationship between religion and communication provides a foundational context for evaluating the implications of Church communication strategy on developing churches in Ghana (Gyamfi, 2023). The cultural nuances, oral traditions, and communal ethos that characterize African religious communication lay the groundwork for

effective church development strategies (Wiafe & Gariba, 2023). The globalized nature of communication opens avenues for churches in Ghana to connect with the broader Christian community worldwide (Beyers, 2021).

The communication strategies adopted by churches, whether charismatic, Pentecostal, or Mainline, are intrinsically linked to their growth trajectories (Prehn, 2012). Effective communication is vital for building and maintaining congregational relationships, fostering community engagement, and attracting new members. However, the precise nature of this linkage and the underlying mechanisms warrant comprehensive investigation (Pocheptsiv, 2014). Empirical studies have demonstrated the importance of communication in religious organizations. For instance, research by Saunders (2014) highlights the role of effective church communication in member retention and satisfaction. It emphasizes the need for churches to employ strategic communication approaches to nurture congregational development. Furthermore, the development of religious organizations is influenced by their ability to adapt to changing societal dynamics, including technological advancements (Assouad & Parboteeah, 2017).

The integration of modern communication tools and strategies is essential for churches to remain relevant and connect with diverse audiences (Adetoyese, 2022). Digitalization has facilitated the creation of virtual religious communities, transcending geographical boundaries (Darko-Adjei, Animante, & Akussah, 2021). Hjarvard (2013) noted the emergence of online platforms as spaces for religious engagement, where individuals can participate in religious discussions, access sermons, and connect with like-minded believers. This online dimension of religious communication enhances accessibility and inclusivity in ways previously unattainable (Animante, Darko-Adjei, & Akussah, 2021).

The pervasive influence of social media on contemporary communication extends to religious discourse. Brouwer and Huizing (2010) explore the impact of social media on religious practices, highlighting how platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram enable religious communities to share messages, organize events, and create a sense of spiritual connectivity. Social media becomes a dynamic space for real-time interaction, fostering a globalized yet intimate religious experience.

To complement the findings of the above works, an in-depth study of the communication strategies employed by charismatic, Pentecostal, and mainline (orthodox) churches in Ghana is imperative. It should shed light on how these strategies contribute to their respective development trajectories. Such research will shed light on the specific practices and approaches that are effective in the Ghanaian context, informing the church policy makers and scholars interested in the intersection of religion, communication, and societal impact.

1.1.2 The church and organizational communication

This study of the communication strategies of churches in Ghana occurs within the framework of organizational communication, where the Church is regarded as an organization. An organization may be seen as an established body with an objective, structure, set of activities to carry out, and anticipatory results (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015). The concept of organizational communication highlights the important contributions of communication to achieving organizational goals. In the context of this study, organizational communication points to the process of sharing information between the hierarchies of a church (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015).

Effective communication is integral to the functioning and growth of any institution, and the Church is no exception (Marshall & Hester, 2015). Internal and external communication within the context of the Church are dynamic processes that involve disseminating information,

fostering community, and engaging with the broader society. Internal communication in the Church is centered on interactions among members, leaders, and various church ministries. It encompasses the exchange of information, the nurturing of a sense of community, and the coordination of activities. According to Marshall and Hester (2015), effective internal communication enhances unity and collaboration within the Church, promoting a shared vision among its members. In a study by Wimberly and McClure (2003), the role of pastoral leadership in internal communication is emphasized. Pastors serve as key communicators, guiding and shepherding the congregation. The study underscores the importance of transparency and clarity in communicating church goals and activities to foster a sense of belonging and commitment among members. Moreover, the utilization of small groups for internal communication has been identified as a valuable strategy. Krejcir (2010) argued that small groups provide a platform for more personalized communication, facilitating deeper connections among members. This approach enhances the effectiveness of internal communication by creating spaces for fellowship, support, and spiritual growth.

Conversely, external communication involves interactions between the Church and the broader community, including outreach efforts, public relations, and engagement with societal issues. As a social institution, the Church plays a vital role in shaping and responding to societal discourse. Van Duzer (2010) highlights the importance of the Church's external communication in contributing to social transformation and addressing contemporary challenges. One aspect of external communication is the use of media for outreach. According to Gordon (2013), the Church can leverage various media channels to disseminate its message and engage with a wider audience. The integration of technology, including social media platforms, extends the reach of the Church beyond its physical congregation, enabling it to connect with individuals globally. Additionally, the Church's involvement in social justice issues is a form of external communication. In the work of Brueggemann (2013), the prophetic role of the Church in

addressing societal injustices is emphasized. Engaging with external communities on issues of justice and compassion not only communicates the values of the Church but also contributes to the overall mission of societal transformation.

While acknowledging the relevance of external communication to churches in Ghana, this study concerns itself with internal communication within the Church. In Ghana, internal communication is essential for the Church to be cohesive and connected and develop a keen sense of community (Asiedu & Boateng, 2019). Ghanaian churches depend on efficient communication to foster connections, give spiritual direction, and plan events among their members since it is a holy organization founded on the values of faith, fellowship, and common purpose (Darko-Adjei & Akussah, 2021). Spiritual direction, instruction, and inspiration are communicated internally inside the Church. Church leaders share timeless principles and truths with their congregations through sermons, Bible studies, and pastoral counseling. These teachings help congregations on their spiritual journeys (Asiedu & Boateng, 2019).

In addition, church bulletins, announcements, and newsletters serve as internal communication tools that inform members about forthcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and ministry options, encouraging involvement and participation in church life. According to Asiedu and Boateng (2019), Ghanaian churches offer opportunities for members to interact on a deeper level, offering support, empathy, and spiritual fellowship by creating channels for sharing prayer requests, testimonies, and personal milestones. Fellowship events, prayer circles, and small group discussions all help to strengthen ties within the church community and promote a sense of cohesion and solidarity (Duncan & Baah-Ofori, 2023).

Authors have identified some critical internal strategies that churches engage in to ensure that communication is comprehensive enough to ensure church development (Jenkins, 2023). In this regard, establishing precise routes and procedures for communication to guarantee that

information is shared throughout the church community effectively and efficiently is crucial in consolidating internal communication (Asiedu & Boateng, 2019). Furthermore, modern media and technology can be used to reach attendees with a range of interests and demographics. They are investing in training and leadership development to give church leaders efficient communication techniques and tools. Additionally, fostering an environment of openness, inclusion, and transparency motivates members to participate in discussions and feedback procedures (Animante, Darko-Adjei, & Akussah, 2021).

While focusing on internal communication within the Church, it is essential to discuss the directional flow of communication within the Church. This is essential as the directional flow of church communication has critical implications on how the Church develops and in which areas it develops (Djupe & Neiheisel, 2022).

Top-down communication happens when members of the Church's leadership—pastors, elders, and administrative staff, for example—share information with the congregation (Djupe & Neiheisel, 2022). This may include sermons, announcements, newsletters, and bulletins communicating significant information, updates, and instructions from the pulpit or through formal channels of communication (Le Duc, 2022). In bottom-up communication, members provide church leadership with their opinions, worries, and insights. This can happen through channels like feedback forms, suggestion boxes, or one-on-one meetings with pastors or other ministry leaders. Through bottom-up communication, members of the congregation may express their needs, share their opinions, and participate in church decision-making (Le Duc, 2022).

Within the Church, communication between people or organizations at the same hierarchical level is referred to as horizontal or lateral (Djupe & Neiheisel, 2022). Congregants, volunteers, and ministry teams that cooperate, exchange information, and provide mutual support in a

range of church-related activities and endeavors are included in this (Olson, 2015). Church members who communicate horizontally are more likely to feel a feeling of belonging, teamwork, and support from one another (Rodgers, 2023).

Within the Church, communicating across several functional divisions or levels of hierarchy is known as "diagonal communication" (Ishola, 2023). This might happen as a result of staff personnel interacting with volunteers, committees communicating with the church leadership, or ministry leaders working together with other ministries. The promotion of cross-functional cooperation, coordination, and synergy among many facets of church operations and ministry is facilitated by diagonal communication (Djupe & Neiheisel, 2022).

1.1.3 Communication and Church Development

According to Silambi (2023), communication is the bane of development in the Church. Thus, effective communication has critical implications for churches' numeric, financial, and spiritual growth. As such, many churches have become more concerned about communication strategies and channels that they adopt to ensure that development within the Church is achieved (Silambi, 2023; Asuquo, 2018). The application of different communication strategies within the religious context is vital for disseminating spiritual teachings, fostering community engagement, and driving church development (Reddy, 2019).

In this study, communication strategies within the context of the Church as an organization are being investigated. In applying the study's adopted definition of organizational communication strategies, church communication strategy can thus be defined as the overall approach, plan, and tactics that a church employs to create and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with its stakeholders (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000; Argenti & Barnes, 2009; Davis & Deetz, 2019).

Church communication strategies, as many studies, including Welch and Jackson (2007) and Reddy (2019), have implications on the performance of organizations. This study aims to investigate the implication of communication strategies on church development.

One of the key concepts framing this study is 'development.' The concept of development, in general terms, is not easily defined. Different scholars have offered different definitions of the concept of development, indicating that the concept has diverse facets and can be perceived from different paradigms (Abuiyada, 2018). However, in its basic form, the term development denotes some advancements or growth from one state to a desired state. The concept implies the holistic growth of a person, society, or thing from one form to another, which is perceived as desirable (Rabie, 2016).

Regardless of the diverse contestations that exist on the definitions of development, church development refers to a rather simple phenomenon where the Church is seen to evolve from a former state to a better state (Jenssen, 2015). Often, when we refer to development in the Church, what is perceived to be espoused is the idea that the Church has observed some growth in terms of numbers and spirituality (Animante, Darko-Adjei, & Akussah, 2021). Church development within the context of this study refers to the numeric advancement and financial and spiritual growth of the members of the Church as well as the Church as an organization (Asuquo, 2018).

In this context, development is understood to encompass numerical growth and qualitative and spiritual aspects of a congregation's life and mission. According to Ames (2011) and Malphurs (2004), church development emphasizes nurturing spiritual growth and maturity among existing members, fostering strong relationships within the congregation, and enhancing the overall health and vitality of the Church and community impact of the Church. In this study, the researcher defines development to include numerical growth, brand popularity, increased

adoption of technology in communication, conversion rate, and retention rate (Gifford, 2010; Hoge, Johnson, & Luidens, 1994; Berglund, 2006; Towns & Stetzer, 2010).

Asuquo (2018) notes that development in the Church cannot be delinked from church communication. That is to emphasize that the very workings of the Church hinge greatly on communication activities. Hence, effectiveness in the Church's communication activities tends to have positive implications for the development of the Church (Silambi, 2023). According to Asuquo (2018), communication is used in most meetings within the Church during church meetings and, in some cases, afterward. Furthermore, critical activities that are spearheaded by communication strategies and efforts, such as prayer meetings, conventions, fundraising, and wedding and funeral ceremonies, among others, have a key impact on positive spiritual, financial, and numeric development. Thus, the spiritual, financial, and numeric development of the Church is tied to the communication activities undertaken by the Church. For instance, communication plays a key role in the spiritual development of the Church when the Church embarks on the mass spread of the Gospel, conventions, and prayer marathons. Likewise, communication is essential in persuading members of the Church to donate financially to increase the economic capacities of the Church.

MacDonald (2019) has argued that for the Church to experience development, there must be a planned approach that initiates, implements, and sustains a communication system or policy in the Church. In essence, authors have argued that since communication is essential in the overall development of the Church, there is a need to institute communication systems that direct effective communication activities of the Church. This includes the development of church organizational communication policy or strategy, the hybridization of traditional and digital communication channels and tools, training church personnel, and strategically tackling communication challenges that are likely to emerge (MacDonald, 2019; Owsley, 2019).

1.1.4 Communication Challenges Faced by Churches

Regardless of the essence of strategic communication to churches, there exist some pertinent communication-based challenges that churches across the globe face. Within the African context, where organizational communication is still experiencing critical evolution, challenges associated with church communication have become very entrenched, posing extreme challenges to the development of churches on the continent (Asogwa & Amana, 2011). While acknowledging the ubiquitous nature of communication across diverse organizations, some authors have argued about the unique nature of communication challenges that inhibit the development of the Church (Coertze, 2005). Hence, while some general communication challenges confront the development of organizations, some authors have argued that churches face even more critical challenges when it comes to communication, especially on the African continent (Asogwa & Amana, 2011).

Keeping up with the swift advances in technology and shifting patterns in communication is one of the biggest problems churches face (Magezi, 2015). In the digital era, social media and digital platforms have become indispensable tools for community development, outreach, and participation, yet many churches find adjusting difficult. Often, churches find it difficult to efficiently use technology and meaningfully engage their congregations if they have limited finances, little technical knowledge, or a strong opposition to change (Janzen, 2019).

Furthermore, churches frequently struggle to use their communication tactics to bridge the generational divide (Eastern, 2022). Younger generations are increasingly acclimated to modern communication channels like email, social media, and mobile applications, whereas older generations prefer more conventional means like phone calls, printed announcements, and in-person contacts (Endacott, Hartwig, & Yu, 2017). Effective communication with all

members of a multigenerational congregation can be greatly hampered by trying to meet their varied requirements (Djupe & Neiheisel, 2022).

For churches looking to promote cooperation and unity, communication silos—information that is dispersed or contained inside certain departments within the Church—present a serious obstacle. Congregants may miss out on significant announcements, events, or chances for engagement when information is not readily disseminated throughout various church service areas (Kimaru, 2019). To make sure that all members feel included and are informed about church activities and projects, it is imperative to dismantle communication silos and encourage cross-functional collaboration (Kimaru, 2019).

In addition to this, communicating successfully across varied cultural and language origins is a difficulty that churches encounter in multicultural and multilingual environments (Modise, 2016). Congregants from various ethnic or cultural backgrounds may find it difficult to comprehend and interact with one another due to language obstacles, cultural differences, and communication methods. Churches have to make an effort to welcome variety, honor cultural distinctions, and use inclusive communication strategies that are appealing to every member of the congregation (O'Callaghan, 2017).

Coertze (2005) notes that financial challenges are a key form of communication-based challenge that most churches in developing countries often face. Often, churches do not have the financial muscle to invest in the right communication channels and strategies that provide them the opportunity to develop. As a result, most churches often completely ignore essential communication channels and strategies that can aid in their development and remain fixated on traditional communication approaches. This, however, limits the effectiveness of their communication and essentially affects the overall development of the Church (Coertze, 2005).

In essence, in a highly evolving society where communication evolves significantly, churches are bound to face a plethora of communication difficulties that have critical implications on how they develop. These challenges are significant obstacles to successful communication and community participation in church contexts, ranging from demographic gaps and technological adaption to cultural diversity (Asogwa & Amana, 2011; Coertze, 2005). Churches may, however, transcend these obstacles and build dynamic, interconnected, and thriving communities that mirror the love, grace, and unity of the body of Christ by welcoming innovation, encouraging diversity, and placing a high value on open communication methods (Baloyi & Pali, 2023).

1.1.5 Contemporary Church Situation in Ghana

There are numerous denominational traditions in Ghana. In categorizing these churches, the study adopts Smith's (1990) suggestion that, in dealing with many small and unordered groups, it is appropriate to create a classification scheme and aggregate that separate groups into a manageable group. Various denominational classifications depend on their history, theological emphasis, leadership style, and organizational structure. For this study, Foli's (2013) classification will be used as follows: The Historic Churches, The Other Mission-Related Churches, Pentecostal Churches, The Independent "Charismatic" Churches, and The Independent "Spiritual" Churches.

Historic Churches

First, the Historic Churches are denominations or traditions pioneered by the early missionaries from Western Europe and later from North America. These denominations operate in a well-established organizational structure and follow contextualized traditions of their European missions. These churches are also called 'mainline,' 'orthodox,' and 'mission' churches. They

include The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, The Methodist Church of Ghana, The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, The Roman Catholic Church, and The Seventh Day Adventist. These churches have been in Ghana for over a century (Foli, 2013).

The Other Mission-Related Churches

These refer to churches established through the second wave of missionary work in the early 1940s. They include the Evangelical Churches of Ghana through the missions of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission, and Church of Christ by Churches of Christ Missions (Foli, 2013).

The Pentecostal Churches

In the early 1930s, Pentecostal Mission activities in Ghana established some Pentecostal churches (Foli, 2013). The first Apostolic Missionary sent to Ghana partnered with the indigenous groups to Church the Christ Apostolic Church, Ghana, from which we have the Church of Pentecost, the Apostolic Church (A Brief History of the Apostolic Church Ghana, 2023). During this period, the Assemblies of God was started by missionaries. Pentecostal refers to churches that emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit and the exact truth of the Bible (Collins, 2023).

The Independent 'Charismatic' Churches

From the 1970s, what is labeled internationally as Neo-Pentecostalism, which emerged as renewal and fellowships in the mainline churches, has resulted in a new breed of independent churches designated as 'Charismatic churches' (Foli, 2013). It is generally accepted that the father of the charismatic movement in Ghana is Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams of the Action Faith Chapel International, who was influenced greatly by Archbishop Benson Idahosa of Nigeria. Other examples of these churches include International Central Gospel Church,

Lighthouse Chapel International, and Royal House Chapel. Asamoah-Gyadu (2020) distinguishes independent charismatic churches from traditional Pentecostal churches. He argued that they differ because the Independent Charismatic churches are historically younger, non-denominational churches with a contemporary approach to church life and worship (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2020). He enlisted the following distinctive features of the Independent Charismatic Churches: mega-size congregations, messages on success and prosperity, positive declarations, imposing auditoriums with huge media presence, and internationalism (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2020).

The Independent 'Spiritual' Churches

These churches are usually referred to in the Akan local dialect as 'sumsum sore' (spiritual Church). They owe their foundation to Prophet Wade Harris, who visited Ghana in 1914. Others were people who separated themselves from the mainline churches. The Independent 'Spiritual' Churches are African indigenous churches. Examples of these churches include the Divine Healers Church, Twelve Apostle Church of John Nakabah, Mozama Disco Christo, and Cherubim and Seraphim (Foli, 2013).

1.1.6 Current Trends in Church on Focus

This is to highlight briefly some current work among the churches selected for this study.

The Methodist Church Ghana

The Methodist Church Ghana is in the second year of implementation for its 7-year strategic plan. This Strategic Plan is driven by the agenda for revival, transformation, and growth with the vision to be a vibrant Jesus Christ-centered and Spirit-filled Church. There are 13 specific objectives supported by action plans and a monitoring and evaluating system to aid in the right

implementation and feedback on progress (Afrane & Adzika, 2022). Again, The Methodist Church Ghana recently launched its ultramodern head office.

The Anglican Church Ghana

The Anglican Church Ghana envisions "to become a dynamic and united church proclaiming and transforming society with the gospel of Jesus Christ." The Church's mission is to work for the promotion of God's Kingdom in Ghana through the celebration of the Sacraments and proclamation of the Word as presented to us in Scripture, responding to the needs of society, especially the vulnerable, the disadvantaged, and the challenged; Promoting justice, peace, human dignity, and reconciliation; and Promoting environmental stewardship (Vision and Mission, 2023). The Church is passionate about proclaiming the Gospel and is undertaking a building project to temporarily accommodate visiting Bishops and clergy (IPG Project, 2023). The Church also seeks to disciple and train its children and young people to contribute to society.

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana has made great strides in many areas of Church life and ministry and has an indelible impact on society. As of their last General Assembly in December 2023, they had 21 Presbyteries, 349 inaugurated Districts, 3,148 Congregations, and 2,204 Preaching Points. This year, they have licensed and commissioned 110 Probationers, all of whom have been posted to serve various congregations and institutional chaplaincies in the country. They sent Presbyterian Ministers as Chaplains to all Presbyterian Second-cycle educational institutions in the country and many other wholly government ones now have. There is no doubt that the Church has expanded and grown physically by leaps and bounds (Odonkor, 2023).

The Church of Pentecost

The Church of Pentecost has the vision to "become a global Pentecost church that is culturally relevant in vibrant evangelism, church planting, discipleship, and holistic ministry." (The Church of Pentecost, 2023: p,2) It is on the mission to establish responsible and self-sustaining churches filled with committed, spirit-filled Christians of character who will impact their communities. The Church of Pentecost recently unveiled its strategic vision, "Vision 2028," with the theme "Possessing the Nations Part 2 – Unleashing the Whole Church for the transformation of their world with the values and principles of the kingdom of God." The focus is to equip members of the Church to become agents of transformation in their society and place of work. The Church has decided to reform its structures and institutional operation to ascertain this vision (Nyamekye, 2023).

Assemblies of God, Ghana

The Assemblies of God Ghana is guided by a leadership mandate that includes the following: to Fulfill the Great Commission with Excellence and greater passion; to Implement the Transformation Agenda religiously (make AG very great); to achieve the mission and vision of AG, Ghana; and to ensure compliance with AG Constitution. They seek to implement this vision through Preaching, Rebuilding, Restoring, Reforming, Repositioning, and rebranding the Church (Leadership, 2023).

International Central Gospel Church (ICGC)

The International Central Gospel Church's vision is to "establish the house of God through the development of Model New Testament Christians and churches." That is, they are committed to training and equipping God's people who come to our Church to develop and grow into maturity in Christ so they will manifest the character of Christ. The Church, founded and

presided over by Dr. Mensa Otabil, has the mission of raising leaders, shaping vision, and influencing society through Christ (Otabil, 2023).

Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI)

United Denominations Originating from the Lighthouse Group of Churches was pioneered in 1985 by Bishop Dag Heward-Mills in Ghana under the name Korle-Bu Christian Centre. The name was changed to Lighthouse Chapel in 1987. The Church's mission is "to build 25,000 churches, to have Churches in 150 countries, to fight fiercely and relentlessly in all battles for the advancement of the churches and the Gospel, to produce radical Christians who work for God, to go to heaven and to hear Jesus say - "Well done, good and faithful servant." Its headquarters, the Qodesh, is located in Accra, Ghana. The Church has over 6,075 branches in many other countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Australia, the Middle East, and America. UD-OLGC is made up of 41 denominations and 138 Bishops in 73 countries. The Church has a humanitarian or charity wing, Help the Helpless, which seeks to help the blind, prisoners, the poor, the sick, and widows. It also has an orphanage, The Lighthouse Christian Home, and a primary school, The Lighthouse Christian Mission School, both are under the management of his wife, Lady Rev. Adelaide Heward-Mills. The Church also has Anagkazo Bible School, which trains people for the ministry (Dag Heward-Mills: Founder, 2023)

Royal House Chapel International

The Royal House was founded in 1992 by the Apostle General Sam Korankye Ankrah. The driving mission of the Church is "touching our generation with the power of God." The headquarters (Ahenfie) of the Church has 26 different Ministries, and its distinct organs are incorporated under the umbrella name. Royal House Chapel has 200 Local Assemblies and 16 International Missions in Europe and the United States. There are various departments, such as the media ministries, the church administration, the Christian Leadership College, and the

Department of Social Services under the Church. The Social Services and Practical Ministry has a wide range of departments under it, including the Royal House Chapel Scholarship Foundation, The Compassion Ministry (Feed the Hungry, Rural Missions and Evangelism), the Marriage Counseling Department, the Children, Teens, Young Adults, Men, Women, Aged and Anglophone & Francophone Ministry amongst man (Ankrah, 2023)

Roman Catholic Church of Ghana

According to Gyamfi (2023), the roots of Catholicism in Ghana can be traced back to the 15th century, with the arrival of Portuguese missionaries along the coast. However, it was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries that Catholicism began to take root and flourish in the region. Missionary efforts led by European priests and religious orders, such as the Society of African Missions (SMA) and the Holy Spirit Fathers (Spiritans), laid the foundation for the growth and expansion of the Catholic Church in Ghana. According to a report published by the Archdiocese of the Cathedral in Accra, over 10% of the Christian population in Ghana is catholic (Catholic Archdiocese of Accra, 2017).

The Roman Catholic Church holds a significant place in the religious landscape of Ghana, contributing to the country's spiritual, social, and educational fabric. With a rich history spanning over a century, the Catholic Church in Ghana has played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's religious identity, promoting social justice, and providing vital services to communities across the country (Gyamfi, 2023).

First Baptist Church

The Ghana Baptist Convention, which started as a mustard seed, is growing into one of the largest denominations in Ghana, with over 2500 churches and the diaspora. The Ghana Baptist Mission established the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu in the Northern Region, the Pastors

Training School (now Northern Ghana Baptist Theological Seminary) in Tamale, Kumasi Academy, and the Ghana Baptist Seminary, now the School of Theology & Ministry of the Ghana Baptist University College, in Abuakwa, near Kumasi. The Church is implementing its 10-year strategic plan titled "Showers of Blessings" to affect the development of Human Resources, Denominational Discipleship, Financial Solvency, Shelter for Worship, and Maintaining the Bible as Vital tool for the Church.

Christ Apostolic Church-Ghana

The Christ Apostolic Church is fulfilling its yearly theme, "Be Discipled to meet your God." The Church, led by the recently elected chairman, Apostle Samuel Amponsah-Frimpong, seeks to spread the Gospel to all parts of Ghana. During his commissioning, the chairman highlighted the need to partner with the government to spearhead and maintain peace and create prosperity for all Ghanaians (Ofori, 2023).

Communication will play a very significant role in achieving the vision outlined by these churches. Therefore, the communication approach and strategy adopted to arrive at their development calls for critical examination.

The Christian church landscape in Ghana is hence comprised diverse sects of different churches (Opoku, 2016). While the historical context of the Christian Church in Ghana provides evidence of the workings of the Orthodox Church, the current landscape indicates that the church situation in Ghana has revolutionized, allowing for different denominations to operate in the nation.

1.2 Problem Statement

The role and relevance of churches as religious institutions and social agencies cannot be overstated. It is, hence, essential that studies are conducted on the activities of the Church to improve its workings and social contributions.

Growing awareness of the critical role that effective communication plays in the growth and development of churches as essential community institutions has occurred in recent years. However, even with the growing focus on communication tactics in religious institutions, there is still the need to examine the unique possibilities and problems that churches face when trying to communicate for development.

In Africa, various studies have investigated different aspects of church communication strategies within specific contexts. Dyikuk's (2019) study, conducted in 2019, focused on utilizing social communication within the mission of the Church in Nigeria. Employing the Multimedia Theoretical Framework, Dyikuk (2019) aimed to assess the extent to which social communication means were employed in the Nigerian church context. Through a qualitative approach, the study revealed several pertinent findings. It became evident that despite ample documents within the Church advocating the effective use of communication means, there was a fundamental misinterpretation of communication principles. Furthermore, the research unveiled a need for more determination to integrate media usage into the pastoral landscape of Nigeria. Notably, there was scepticism surrounding the implementation of virtual reality technology in the Church's communication endeavors.

Muasya's (2020) study took a distinct trajectory by exploring the relationship between effective internal communication and employee performance within the Anglican Church of Kenya, Makueni Diocese. The study was designed to ascertain the efficacy of internal communication

channels in influencing employee performance and to propose strategies for enhancing such communication mechanisms within the ecclesiastical framework. In alignment with Dyikuk's (2019) research, Muasya (2020) also acknowledged the significance of communication within a church context. However, the study diverged from Dyikuk's (2019) focus on external social communication and delved into the intricacies of internal communication and its impact on employee performance. Notably, Muasya's (2020) findings indicated a deficiency in the effectiveness of internal communication channels, suggesting a potential area for improvement.

Magezi (2015) took a broader perspective by investigating the utilization of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) within the context of church practice in two Zimbabwean cities. Unlike the previous studies that primarily focused on communication strategies, Magezi's (2015) research focused on technology adoption and utilization within the church setting. Although Dyikuk's (2019) and Muasya's (2020) studies underscored the significance of communication in church contexts, Magezi's (2015) study veered towards exploring technological advancements and their integration into church practices. It is worth noting that Magezi's (2015) research while concentrating on a specific subset of communication tools, did not comprehensively address the entire spectrum of communication strategies within churches.

Narrowing down the focus to Ghana, the few accessible studies on communication within the church setting focused on situational communication strategies like that of Acquah (2021), who investigated communication strategies employed by the Methodist Church in Ghana in the fight against COVID-19. Darko-Adjei (2021), on the other hand, investigated the use of social media by leaders of charismatic churches in Ghana. While these two studies discussed communication strategies employed by Ghanaian churches, their scope and focus are limited.

Acquah (2021) did not discuss the Methodist Church's communication strategies in non-pandemic situations. The focus was also on only one denomination, which also belonged to one grouping of the modern Church – orthodox. Darko-Adjei's (2021) study also focused on a single medium of communication – social media, with no discussion of other channels and strategies used. The study also focused on only two churches within the charismatic churches.

The minimal research conducted on communication strategies within Ghana and the identified gaps in the few accessible studies by Acquah (2021) and Darko-Adjei (2021) give grounds for further studies that bring together a sample of churches from the three major divisions of the modern Church – Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Charismatic to investigate the standard communication strategies they employ in their day-to-day operations internally and externally.

To address this research gap, this research comprehensively examines the diverse communication strategies employed by specific church denominations in Ghana. In making a strategic decision regarding the scope of investigation, this study will emphasize an approach that transcends the confines of individual service locations. Instead, the primary focus will be directed toward denominational groupings, specifically Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Charismatic churches.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General objective

The main goal of this study is to investigate the impact of communication strategies on the development of churches in Ghana. The specific objectives to be addressed are as follows:

- Investigate the communication strategies adopted by Ghana's charismatic, Pentecostal, and Orthodox churches.

- Examine the implications of the communication strategies of the churches to the development of the churches in Ghana.
- Explore the challenges churches face in integrating modern communication tools or channels in their internal communication.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What communication strategies are adopted by Ghana's charismatic, Pentecostal, and Orthodox churches?
2. What are the implications of the churches' communication strategies for developing charismatic, Pentecostal, and Orthodox churches in Ghana?
3. What challenges do churches face in integrating modern communication tools or channels in their internal communication?

1.5 Scope of the Study

While acknowledging the presence of many orthodox, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches in Ghana, this study will concentrate on a selected group of twelve churches, with an equal distribution of four from each category. These churches have been strategically chosen for their prominence, their reach in terms of branches across Ghana, and their influence within the chosen research locations of Tema and Accra. The research focused on The Methodist, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian. These churches have a long-standing history in Ghana and represent the orthodox Christian tradition. The study will also encompassed four major charismatic churches: ICGC (International Central Gospel Church), Lighthouse Chapel International, Perez Chapel, and Royal House Chapel. Furthermore, core Pentecostal churches such as the Christ Apostolic Church, Church of Pentecost, the Baptist Church and the Assemblies of God were also included in this study because they also formed a core constituent

of the church community in Ghana. It is essential to acknowledge that even though the study intends to generalize its results to churches in Ghana, the specific outcomes of this research should be understood as representative of the selected churches in Tema and Accra.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant potential for contributing to local and global knowledge in the field of church communication. In-depth research into church communication strategies among Ghanaian religious institutions, encompassing charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox denominations, would significantly advance knowledge in this domain. The study aligns with the scholarly tradition of examining communication strategies in religious organizations, and its localized focus contributes to a deeper understanding of communication within the Ghanaian context. Scholars have emphasized the need to explore communication practices in religious organizations (Baxter, 2016; Pooley, 2017). By comparing and contrasting strategies in charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox Ghanaian churches, this research builds upon existing literature by offering insights into the dynamic nature of communication within these denominations.

The contextual focus on Ghanaian churches is a salient feature of this study, ensuring that the findings remain rooted in the specific sociocultural, historical, and religious dynamics of Ghana. This aspect enhances the relevance and applicability of the research to the Ghanaian church landscape. While the research focuses on Ghana, its implications extend beyond national boundaries. The insights generated here have the potential to enrich global discussions on organizational communication, particularly within religious organizations. This research aligns with this global perspective by studying communication strategies in Ghanaian churches. It acknowledges that effective communication strategies transcend cultural boundaries and can inform practices in religious organizations worldwide.

This research's practical significance lies in its potential to inform policy and decision-making within Ghanaian churches. The recommendations derived from this study can guide churches in Ghana in enhancing their communication practices to serve their congregations and communities better. Moreover, the global applicability of these findings is noteworthy. Churches worldwide face similar challenges adapting to changing communication technologies and societal dynamics. Therefore, the best practices identified in this study can serve as case studies for churches outside of Ghana, aiding them in navigating the complexities of contemporary communication.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is organized in five chapters. This current chapter is the main introduction to the study. It has discussed the background of the research, the problem statement, the research aim, objectives, and questions, the scope of the research, the justification for the study, and the potential contribution of the research. Chapter 2 discusses the theories supporting the study and reviews empirical studies. Under the theoretical review section, key theories underpinning the study were discussed. The empirical review section discussed findings from earlier research similar to this study. Chapter 3 presents the qualitative research design, which explains the general and specific steps taken to gather and analyze data for the research. It discussed the data collection methods, the study's analytical design, and other vital methodological issues, such as ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents analyses, findings, and discussions of the data for the qualitative inquiries. Chapter 5 concludes the study with a summary of salient points, major contributions of the study, recommendations, and topics for further studies.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the general introduction to the study. This chapter focused on explaining concepts in the study while drawing on different arguments to establish the linkage between them. Ultimately, this chapter of the study established the motivation for studying church communication and church development in Ghana. The chapter discussed the core objectives of the study, which were to investigate the role of communication in church development in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study focuses on reviewing relevant literature that is in line with the objectives of the study. Therefore, this chapter critically reviews studies and other literature on church communication and development. The chapter also presents discussions on the theoretical framework that guides the study. The study considers the Systems Theory and the Persuasive Communication theories as theoretical underpinnings for this study. This chapter presents critical discussions on the two theories, which are presented as the theoretical foundation to help understand how communication is done or performed in churches. The chapter also discusses a review of related literature and its identified gaps.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Communication and Religion

Authors have noted that communication is pivotal in every form of religion. Hence, communication plays a critical role in religions across the world. Some scholars contend that the basis for which different acts of worship have evolved and morphed into contemporary forms of structured religion revolves around communication (Nadeem, Mohammed, & Dalib, 2017). Ottuh and Jemegbe (2020) have emphasized that communication is central to every aspect of society. Religion and religious acts and values are a central aspect of societies, hence, different forms of communication are integrated to establish themselves and evolve.

One important fundamental and crucial idea in religious thinking is that religion is a communicative topic; that is, religion is a message that the Supernatural Being has given to humans, and anybody who accepts this message will also share it with others (Uttoh & Jemegbe, 2020). All religions that are practiced in human civilization, of course, communicate (Nadeem, Mohammed, & Dalib, 2017). For instance, to express that religion is rooted in communication activities, some scholars argue that all religions have been established and propagated through propaganda, an essential communication tool. This also suggests that all religions worldwide communicate, and that communication cannot be delinked from religion (Sazali, 2018).

Uttoh and Jemegbe (2020) note further that the core of most religions is built on the messenger and message narrative. For instance, the entirety of the Islam religion is built on the supposition that Mohammed (messenger) was the holy prophet who was ordained to deliver and spread the message of Islam. Similarly, the Christian religion follows a similar trajectory, focusing on Jesus Christ as the messenger and the gospel of Christ as the message. Uttoh and Jemegbe (2020) acknowledge that the emphasis on the messenger and message narrative proposes that religion is a communicative act.

The social and communication elements are visible and similar to all religions if one closely examines the religious precepts, commands, and worship found in most (Zhao, 2019). For example, most religious prayers, essentially a condensed list of religious principles and beliefs, have been recommended and stressed to be said in a group setting using just verbal communication (Alviry, 2007; Bassey, Anweting, & Maashin, 2019). Saying these prayers aloud suggests that worship rituals have a communicative purpose. It is also a plural form of worship that fosters intimacy and sympathy among followers of different religions while simultaneously putting them in a position to become aware of one another's circumstances and

lifestyles (Gazniuk, Soina, Goncharov, & Chervony, 2019). Zhao (2019) notes that these prayer and chant expressions characterize the history and evolution of religion worldwide. Zhao (2019) underscores that in primitive societies where written communication had not been fully developed, verbal communication formed the basis of religious communication. Religious symbols were primarily expressed through voice (such as chanting and playing simple instruments), body (such as expressions, gestures, dances, and other ritual acts), and image (such as makeup, clothing, Totems, and simple hieroglyphics) between wizards and members of the ordinary clan (Alviry, 2007). Even now, where written communication has advanced and digital technologies have evolved communication entirely, oral communication still holds much significance in religion (Hezser, 2010).

Beyond oral communication that grounds the history of religion, authors have argued that the written forms of religion, such as the Torah, Quran, and the Bible, also provide critical evidence of the role and relevance of communication in religion (Uttoh & Jememgbe, 2020). Some scholars argue that religion has become a crucial aspect of societies even in recent times due to written communication forms (Reddy, 2018; Ghosh, 2018; King, 2003). They argue that written communication preserves religious traditions, ideas, thoughts, and prescriptions (Zhao, 2019). This also asserts that religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity, among others, have preserved their basic ideals and thoughts because of the introduction of written communication forms (Cohen, 2023). The founders of major global religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, disseminated their beliefs orally rather than in written works. Their teachings were preserved and gradually disseminated worldwide because their disciples kept the records, combed through, and processed their sermons to create masterpieces (Zhao, 2019). Several studies have linked the spread and expansion of different forms of religion to developing written forms of communication (Gazniuk, Soina, Goncharov, & Chervony, 2019; Zhao, 2019; Nahon-Serfaty & Ahmed, 2014). Thus, the literature supports

that religions have become global and have spread widely because of the advancements in written communication. The emergence and fast popularization of print media, which enabled the rapid replication of written text, is perhaps the bane of religious communication without the quick expansion of print technologies that facilitated the spread of religious texts, thinking, and ideas (Zhao, 2019).

Some authors also evidence that religious communication has evolved since the 1920s when electronic media such as radio and television emerged and expanded across continents (Hoover, 2012; de Witte, 2011; Scharnick-Udemans, 2017). This provides critical evidence of the role of communication in religion. Communication technology has undergone yet another transformation since the 1920s. The era of electronic communication, which began with the development and widespread of motion pictures, radio, and television, influenced world religions unparalleled (Zhao, 2019). This historic feat marked yet another transition in the history of religion while also giving some understanding of the role of communication in religion (de Witte, 2011).

Communication technology has greatly influenced the evolution of modern religion, yet this does not imply that religion is a solely reliant phenomenon. Communication technology is an independent variable (Oveh, 2023; Zhao, 2019). This also suggests that religion has laws of occurrence and evolution as a largely autonomous social system (Zhao, 2019). These laws also influence other social systems, such as the communication system. Hence, while there is a close linkage between religion and communication, religion is not dependent on communication (ibid).

2.2.2 The Christian Church and Communication

The development of the mass popular media and a free, pluralist pattern of public communication throughout the past 150 years have significantly impacted how the Church communicates internally and internationally (Hines, 2020). As a result, there have been significant shifts in how we show our religion, individually and as a society, and in how we practice modern spirituality (King, 2003).

Christianity is primarily a communication-based religion that places a strong emphasis on divine revelation, the Incarnation and the Church's ongoing incarnation in various cultures, the mandate to proclaim God's word, the formal ecclesial community as the setting for the development of faith, the importance of written scriptures, and the passing down of a tradition to future generations (Asuquo, 2018). The ability of the Church to remain vibrant has rested mainly on its ability to modify its gospel message to fit the media of the day (Asogwa & Amana, 2011).

The Church's purpose is centered on communication since it is an essential means of spreading the gospel, encouraging spiritual development, and creating a sense of community among Christians (Animante, Darko-Adjei, & Akussah, 2021). From the beginning of Christianity to the present, the Church has embraced a variety of communication channels in order to share the gospel, encourage discipleship, and equip Christians for service (Asuquo, 2018).

The diversity of communication allows communication in the Church to be carried out in varied ways. Hence, different churches across the globe engage in a plethora of communication types and forms as regular parts of their worship. Asuquo (2018) argues that the nature of communication forms and their relationship to how churches develop is seamless. Hence,

authors focused on communication in the Church often ignore the key intricacies prevalent in church communication (Idowu, 2016).

Churches employ a mix of different communication forms to effectively communicate their purpose to members of the Church (King, 2003). One of the main forms of communication employed in churches is verbal communication (Reddy, 2017). Inspiring faith, conviction, and discipleship, sermons, Bible studies, and theology lectures provide spiritual insights, biblical teachings, and moral advice to congregations (Hezser, 2010). Church bulletins, newsletters, and publications, which include information about forthcoming events, ministry updates, and prayer requests, are important kinds of written communication that help keep members informed and involved in the life of the Church (Hezser, 2010).

Digital Communication has recently become increasingly integrated into church communication activities (Chukwuma, 2018). Using websites, social media accounts, and mobile applications, churches may connect with their members outside their physical building by instantly disseminating sermons, materials, and announcements to a worldwide audience (Adetoyese, 2022). Visual communication tools have, in a sense, taken center stage in church communication (Gehring, 2021). Sacred stories, spiritual themes, and theological truths are communicated via art, architecture, and symbolism in church structures and worship areas, enhancing worship sessions and strengthening believers' comprehension of their religion (Asiedu & Boateng, 2019).

These diverse forms of communication have characterized the nature of communication within the Church globally. Meanwhile, verbal forms of communication remain the most often used by most churches worldwide (King, 2003). Digital technologies have come to mean that there are crucial opportunities for consolidating the different forms of communication into internet-enabled forms that transcend physical borders (Gehring, 2021; Chukwuma, 2018).

Some authors have argued that one of the critical dimensions through which church communication can be understood is viewing the Church as an organization (Cho & Squier, 2013; Le Duc, 2022). Thus, communication in the Church essentially happens within the larger framework of organizational communication. Indeed, while there is growing contestation on whether the Church is an organization, some literature acknowledges that the Church can be seen as an organization. Hence, communication within churches may be viewed as organizational communication (Jouany & Martic, 2020). Organizational communication covers communication within an organization with a specified functional structure. The core of organizational communication is that all contributing factions of the communication process are seen as stakeholders. Thus, when one engages in organizational communication, one focuses on communicating with the organization's key stakeholders (Sazali, 2018). Communication within the Church also adopts similar characteristics since the Church can be seen as an organization. Church communication, hence, deals with communicating with the key stakeholders of the Church (Hoover, 2012).

Ultimately, this presents the notion that organizational communication with the Church occurs in two main dimensions – internal communication and external communication. Sazali (2018) notes that communication in the Church can be observed from three perspectives - communication with the divine, communication with members of the church community, and communication with members of the external social community. Whichever way one looks at it, it is evident that communication plays a critical role in churches. Authors contend that the core of the Christian religion is born out of communication with the Almighty God (Jenkins, 2023; Barss, 2019; Benyah, 2020). While this is true and presents critical spotlights for discussing the origins of the Christian religion, internal communication with members of the Church and external communication with the external environment forms the focus of this study. Internal communication within the Church often occurs in two main ways: a top-down

communication approach where leaders communicate with church members and communication among members of the Church (Knap, 2013; Johnson, 2014; Allen & Swanton, 2016).

2.2.3 Internal Communication within Churches

Internal communication within churches is a critical facet that influences congregational engagement, organizational cohesion, and spiritual growth. This section explores various strategies employed for effective internal communication within church contexts, drawing insights from reputable sources that highlight the importance of fostering a communicative and supportive environment. Authors argue that internal communication within the Church occurs mainly in two ways – communication between members of the Church and communication from leaders of the Church to members of the Church (Pennar, 2020; Knap, 2013; Johnson, 2014; Allen & Swanton, 2016).

Pastoral leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the internal communication dynamics within churches. Pastors serve as spiritual guides, communicators, and facilitators of community engagement (Darko-Adjei, Animante, & Akussah, 2021). The openness and transparency of pastoral leaders significantly impact the communication culture within a church. Johnson (2014) underscores the importance of pastors in creating an atmosphere of open communication. Pastors who prioritize transparency in their leadership style contribute to a sense of trust and openness among church members. Vision casting is a pivotal aspect of pastoral leadership that influences internal communication. Booher-Jennings (2008) emphasizes the role of pastors in articulating a compelling vision for the Church. When pastors effectively communicate the Church's vision, members gain clarity about the collective goals, fostering unity and alignment within the congregation. Pastoral leaders serve as role models for effective communication within the church community. Their ability to model active

listening, empathy, and clear expression sets the tone for healthy interpersonal communication. Krejcir (2012) discusses the impact of pastoral modeling on creating a communicative church environment. Conflicts are inevitable in any community, and pastoral leaders play a crucial role in conflict resolution. By employing effective communication strategies, pastors can guide the congregation through conflicts, promoting reconciliation and unity. Knapp (2013) explores the role of communication in conflict resolution within church contexts.

Small groups enhance internal communication within churches, providing a space for personalized interaction and spiritual growth. Small groups are microcosms of the larger church community, fostering intimate connections and relational depth. Krejcir (2012) discusses the role of small groups in community building, emphasizing their potential to create a sense of belonging and mutual support among church members. Personalized communication within small groups contributes to individualized discipleship. In the context of small groups, members have opportunities for one-on-one interactions, prayer, and sharing personal journeys. This personalized approach enhances spiritual growth and creates a supportive environment for individuals. Allen and Swanton (2016) explore the impact of small groups on personalized discipleship. Leadership within small groups is pivotal for effective communication. Small group leaders serve as facilitators of discussions, mentors, and shepherds. Their ability to foster an atmosphere of trust and openness dramatically influences the quality of communication within the group. Swanson and Pintar (2016) discuss the significance of leadership in small groups for creating a communicative and supportive environment.

2.2.3 The Role of Communication in Church Development

Communication within the Church has been critical in ensuring churches develop in many ways. Offiong (2018) notes that communication enhances the prospects of the Church in reaching different levels of development. Offiong (2018) notes that the Church develops

differently. This includes economic, numeric, spiritual, and social development. Offiong (2018) notes that this is largely facilitated by implementing some critical communication strategies that create interactions between the internal and external members of the Church.

The Church's social development should be understood in terms of its increasing social relevance, acceptance, and popularity, as well as in terms of the growing unity and cooperation among its members across various congregations and denominations, all of which foster better social interaction. Communication contributes to this evolution by publicizing and raising awareness of church initiatives. News, directions, and information regarding church issues are also distributed to members and outsiders. The Church's social growth is further enhanced by the media, which also helps improve church programming and member interactions (Offiong, 2018).

Asuquo (2018) points out that church communication and development are inextricably intertwined. This is to underline that as the Church's basic operations rely heavily on communication, the Church's ability to communicate effectively tends to benefit the Church's growth (Silambi, 2023). Asuquo (2018) claims that most church gatherings involve communication during and, in certain situations, beyond church hours.

As Offiong (2018) notes, economic growth is the capacity to fund and carry out different projects and keep the Church running smoothly. These initiatives might involve buying property, starting construction projects, buying equipment, starting new churches, and giving the church and its people more financial power. Furthermore, Offiong (2018) argues that using contributions, fundraising events, and offerings is a significant method of financing these. Due to its utilization of radio, television, advertisements, handbills, posters, and flyers to guarantee publicity, communication is crucial to these activities. Communicating raises awareness and

extends an invitation to a large number of people. These events guarantee a high turnout and, as a result, a high revenue when the mass media is used correctly and effectively.

Offiong (2018) continues that as the Church increases numerically, it is anticipated to expand in financial and economic capabilities since economic and numerical development are closely related. A larger membership implies increased contributions, church revenue, and financial capacity. Here, it should be remembered that the mass media plays a role in the numerical expansion of the Church, which in turn helps with its financial and economic expansion.

Additionally, important events like prayer meetings, conventions, fundraising, weddings, and funerals, among others, that are led by communication strategies and efforts significantly influence the advancement of spirituality, finances, and numerical development (Offiong, 2018; Asuquo, 2018). It follows that there is a direct correlation between the Church's communication efforts and its spiritual, financial, and numerical growth. For example, when the Church starts holding conferences, prayer marathons, and widespread gospel distribution, communication becomes crucial to the Church's spiritual growth. Similarly, convincing churchgoers to donate to expand the organization's financial resources requires effective communication (Asuquo, 2018).

In the Church, communication is essential to fostering Christians' spiritual development and discipleship. Church leaders help members in their spiritual journeys by imparting biblical truths, theological insights, and practical wisdom through sermons, Bible studies, small groups, and discipleship programs (Silambi, 2023). People are empowered to develop a closer connection with God, get a deeper comprehension of the scripture, and actively live out their faith when the gospel message is communicated in an engaging and straightforward manner.

Encouraging donations and fundraising campaigns inside the Church are made possible via effective communication (Asuquo, 2018). Church leaders encourage members to pledge their

financial resources to kingdom-building projects by clearly communicating the Church's purpose, beliefs, and strategic goals. Churches share how donating changes lives, advances ministry projects, and spreads the gospel throughout communities using powerful narratives, personal testimonies, and multimedia displays (Chukwuma, 2018). Communication focused on the Church's vision and mission inspires people to live with passion and zeal, enabling members to generously contribute to the development of the Church (Hezser, 2010).

Another dimension where financial church development is expressed concerns how communication is engaged to ensure financial accountability and transparency. Churches engage in different forms of communication to show transparency and honesty in their financial resource management by releasing financial statements, reports, and updates regularly. Congregants gain confidence and trust when budgets, costs, and financial choices are communicated openly. This empowers people to give and support the Church's activities and initiatives.

Offiong (2018) further notes the relevance of communication in improving the numeric development of the Church. The Church's numerical development is anchored by communication, which is essential for drawing in, holding on to, and encouraging new members and fostering the development and growth of the church community. The Church's numerical development goals cannot be advanced without efficient communication tactics, from evangelistic outreach to discipleship and retention initiatives. An effective means of evangelistic outreach is communication, which allows the Church to communicate the gospel with people inside and outside its immediate neighborhood. Sermons, evangelistic activities, book distribution, and digital media platforms are just a few ways churches spread the good news of salvation and encourage people to accept the gospel.

Additionally, the assimilation of new members into the church community and their long-term retention depends heavily on communication (Otieno, 2014). Making the Church's programs, ministries, and engagement possibilities clear and friendly helps new members feel included and connected immediately. Relational ties, pastoral care, and personalized follow-up further reinforce a sense of commitment and belonging, which lowers attrition and promotes long-term retention within the church community (Endacott, Hartwig, & Yu, 2017).

According to MacDonald (2019), a deliberate strategy that starts, develops, and maintains a communication system or policy inside the Church is required for the Church to grow. Some authors have maintained that since good communication is crucial to the Church's overall growth, it is necessary to set up communication mechanisms that guide its outreach initiatives (Animante, Darko-Adjei, & Akussah, 2021). This involves creating organizational communication policies and strategies for churches, combining conventional and digital communication channels and technologies, providing training for church staff, and strategically addressing any communication issues that may arise (MacDonald, 2019; Owsley, 2019).

In essence, communication is critical to creating and expanding churches because it shapes spiritual formation, connects people, and supports outreach and mission initiatives. Churches may foster a culture of participation, cooperation, and discipleship that helps people grow in their faith and spread the Church by emphasizing effective communication techniques. Churches must stay dedicated to adopting innovation, authenticity, and relational ministry principles that reflect the transforming potential of communication in growing the Church as they continue to negotiate the difficulties of today's communication landscape.

2.2.4 Effective Communication Strategies for Church Growth

Communication strategy concerns the science and art of employing a carefully developed plan and method to achieve some intended communication-based objective (Prehn, 2012). It concerns the set of plans and techniques that are adopted to effectively communicate some messages to a group of people (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). Effective communication strategies critically use communication resources and capabilities and align them with critical communication objectives (Kibe, 2014). Authors such as Penna (2020), Murphy et al. (2017), and Hallahan et al. (2007) have all argued that despite the wealth of literature on communication in churches, very little literature exists on the effectiveness of communication strategies that churches adopt. However, some studies have tried illuminating how effective communication strategies are for church development.

Prehn (2012) notes that while communication is critical in churches, implementing effective communication strategies guarantees church growth. Prehn (2012) further notes that six key strategies ensure effective communication for the development of the Church. The author accounts for the use of multiple communication channels, ensuring specializations in communication production systems and authenticity in communication messages, which comprise some of the critical strategies that must be adopted within churches as communication strategies. Prehn (2012) further notes that another critical strategy that churches can adopt is to be sensitive to cultural contexts and nuances. Also, churches can develop when they improve the overall management of communication resources while striving to ensure that communicative messages touch on what the Church perceives as relevant.

Appiah-Kubi and Torres (2008) highlight the importance of diverse worship expressions, they argue that, Churches that embrace various musical styles and cultural elements create an inclusive environment that appeals to a broader audience. Effective communication extends

beyond the pulpit to community engagement programs. Adu-Gyamfi (2017) emphasizes the role of churches in community development. Churches that actively participate in community initiatives, addressing local needs and demonstrating a commitment to social welfare enhance their appeal and contribute to sustainable growth.

Technology plays a vital role in church growth strategies. Adu-Gyamfi (2017) discusses the impact of technology on church outreach, emphasizing the use of social media and online platforms. Churches that leverage technology effectively extend their reach, connect with a broader audience, and attract individuals who may not be physically present. To this length, Penna (2020), Wakefield (2020), and Weinstein (2020) note that the coronavirus caused a great revolution in church communication. Penna (2020), for instance, accounts for the coronavirus pandemic era, which initiated a shift from face-to-face interpersonal communication to a heavy reliance on digital and social media technologies. The author further avers that this has massively changed how churches communicate, with many churches still adopting and relying on these strategies to reach wider audiences worldwide. According to Wakefield (2020), the coronavirus era tested the resilience of internal communication channels in the Church. Churches during the COVID-19 times had to shift to different forms of internal communication channels that enabled church members to communicate amongst themselves while also allowing the transference of information from church leaders to members.

From a global perspective, scholars have recognized the significance of effective communication in the growth and development of churches (Bail, 2014; van der Berg, Malan, and Wolhuter, 2015). Specifically, (Bail, 2014) emphasizes the importance of communication in managing and promoting the reputation of religious institutions. Kim and Kim (2019) examined how churches use Facebook to build relationships with the public in the United States and Korea. Choi and Kim (2018) investigated the impact of social media on the public relations

practices of religious congregations. Lee and Kim (2017) explored the use of communication technologies by pastors and its influence on the religious participation of church members.

In Africa (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2017) highlights the growing importance of using social media and other technological tools in church communication to engage with members and the wider society. Moreover, recent studies have shown that church communication is associated with improved community integration, particularly in Africa (Yawson, 2019).

Worancha (2012) for instance examine communication strategies that enable church development in churches in Eastern Africa. The study found that the implementation of effective communication strategies that are primarily based on interactivity and persuasiveness have critical implications for numerical and spiritual growth of the church. Worancha (2012) found in his study that effective communication strategies are ultimately developed from a critical assessment of the communication needs of the church. Such strategies that are developed from an introspective analysis of the communication demands of the church enable the implementation of communication strategies that directly impact church development. In essence, Worancha's (2012) study argues for a custom-fit communication strategy outline for churches that connects directly to the communication needs of the church. Eilers (1979) stresses the relevance of communication training in churches in Africa as a key strategy for their development. Eilers (1979) notes that for churches to experience the benefit of communication in how they develop, churches in Africa must invest in communication training for church leaders and members. Eilers (1979) argues for a three-step communication approach to provide an intensive communication training guideline or routine for leaders of churches in Africa. Ugot and Offiong (2013) studied the nature and role of language and communication in Pentecostal Churches in Calabar, Nigeria. Much like Worancha (2012) had found in his study in Eastern Africa, Ugot and Offiong (2013) also stress the relevance of a needs-based

communication strategy for churches. However, Ugot and Offiong (2013) argue while acknowledging the relevance of communication that for churches to develop effectively, there must be an emphasis on language use and not just communication strategies. Ugot and Offiong (2013) stress that language use strategies such as use of literary devices, neologisms, and the use of language in prayers and choruses have key implications for the spiritual development of churches in Nigeria. At the same time, Agbese et al. (2020) and Agbese et al. (2018) studied the use of social media in Pentecostal churches and pastors in Nigeria.

2.2.5 Evolution of Church Communication in Ghana

In recent years, communication has become a critical component in the success and growth of churches worldwide. In Ghana, churches have recognized the importance of effective communication strategies to expand their outreach and promote growth within their congregations (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2017). The growth of churches in Ghana relies on effective communication strategies that resonate with the congregation and attract new members. Contextualized preaching and teaching are crucial for church growth in Ghana. As Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) discussed, pastors who contextualize their messages to address local issues and concerns connect more effectively with the congregation. Understanding the socio-cultural context enables churches to deliver relevant and impactful messages. Ghana boasts of diverse ethnic groups, each with distinct cultural expressions. Incorporating inclusive worship styles that celebrate this diversity is essential for church growth

Historically, before the emergence of modern communication technologies, churches relied on more traditional methods of communication to engage with their members and stakeholders, such as face-to-face interactions and printed materials (Lee & Kim, 2017). For example, pastors and other religious leaders would deliver sermons and communicate with members in person or through written correspondence, and printed materials such as church bulletins and

newsletters were often distributed to disseminate announcements and other important information (Lee & Kim, 2017).

In addition, churches often organize events and activities, such as social gatherings and community service projects, to engage with their members and serve the wider community (Choi & Kim, 2018). These events allowed for face-to-face interactions and allowed members to build relationships with one another and church leaders.

Despite the limitations of these traditional methods of communication, they were effective in promoting engagement and building community among church members (Lee & Kim, 2017). However, new communication technologies have also presented new opportunities for churches to engage with their members in more diverse and efficient ways.

Before the emergence of modern communication technologies, church communication in Africa and Ghana, as well as globally, focused on traditional methods of communication such as oral storytelling and pamphlet distribution (Kretch, 2018; Adzroe, 2016).

Initially, churches in Africa and Ghana relied on word-of-mouth and community-based communication to reach out to members and engage with stakeholders (Mwaura, 2018). This was often achieved through preaching, evangelism, and community outreach programs. Oral storytelling and folklore were also essential ways religious messages were conveyed and passed down from generation to generation (Mwaura, 2018).

In addition, churches in Africa and Ghana used printed materials such as letters, tracts, and pamphlets to disseminate information and invite members to events and activities (Adzroe, 2016). Individual churches often produced and distributed these materials within the community or at church services and events.

However, as technology advanced, churches in Africa and Ghana have gradually incorporated digital communication tools into their outreach and engagement strategies (Agbese et al., 2018; Kim & Kim, 2019). For example, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become popular tools for churches to interact with their members and promote community engagement, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to restrictions on physical gatherings (Agbese et al., 2020). Many churches have begun live streaming their services on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, allowing members to participate in services remotely. (Agbese et al., 2020).

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2017), churches in Ghana increasingly use various communication channels, such as social media, radio, and television, to reach out to their congregations and the wider community. These channels have become essential tools for churches to share messages, connect with members, and attract new followers (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2017).

In addition to using traditional communication channels, churches in Ghana are adopting more innovative methods, such as mobile apps and websites, to facilitate communication and engagement with their members (Gyimah, 2020). These platforms allow churches to share real-time information, sermons, and other resources with their members.

Additionally, these communication strategies benefit churches by expanding their reach, improving engagement with members, and helping to attract new followers (Yawson, 2019). Social media, for example, has provided a platform for churches to showcase their activities to a broader audience and attract new members interested in their teachings.

Research has shown that churches in Ghana have increasingly embraced technology in their communication and outreach strategies. For example, Adzroe (2016) examined the use of print

media in Christian evangelism in Ghana, highlighting the critical role of printed materials such as bulletins, tracts, and newsletters in disseminating information and engaging with members.

A study by Osei-Tutu et al. (2021) examined the use of YouTube by religious organizations in Ghana and found that churches were among the top users of the platform, with many using it to upload and share sermons with their members. The authors also found that using YouTube had helped churches reach a wider audience and engage with members who may not be physically present at church services.

For example, Asamoah-Gyadu (2018) examined the use of media and communications by African Pentecostals, including those in Ghana, arguing that media and communications have become crucial to the growth and spread of Pentecostalism. Boateng and Oppong-Tawiah (2016) examined the use of social media by Ghanaian churches, highlighting the role of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp in promoting information sharing and building community among members. Agyemang (2016) also examined the impact of technology on religious communication in Ghana, noting that the use of technology has helped churches reach broader audiences and engage more effectively with their members. Fosu and Mireku (2020) further examined the influence of leadership communication on employee organizational commitment in a Christian denomination in Ghana, emphasizing the importance of effective communication within churches. Kretch (2018) highlights the emergence of telechurch and televangelism in Ghana, which has allowed churches to reach a wider audience through broadcasting religious programs on television and radio, even in remote areas with limited physical access to churches.

In Ghana, despite the increasing recognition of the significance of church communication, there are still gaps in the literature that call for critical attention; most of the literature tends to focus on singular aspects of church communication rather than a holistic communication strategy

(Gyimah, 2020; Kretch, 2018; Adzroe, 2016; Osei-Tutu et al.; 2021; Kim & Kim, 2019; Boateng & Oppong-Tawiah, 2016).

The significant findings from the literature we have examined so far show that before the emergence of modern communication technologies, churches relied on more traditional methods of communication, such as face-to-face interactions, oral storytelling, and printed materials like bulletins, tracts, and newsletters. These methods were effective in promoting engagement and building community among church members. (Lee & Kim, 2017; Choi & Kim, 2018; Kretch, 2018; Adzroe, 2016; Mwaura, 2018). However, the emergence of new communication technologies has also created new opportunities for churches to communicate with their members and stakeholders, particularly in Africa and Ghana, where digital communication tools such as social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become famous for churches to interact with their members and promote community engagement even during the COVID-19 pandemic which led to restrictions on physical gatherings.

While each piece of literature had a specific focus, they were all connected in exploring how churches have adapted to and utilized modern communication technologies in their outreach and engagement strategies. For instance, Adzroe (2016) examines the use of print media in Christian evangelism in Ghana using the Presbyterian Church of Ghana as a case study, Adzroe (2016) examined the use of print media in Christian evangelism in Ghana, specifically looking at the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Mwaura (2018) investigated the use of communication technology among African religious institutions. Kretch (2018) analyzed the disruption of Christianity by telechurch, televangelism, and the future of social media. While much of the literature examines the use of social media by churches, research is needed to understand the use of other digital communication tools, such as websites, mobile apps, and live-streaming

platforms. Churches are increasingly using these tools, which could provide valuable insights into how they are utilized to reach members and stakeholders in different denominations.

Again, we must understand how different generational cohorts within churches respond to communication strategies using modern technologies. Given the differences in the technological fluency of different age groups, understanding how this impacts the effectiveness of church communication will be valuable.

In terms of context, attention has mainly been focused on the use of communication strategies by various individual churches in other denominations in Africa, North America, and worldwide. There is yet a study that will look specifically at how these strategies work in Ghana's three major denominations (mainline, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches). We need to examine how churches in the major denominational groupings in Ghana utilize communication strategies and what differences and similarities exist in their approach.

We further need to explore the impact of technology adoption on churches continued use of traditional communication methods and the challenges associated with balancing a digital outreach strategy with maintaining the traditional modes of communication that are often central to a church's identity.

The imperative for effective communication strategies within Ghanaian churches is rising, underscoring their growing significance in achieving both expansion and success. Through the adept utilization of diverse communication channels and platforms, these churches are enhancing their connections with existing members and successfully attracting new followers to their faith.

Effective communication's pivotal role extends beyond Ghana's borders, contributing significantly to the global growth and development of religious organizations. While the

importance of communication in church growth is increasingly acknowledged, existing literature tends to narrowly focus on specific facets of church communication, often overlooking a comprehensive overview, particularly within the distinctive context of Ghana.

In a broader context, the studies collectively provide a foundational understanding of how churches, regardless of denomination or geographical location, harness communication technologies to engage with their members and stakeholders. This is especially pertinent in the current era, where the dynamics of communication have undergone significant shifts.

Several studies have paid critical attention to understanding the relationship between church communication and the development of the Church. The literature have studied this relationship in different ways, with some paying critical attention to the strategies churches adopt to ensure communication is development-centered in churches. Ma (2022), Muasya (2020), and Acquah (2021) delved into communication strategies within different organizational contexts, offering valuable insights applicable to church development. Communication strategy concerns the science and art of employing a carefully developed plan and method to achieve some intended communication-based objective (Prehn, 2012). It concerns the set of plans and techniques that are adopted to effectively communicate some messages to a group of people (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). Effective communication strategies make critical use of communication resources and capabilities and align them with critical communication objectives (Kibe, 2014)

These studies provide a nuanced understanding of communication dynamics and their implications for organizational commitment, employee performance, and crisis management, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on church communication strategies in Ghana.

Prehn (2012) notes that while communication is critical in churches, implementing effective communication strategies guarantees church growth. Prehn (2012) further notes that six key

strategies ensure effective communication for the development of the Church. The author accounts for the use of multiple communication channels, ensuring specializations in communication production systems and authenticity in communication messages, which comprise some of the critical strategies that must be adopted within churches as communication strategies. Prehn (2012) further notes that another critical strategy that churches can adopt is to be sensitive to cultural contexts and nuances. Also, churches can develop when they improve the overall management of communication resources while striving to ensure that communicative messages touch on what the Church perceives as relevant.

Technology plays a vital role in church growth strategies. Adu-Gyamfi (2017) discusses the impact of technology on church outreach, emphasizing the use of social media and online platforms. Churches that leverage technology effectively extend their reach, connect with a broader audience, and attract individuals who may not be physically present. To this length, Penna (2020), Wakefield (2020), and Weinstein (2020) note that the coronavirus caused a great revolution in church communication. Penna (2020), for instance, accounts for the coronavirus pandemic era, which initiated a shift from face-to-face interpersonal communication to a heavy reliance on digital and social media technologies. The author further avers that this has massively changed how churches communicate, with many churches still adopting and relying on these strategies to reach wider audiences worldwide. According to Wakefield (2020), the era of the coronavirus tested the resilience of internal communication channels in the Church. Churches during the COVID-19 times had to shift to different forms of internal communication channels that enabled church members to communicate amongst themselves while also allowing the transference of information from church leaders to members.

Some studies have also focused keenly on the relationship between effective communication in the Church and the performance of the Church as a means of drawing out the role of

communication in church development. Musheke and Phiri (2021), as well as Arab and Muneeb (2019), delved into the nexus between effective communications and organizational performance, emphasizing the significance of the systems theory in comprehending this relationship. Musheke and Phiri (2021) found a significant relationship between effective communication and the overall performance of organizations. The study aimed to identify factors influencing effective communication based on systems theory principles and to devise a communication model addressing these factors to enhance organizational performance. The findings highlighted a significant relationship between the communication channels utilized and effective communication.

Moreover, the study affirmed the positive impact of effective communication on organizational performance. Regarding its application to the research topic on church communication strategies for development in Ghana, Musheke and Phiri's (2021) study offers valuable insights into the significance of effective communication channels within an organizational context. Similarly, within churches in Ghana, understanding the impact of various communication channels on the effectiveness of church communication strategies is crucial for fostering development and engagement among congregants. However, the study's focus on generic organizational performance might limit its direct applicability to the specific context of church development. Churches, being unique organizational entities with distinct goals and dynamics, might require a more tailored approach to understanding the effects of communication strategies on their development.

Additionally, while the study identifies a relationship between communication channels and effective communication, it needs to delve deeper into the nuances of these channels or their specific impact on organizational performance. In the context of churches, exploring the specific types of communication channels (e.g., sermon delivery, social media engagement,

community outreach) and their impact on congregational engagement and church development would provide more granular insights. Despite these limitations, the study reaffirms the significance of effective communication in organizational performance—a principle that extends to churches seeking development and growth. It emphasizes the need for churches to discern and utilize effective communication channels tailored to their congregational needs and organizational objectives.

Penna (2020) investigated the communicative strategies adopted by churches during the COVID-19 shutdown, focusing on how these strategies facilitated communication with members and community outreach through various communication channels. The study aimed to analyze the impact of limited communication channels on church communication practices. The findings of the study point to a reliance on digital communication channels as primary communication channels during the pandemic. The findings highlighted those churches effectively utilized online channels by leveraging the four principles of Channel Expansion Theory. Specifically, the research emphasized that these four principles—individual experience with the channel, messaging topic, organizational context, and communication co-participants—significantly influenced the effectiveness of communication channels within churches. The study's outcomes contributed insights into effective church communication strategies, bridging theoretical knowledge in communication studies and practical application. Regarding its relevance to church communication strategies for development in Ghana, Penna's study offers valuable insights into how churches adapted their communication practices during crises, particularly through online channels. Similarly, within the context of church development in Ghana, understanding the efficacy of various communication channels, especially in times of crisis, becomes crucial for maintaining congregational engagement and fostering growth. However, the study's focus on a specific event, the COVID-19 shutdown,

might limit its applicability to understanding broader church communication strategies in non-crisis contexts.

Furthermore, the study's reliance on qualitative data from a limited number of interviews could restrict the diversity and representativeness of perspectives, potentially overlooking nuanced variations in communication strategies among different churches. Moreover, while the research emphasized the importance of the four principles of Channel Expansion Theory, it did not profoundly explore potential challenges or limitations encountered in employing these principles within church communication practices. Understanding the barriers to effectively utilizing these principles could offer more comprehensive insights. Communication strategies for development of churches on the African continent has also been investigated by some authors in considerable length.

The growth of churches in Ghana relies on effective communication strategies that resonate with the congregation and attract new members. Contextualized preaching and teaching are crucial for church growth in Ghana. As Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) discussed, pastors who contextualize their messages to address local issues and concerns connect more effectively with the congregation. Understanding the socio-cultural context enables churches to deliver relevant and impactful messages. Ghana boasts of diverse ethnic groups, each with distinct cultural expressions. Incorporating inclusive worship styles that celebrate this diversity is essential for church growth. Appiah-Kubi and Torres (2008) highlight the importance of diverse worship expressions. Churches that embrace various musical styles and cultural elements create an inclusive environment that appeals to a broader audience. Effective communication extends beyond the pulpit to community engagement programs. Adu-Gyamfi (2017) emphasizes the role of churches in community development. Churches that actively participate in community

initiatives, addressing local needs and demonstrating a commitment to social welfare enhance their appeal and contribute to sustainable growth.

Acheampong (2014) investigated the utilization of marketing communication strategies by churches in Ghana. It employs a mixed-method approach. The study revealed variations in the effects of marketing communication tools concerning respondents' age groups, denominations, and educational levels. Notably, no significant relationships were found between advertising, publicity/public relations, and church growth. However, it identified significant associations between personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion, and church growth. Regarding its relevance to exploring church communication strategies for development in Ghana, Acheampong's (2014) study sheds light on the impact of specific marketing communication tools within the church context. Similarly, in the church development discourse, understanding the effectiveness of various communication strategies, such as personal selling and direct marketing, becomes crucial for fostering engagement and growth among congregants. However, the study has certain limitations. Focusing on church growth as the primary outcome might overlook other crucial aspects of church development, such as community engagement, spiritual nourishment, or long-term sustainability. Additionally, the study's location within the Adenta Municipality might limit the generalizability of its findings to other regions in Ghana, each with its unique cultural and religious dynamics. Furthermore, while the study identified significant relationships between specific marketing communication tools and church growth, it does not deeply explore the underlying reasons or mechanisms behind these associations. Understanding why personal selling, direct marketing, and sales promotion specifically influence Ghanaians' church selection would provide more insightful conclusions.

The literature concerning church communication in Ghana reveals a noteworthy trend of embracing digital communication technologies. Particularly noteworthy is the adaptation to

modern circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein churches have demonstrated resilience by incorporating digital platforms while maintaining traditional modes of communication, including printed materials and broadcasts on television and radio.

The evolving landscape of church communication in Ghana is underscored by a discernible shift toward digital platforms, prominently featuring social media and video-sharing platforms. Simultaneously, churches are skillfully retaining traditional communication methods like printed materials and broadcasting on TV and radio. These studies collectively illuminate the adaptability of Ghanaian churches, showcasing their openness to innovative forms of communication that foster member engagement and facilitate community building.

While the literature review suggests that the relationship between communication and church development has been quite well studied, these studies focus mainly on effective communication strategies that churches adopted during the coronavirus pandemic. This study contextualizes the relationship between communication and church development outside of the pandemic settings. The study also seeks to extend the discussions beyond single churches, as most studies have done while looking extensively at different denominational churches in Ghana.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Persuasive Theory

Persuasive Theory is a prominent communication theory that explores the factors influencing attitude change and the techniques used to influence others. In the context of this study, the application of Persuasive Theory can provide valuable insights into how communication strategies within churches shape attitudes and beliefs and ultimately contribute to the development of congregations.

Persuasive Theory has a rich historical evolution, drawing from classical rhetoric to contemporary communication studies. Aristotle's ethos, pathos, and logos framework laid the foundation for understanding persuasive appeals (Aristotle, 350 BCE). Over time, scholars like Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) formulated the Yale Model, which emphasized the source, message, and audience as critical elements in persuasion. The core principles of the persuasion theory are rooted in the ideas of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), the social influence model, and the source credibility and persuasive appeals thinking. Authors argue that the ELM is a stand-out principle upon which the core assumptions of the Theory are built.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) provides a nuanced understanding of the routes to persuasion, distinguishing between central and peripheral processing. The ELM proposes two paths to persuasion: the core path, which calls for a close examination of the arguments and supporting data, and the periphery path, which depends on signals and heuristics. The model highlights how skill and motivation play a part in influencing how people perceive persuasive communications (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Another key principle of the persuasion theory is that the Theory posits that the perceived credibility of the source of the information has critical implications on how the information is received and its effectiveness. Thus, critical persuasion dynamics such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness are presented in the Theory as critical. Furthermore, the Theory assumes that persuasive appeals such as fear, humor, and social proof often evoke emotional responses from receivers of persuasive messages and can influence their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors.

Persuasive Theory is instrumental in comprehending how churchgoers perceive and interpret communication strategies. By focusing on ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical appeal), the research can analyze the effectiveness of different persuasive

elements within church communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Examining the source's credibility, message content, and emotional resonance can reveal persuasive mechanisms. The Theory's emphasis on message construction aligns with the study's focus on communication strategies (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). By scrutinizing how messages are framed, the study can unveil the persuasive elements contributing to developing church members' beliefs and attitudes.

Numerous studies have applied Persuasive Theory within the context of religious communication. For instance, Kim (2009) explored the persuasive strategies used by Korean pastors in sermons, emphasizing the role of ethos and pathos in connecting with congregants. In a study by Fitch and Burkholder (1993), the authors investigated the persuasive power of religious narratives in shaping attitudes and beliefs among churchgoers. These studies highlight the relevance of Persuasive Theory in understanding how religious leaders strategically communicate to influence their congregations.

The core of communication in the church hinges greatly on persuasive communication tendencies. Sharing the gospel, engaging people in repentance, and soliciting for funds from church members rely greatly on persuasion. Persuasion theory provides insights into crafting messages that are compelling, credible, and persuasive. By understanding principles such as the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) or the persuasive appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos, church communicators can tailor their messages to resonate with their audience and motivate desired outcomes, whether it is attendance at services, engagement in community activities, or support for ministry initiatives.

The persuasive theory has been criticized for being overly dependent on the idea that people process information rationally. However, information processing within human beings often have key non-rational elements such as cultural, emotional and heuristic elements playing

critical roles (Gardikiotis & Crano, 2015). Moreover, the theory has been criticized for being extremely westernized making it, in some instances quite inapplicable in other cultural contexts such as the African system (Ghanem, David & Ali, 2021).

Regardless of these criticisms, the theory holds immense significance for understanding persuasive communication within churches in Ghana. The persuasive theory hence is relevant in this study because it allows the researcher to assess communication within the church that is primarily built on the idea of persuading people in diverse ways.

Considering the various persuasive techniques outlined in the Theory, such as social proof, reciprocity, and authority, this study can evaluate how these techniques are employed within Pentecostal, charismatic and Orthodox churches' communication to influence congregational development. Persuasive Theory can be applied across the main Ghanaian churches' communication channels, from sermons to digital platforms. Analyzing the persuasive strategies used in traditional and modern communication will contribute to a holistic understanding of their impact.

2.4.2 Systems Theory

Systems Theory is a comprehensive interdisciplinary framework that views entities as interconnected components within a more extensive system. Its application spans various disciplines, offering insights into complex systems of interactions, structures, and dynamics. Originating from fields such as biology and engineering, Systems Theory gained prominence in the mid-20th century. Bertalanffy (1968) proposed General Systems Theory, highlighting common principles applicable to diverse systems. The core assumption of the systems theory is that the system as a whole is better and holds more significance than any of the components that make up the system (Dent & Umpleby, 1998). The Theory emphasizes the interdependence

of parts, the influence of the environment, feedback loops, and the emergence of new properties within systems. The Systems theory is built on six principles – wholeness, hierarchy, self-regulation, openness, adaptability, stability, and flexibility (van Vuuren, 2002).

The principle of wholeness describes the idea that systems have elements different from the constituent parts that make them. Systems have qualities distinct from those of their constituent components due to their interdependence and interaction. A system as a whole is more than the sum of its parts because of the interactions between the individual elements. In the hierarchy principle, the system is viewed as a component of a hierarchy. Every system is viewed as a subsystem of a more extensive system and a system composed of subsystems. Systems at the higher levels of the hierarchy exhibit increasing complexity, whereas lower-level systems are more basic and mechanical. This self-regulation "steers" the system's processes toward the desired state. At lower hierarchical levels, the "goals" or ultimate states of systems might be quite constrained, predictable, and simple; at higher levels, they can be exceedingly complicated.

Another critical element of the Systems theory is how it distinguishes between closed and open systems. Systems theory makes a distinction between closed and open systems. An enclosed system keeps its surroundings apart. Because of this, it is entropic and tends towards maximum disorder, according to the second law of thermodynamics. Permeable borders allow information, materials, or energy to flow freely between an open system and its surroundings. The principle of adaptability concerns how, over time, the system adapts to the complex dynamics of the environment. Open systems interact with their surroundings, which causes them to alter and adapt. These systems interact with the environment and actively respond to its circumstances.

The last principle deals with the stability and flexibility of the system. According to Koestler (1978), a system's hierarchical structure—which allows it to function as both a whole and a component—gives it its most significant characteristics. According to him, every system has two inclinations: an aggressive inclination to maintain its unique autonomy and an integrative desire to work as a component of the greater whole.

Despite being one of the adopted theories in communication research, the Systems theory has been criticised by authors on several different principles. For instance, the theory has been criticized for its over-emphasis on the interconnectedness of sub-systems. While recognizing that interconnectedness is a strength, an overemphasis on it can lead to a paralysis of analysis, where the sheer number of interconnections becomes overwhelming and hinders effective decision-making and problem-solving (Zhukovsky & Pivovarov, 2015). Furthermore, Systems theory can sometimes give a static picture of systems, focusing on equilibrium and homeostasis. This perspective might not adequately address the dynamic and evolving nature of many real-world systems, which are often in a state of flux and continuous change (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010).

However, the theory holds critical relevance to this study in a variety of ways. In the context of this research on "Church Communication Strategy and Its Implication for the Development of Churches in Ghana," Systems Theory can be a valuable lens for understanding the intricate relationships and interdependencies within the church communication system.

Researchers like Morgan (2006) applied Systems Theory to understand organisational dynamics. Within churches, this perspective can illuminate how communication strategies influence the functioning of the Church as an organisational system. In the study by Pearce and Huang (2019), Systems Theory was employed to analyse interpersonal interactions within congregations. This approach is pertinent for this research to explore how communication

strategies impact the interactions and relationships among church members. Systems Theory has been used to study cultural adaptation within religious organisations (Warner & Krefting, 2016). Applying this to this research can unveil how communication strategies adapt to the cultural context of the Ghanaian church environment.

Systems Theory offers a holistic view of church communication, considering the interconnections between different components. This aligns with the holistic nature of church development, where communication strategies impact various facets of church life. The Church is a complex system with interconnected elements, including leaders, members, communication channels, and cultural contexts. Systems Theory allows for examining how changes in one element have implications throughout the system. For instance the closed and open systems paradigm that is provided by the Systems Theory provides a critical framework for understanding the openness Charismatic churches that allow the church to access feedback from congregants and implement them while also providing a key perspective to understanding the nature of orthodox churches in Ghana.

Furthermore, the openness and closeness of church systems as nuanced by the core tenets of the theory enables this study to situate and properly understand how churches in Ghana adapt to environmental pressures. For instance, the theory allows the researcher to understand how charismatic and Pentecostal churches adopt and use new media technologies at a quicker rate than orthodox churches in Ghana.

By applying Systems Theory, this research can explore how communication strategies adapt to societal changes and technological advancements. Understanding feedback loops within the Ghanaian church system is crucial. Systems Theory provides a framework to analyze feedback mechanisms, allowing this research to assess how congregational feedback influences communication strategies and, in turn, church development. Churches have various

subsystems, such as worship, administration, and outreach. Systems Theory enables the identification and analysis of these subsystems, shedding light on how communication strategies function within each, contributing to the overall development of the Church.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The extensive exploration of literature surrounding the research topic has provided a comprehensive foundation for understanding the multifaceted dynamics at play. The review encompassed diverse theoretical frameworks, such as persuasive theory and systems theory, each offering unique insights into the communication strategies adopted by churches and their implications for development. It reviewed some empirical studies that are similar to this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design employed in the investigation. This study examines the correlation between communication strategies and the development of charismatic, Pentecostal, and Orthodox churches. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the precise methodologies employed for data collection to answer the study's research questions.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

The qualitative research approach was employed to collect and analyze data on church communication strategies in Ghana, exploring their implications for the development of churches. This approach is well-suited for understanding the complexities, nuances, and context-specific nature of communication strategies within the Ghanaian church landscape (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative approach aligns with the research objectives, as it enables the exploration of communication strategies, implications, and challenges faced by churches in Ghana within their cultural and organizational context.

The exploratory research design was chosen to help uncover insights, understand relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Zikmund et al., 2013). Exploratory research is conducted to explore a topic when there is a need to delve deeper into the phenomenon. It aims to gain insights, generate hypotheses, and understand the nature of a problem or phenomenon (Zikmund et al., 2013). Given the nuanced and evolving nature of church communication strategies in Ghana, the exploratory design allows for an initial exploration and discovery of factors influencing these strategies.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population under investigation in this study encompasses all charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox churches located in Ghana and their members, as the study aims to explore the communication strategies employed by these religious institutions. According to Babbie (2005), the research population refers to the collection of components from which the sample is specifically chosen. The population for this study includes all Pentecostal, charismatic and orthodox churches in Ghana.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Size

The study employed a purposive sample strategy to select twelve branches of Orthodox, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches in the Greater Accra region. These churches include the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, The Methodist Church Ghana, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Christ Apostolic Church, The Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God, Ghana, First Baptist Church, International Central Gospel Church, Royal House Chapel, Perez Chapel, and Lighthouse Chapel International. The senior pastors or their appointees were interviewed for the study. In this study, the senior/head pastors of the sampled churches and one other senior member of the administrative offices in charge of the church's communication participated.

The purposive sampling targeted individuals holding positions as heads of administration or communication. The purposive sampling approach was used to sample 24 respondents for this study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

This study employed primary data to examine and address the critical research inquiries. Primary data refers to data directly obtained by the researcher in the specific field of study, utilizing methods such as surveys, interviews, or experiments to address a particular research project (Glen, 2020). The collection of primary data occurred via interviews.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect data for the study. The researcher interviewed twenty-four participants from all 12 churches sampled for the study. The interviews inquired about the communication strategies implemented by their respective churches and examined the discernible and documented effects of these strategies on the growth of the churches. The acquired data was analyzed to provide an understanding of matters about church communication techniques and their impact on church expansion.

The interview was aided by two sets of pre-determined and pretested interview guides (one for heads of administration and the other, a slightly modified version, for communication directors) designed to elicit information on issues such as:

- The primary communication strategies employed by churches.
- Specific communication channels or tools that churches rely on
- Technology's influence on the church's communication strategies
- Perceived relationship between churches' communication strategies and their growth or expansion
- Challenges or obstacles encountered in implementing communication strategies that support church growth.
- Communication practices or strategies that are considered "best practices" for engaging with the congregation and the community.

The concerns above served as the thematic indicators for the pre-established coding of the interview data (Creswell, 2009). Some of the interviews were conducted in offices, and some were collected via phone calls and WhatsApp calls of the respondents upon agreement of dates and times for the interview sessions with the respondents. The interviews were recorded electronically, and notes were taken to assist in transcribing. Each of the interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes. The interview material was transcribed exactly as spoken and afterward processed for analysis. To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the qualitative data, the researcher undertook measures such as personally crosschecking the transcriptions and seeking assistance from my supervisor in this process. The auditory renditions of the interviews were duplicated onto flash drives and stored in a secure location alongside the written renditions. These materials were made accessible for scrutiny by my supervisors and the academic institution, namely the University of Media, Arts, and Communication.

3.6 Data Analysis

Researchers have proposed several procedures for the analytical process, which would benefit the study, encompassing data organization, transcribing, immersion in data, topic production, coding, and interpretation of findings (Babbie, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The data analytical approach used in this study followed the thematic analytical approach. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006) the thematic approach concerns the identification of themes and patterns within qualitative text to draw out meaning from data provided by research participants. The study ensured strict accordance with the principles of the thematic analysis approach. To start the data familiarization process, the researcher transcribed all interview audio recordings into written papers. Subsequently, the data obtained from transcribed interviews and observational notes were subjected to thematic analysis using NVivo, qualitative text analysis software. The papers were imported into NVivo for the purpose of

automated coding. The auto-coding approach solely involved categorizing phrases that shared identical terms into thematic groups.

In order to conduct a qualitative analysis, thematic markers, as proposed by Creswell (2009), were employed to examine the data, with a particular focus on identifying themes within the data collected from the respondents. Consistent with the principles of qualitative reporting, the researcher employed elaborate prose narratives to convey and analyze the findings.

3.7 Ethical Issues and Control

The ethical considerations surrounding research are of utmost significance, particularly in studies that directly impact human life (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Hence, all the research endeavors, encompassing both fieldwork and writing phases, were guided by various factors, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring the confidentiality of both participants and the information they shared, prioritizing the safety of all individuals involved in the research, demonstrating respect for the sensitivities of participants, avoiding any potential biases, and safeguarding all collected data. Significantly and pragmatically, the researcher guaranteed the acquisition of informed consent using written and verbal means, depending on the participant's deliberate decision. The researcher also valued the convenience and individuality of potential participants and ensured that the participants of the study's responses were treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Before using participants' replies in the report, the researcher sought consent from each individual to cite their statements. The individual identities of participants were not disclosed within the report. The researcher retained sole possession of all research-related papers and information and ensured they were inaccessible to any other individuals. The electronic data were stored on an external memory drive, while physical copies were safeguarded in a secure, locked safe.

3.8 Chapter Summary

The previous chapter has presented a thorough and inclusive examination of the research objectives for the project. This study has thoroughly investigated the specific approaches and procedures employed in gathering data using document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The chapter also delineates the analytical framework employed to generate and interpret the study's findings. Moreover, a comprehensive analysis of the ethical considerations that shaped the research has been discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter involves a presentation of data collected from fieldwork and the results of analysis of these data. The demographic information of interviewees was presented first, followed by the information received from interviewing the sample purposively selected for this study. After this, an analysis of the information is presented, and the findings are discussed in line with the study's objectives. The purpose of the study is to investigate the church communication strategies of Ghanaian churches and their implication on the development of Ghanaian churches. The researcher adopted a descriptive research design, and the primary data collection medium was an interview. Using the interview approach, the data gathered was qualitative, and the data analysis was done qualitatively.

4.2 Demographic Analysis of Participants

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Interviewees

Participant Code	Gender	Level of education	Position	Denomination	Number of years in current church
Participant OR1	Female	Master's degree	Lector	Orthodox	43 years
Participant OR2	Female	Bachelor's degree	Lector	Orthodox	41 years
Participant OR3	Male	Master's Degree	Arch Deacon of Tema	Orthodox	39 years
Participant OR4	Male	Master's degree	Assistant Priest	Orthodox	6 years
Participant OR4	Male	Master's degree	Steward	Orthodox	31 years
Participant OR5	Male	Master's degree	Diocesan Youth Organiser	Orthodox	40 years

Participant OR6	Male	Master's degree	Second Associate Minister	Orthodox	38 years
Participant OR7	Male	Master's degree	Clark of Session	Orthodox	34 years
Participant PE1	Male	Master's degree	Associate Minister	Pentecostal	39 years
Participant PE2	Male	Master's degree	Senior Pastor	Pentecostal	30 years
Participant PE3	Male	PhD	Pastor	Pentecostal	13 years
Participant PE4	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Head of Media Communication	Pentecostal	10 years
Participant PE5	Male	Master's degree	Secretary	Pentecostal	28 years
Participant PE6	Male	Master's Degree	Presiding Elder	Pentecostal	26 years
Participant PE7	Male	Master's Degree	Area Secretary/ Circuit Pastor	Pentecostal	30 years
Participant CH1	Male	Bachelor's degree	Pastor	Charismatic	27 years
Participant CH2	Female	Master's Degree	Chapel Shepherd/P.A for Head Pastor	Charismatic	18 years
Participant CH3	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Reverend Minister	Charismatic	29 years
Participant CH4	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Pastor	Charismatic	20 years
Participant CH5	Male	Master's Degree	Pastor	Charismatic	24 years
Participant CH6	Male	Master's Degree	Pastor/Auxiliary Bishop	Charismatic	36 years
Participant CH7	Male	Master's Degree	Social Media Manager/ Research Assistant	Charismatic	10 years
Participant WCH8	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Pastor	Charismatic	10 years

The subsequent discussions present the analysis and findings in line with the research questions of the study.

4.3 RQ1: What communication strategies are adopted by Ghana's charismatic, Pentecostal, and Orthodox churches?

The first objective of this study was to investigate the communication strategies adopted across all the churches studied for this research. The findings indicate that the churches studied adopted a complex system of communication strategies that hinged on using traditional, digital, and pragmatic approaches to communicate with church members and leaders of various churches. The study found two key communication strategies and approaches that concerned using traditional and digital communication strategies and customized communication strategies for new members of the various churches. The study found that these strategies were adopted to cater for the complex communication needs of the various churches and their members' orientation to worship. Thus, while these approaches to communication were observed as adopted across Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Orthodox churches, the study also found that the implementation of these strategies was diversified based on the church engaged in the strategy.

4.3.1 Communication Strategies Engaged by the Churches

Traditional Communication Strategies

The data showed that traditional communication strategies formed an essential aspect of the general communication strategies adopted across all three church forms studied. The findings show that traditional communication strategies have been widely adopted and formed an essential communication strategy that all the churches have adopted and used to communicate with their members. The study found a keen use of face-to-face communication strategy such as the bible study, prayer meetings, quarterly meetings, conferences and society meetings to communicate in groups within churches. The participants indicated that even though digital

media and communication tools had become integral in the communication efforts of the churches and that a large proportion of communication efforts and initiatives hinged greatly on such forms they cannot do away with the traditional form.

The study mainly found the general use of face-to-face platforms such as Sunday divine services, bible studies, all-night service and prayer meetings to communicate church information and sermons to church members. One of the participants acknowledged that face-to-face meetings such as prayer services, meetings and conferences had been adopted since the beginning of the Church as a communication strategy to communicate to members of the church as part of regular church activities.

"Since the start of the Church, our primary communication and outreach have been traditional channels, primarily through Face-to-face. All the members will converge in the chapel for all communication activities and conduct seminars and conferences. We still rely on the face-to-face meeting even after COVID-19 because most of our members are not well versed with the digital platforms.

In the extract above, the respondent presents that there is the continuous use of the traditional channel to communicate with church members even after the pandemic's impact. This connects and situates essentially with the thoughts of Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953), who have argued that for communication to be persuasive, there is a need for continuous information sharing. Hence, as Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) present, persuasion hinges greatly on constant communication about an issue. In effect, to ensure persuasion towards the acceptance of the gospel, it became necessary, as evidenced in the data gathered, that churches adopt communication approaches to maintain communication with the church members.

All the three denominations recognize the need for diverse communication channels, incorporating traditional and contemporary methods. The shared acknowledgement of the

importance of adapting to modern communication technologies. Furthermore, the findings point to characteristic workings of the Systems theory.

Digital Communication Strategies

The data showed that digital communication strategies formed an essential aspect of the general communication strategies adopted across all three church forms studied. The findings show that digital communication strategies have been widely adopted and formed an essential communication strategy that all the churches have adopted and used to communicate with their members. The study found a keen use of digital communication technologies such as the Internet and social media to communicate in groups within churches. The participants indicated that digital media and communication tools had become integral in the communication efforts of the churches and that a large proportion of communication efforts and initiatives hinged greatly on such forms.

The study mainly found the general use of social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube to communicate church information and sermons to church members as supplementary communication systems to formal traditional communication settings and forms. One of the participants noted that Facebook, YouTube, and Zoom had been adopted as additional communication strategies to communicate to members of the church as part of regular church activities.

"In conventional terms, our primary communication and outreach have been formal channels, primarily through Facebook. In addition to Facebook, we leverage Zoom links to conduct seminars and conferences, eschewing physical gatherings. Facebook is our primary platform, supplemented by YouTube, while the registered Zoom link is utilized for our audience engagements. This encapsulates our current communication strategies."

(Participant OR4; Field data, 2023).

Hence, the respondent supposes in the extract that digital media and communication strategies had become critical characteristics of the communication processes of the church. The findings further indicate that the general reliance on digital media and communication channels and forms as critical communication strategies has been necessitated across different denominations, primarily due to the coronavirus pandemic. Hence, some respondents noted that digital media strategies had become vital in church communication as a reactive communication strategy to deal with restrictions that churches faced during the pandemic between 2019 and 2021. In the extract below, for instance, the respondent acknowledges the impact of the pandemic on church activities and how communication strategies had to be revolutionized towards digital strategies to accommodate the implications of the pandemic on the church.

"During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when we encountered the necessity of a lockdown, we strategically decided to harness the potential of social media platforms. Consequently, we acquired cameras and provided training to select team members for this purpose. This initiative enabled us to establish a robust presence across various social media channels, specifically WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook".

(Participant PE6; Field data, 2024)

In the extract above, the respondent presents that the shift to digital technologies to communicate with church members resulted from the pandemic's impact. Thus, the church had to make critical shifts towards using social media and messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook to maintain communication with church members. Thus, as a means of not breaking communication with church members, the church's leadership had to adopt digital communication strategies. This connects and situates essentially with the thoughts of

Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953), who have argued that for communication to be persuasive, there is a need for continuous information sharing. Hence, as Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) present, persuasion hinges greatly on constant communication about an issue. In effect, to ensure persuasion towards the acceptance of the gospel, it became necessary, as evidenced in the data gathered, that churches adopt digital communication approaches to maintain communication with the church members.

There is a discernible shift towards digital communication tools within Orthodox churches, prominently featuring Facebook as a primary platform for communication and outreach. The utilization of Zoom for seminars and conferences signals an adaptation to virtual gatherings, likely influenced by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The supplementary use of YouTube underscores the incorporation of diverse digital channels for disseminating information and engaging the audience. The findings align with Crespo's (2020) discussion on the experimental platforms for communication within religious congregations. Adapting to virtual gatherings and incorporating multiple digital channels resonates with the broader trend of religious institutions leveraging technology for outreach programs (Finn, 2018).

The Pentecostal church proactively responds to the challenges posed by the pandemic, emphasizing the strategic use of social media platforms, training team members, and establishing a solid digital presence. The integration of live streaming services on platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook signifies a commitment to leveraging digital tools for communication and outreach. The Pentecostal churches emphasis is on a 'borderless' or 'limitless' church aligns with the transformative impact of technology on religious practices discussed by Anderson (2013). The acknowledgment of technology as a catalyst for positive change resonates with Ammerman's (2006) exploration of the evolving role of technology in religious communities.

In Charismatic churches, effective utilization of digital communication tools in outreach efforts is highlighted, with active participation in online services even after individuals relocate to other churches. The mention of multiple platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram showcase a diverse digital presence. The Charismatic church's reliance on Zoom for administrative functions during the pandemic resonates with the broader trend of religious organizations adapting to digital platforms during challenging circumstances (Crespo, 2020). Acknowledging technology's positive influence on church communication aligns with Finn's (2018) discussion on how technology enhances accessibility and impact within religious contexts.

All the three denominations showed a significant shift towards digital communication tools. Also, adapting to virtual gatherings and emphasizing diverse digital channels were common strategies across Orthodox, Pentecostal, and charismatic churches. Nonetheless, Pentecostal churches highlight a 'borderless' or 'limitless' church concept, emphasizing technology's transformative impact on church practices. Charismatic churches underscore the practical application of digital tools in administrative functions, with a designated role overseeing digital communication strategies.

The findings underscore the transformative impact of technology on communication strategies within religious organizations. Adapting to digital platforms reflects a proactive approach to addressing challenges and ensuring continued engagement with the congregation.

All the three denominations recognize the need for diverse communication channels, incorporating traditional and contemporary methods. The shared acknowledgement of the importance of adapting to modern communication technologies, mainly through social media platforms, reflects a broader trend in religious institutions engaging with contemporary tools. Furthermore, the findings point to innate workings of the Systems theory. The study exacts and

shows how the different churches operating different systems, adopted integrated and used new media and digital technologies during the pandemic era. The quick response of charismatic churches to the pandemic for instance is key indication of the adaptability nature of the Systems theory. Moreover, onward adoption of social media technologies by these churches shows how some of the churches operate on open systems while others operate on closed systems.

New Member Communication Strategies

The study further found out that one distinct communication strategy the churches adopted was how they communicated with new church members. The analysis made in the study showed that the churches adopted distinct communication strategies while welcoming and integrating new members into the churches. The study found out that the various churches communicated differently when welcoming or initiating new church members.

Hence, while it was common for all the three different denominations to engage in effective communication strategies to welcome and properly assimilate new members into the churches, the study found out that they did this in different ways. Orthodox churches for instance engaged in a grand welcoming strategy where the new member was first introduced to the entire church and later assimilated into the church with several other strategies.

The data indicates that Orthodox churches engaged in some strategic ways of introducing and integrating new members into the church. The findings suggest that new members were introduced to the entire church and later encouraged to join a class for new members where further church orientation was done.

One of the respondents noted that new church members received an introduction to the church and further communicated on core issues in individual new members' meetings as a form of communication strategy.

"The initial point of contact involves introducing newcomers to the church environment. After the introduction, they are directed to attend the new members' class."

(Participant OR6; Source: Field Interview, 2023)

The reliance on this strategy typifies the nature of communication strategies engaged in the church. The implication of the extract provided draws that while the first face-to-face engagement of introduction and integration was occasioned, the church further relied on a face-to-face and more personalized communication form to communicate critical issues to new members. The mention of new members' classes indicates a structured approach to introducing newcomers, with designated leaders guiding them through sessions to provide essential information about the church.

The data found out that new-member communication in charismatic and Pentecostal churches was different from orthodox churches. Pentecostal and charismatic churches emphasize consistent interactive communication forms as against a more one-way form of communication observed in orthodox churches in welcoming new members to the church.

The study found out that church communication for new members of charismatic and Pentecostal churches was often heralded by consistent interaction with the new members even beyond church hours. Thus, the study found out that in charismatic and Pentecostal churches, there was some conscious effort to ensure that leaders-maintained communication and interaction with new members even outside the church. This was done mainly to ensure that new members maintained an interest in the church and attended church services and meetings. One respondent noted that this strategy was often used to access and keep information on new church members.

Furthermore, according to the respondent in the extract below, this strategy of communicating with new church members was often comprised consistent follow-up interactions with the new church members.

“When you become a new member, we will collect your details. Subsequently, you will receive a call, and there will be another call throughout the week. If someone chooses to be a member, we inform them about various events and programs, encouraging their active participation.”

(Participant CH2, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

The study further found out that communication to interact with new church members and access critical information was not only done in verbal meetings. Some respondents noted that new church members were given forms to fill out in some charismatic churches. This demonstrated another communication strategy with new members of the charismatic churches. The emphasis on outreach and inclusivity demonstrates a commitment to engaging potential members and visitors, ensuring that everyone receives information and invitations to church events.

“We provide a card for individuals to fill out, indicating whether they wish to become members or want to learn more about the church. For those indicating they are just visiting, we ensure that they receive information about specific events, inviting them to join us. We strive to include everyone during outreach efforts”

(Participant CH6, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

The study further found out that in these different communication strategies developed by the charismatic churches to communicate with new church members, there was some form of integration of digital communication channels. The study found the extensive use of modern

communication tools, particularly WhatsApp and social media, for engaging new members and keeping them informed about church activities.

For new members, our primary mode of communication is through WhatsApp platforms. We make a follow-up call to them. This is complemented by a series of physical visits and regular communication through social media channels, including calls and check-ins. We distribute flyers to convey information about upcoming programs, ensuring they are well informed.

(Participant CH4, Source, Field Interview, 2023)

The findings regarding the first research question indicate that the churches adopted and implemented different communication strategies. Notably, the findings imply reliance on digital communication tools and strategies to communicate critical church information to church members. Furthermore, the findings also indicate that charismatic and orthodox churches designed specific communication strategies to improve communication with new members of these churches. The findings in line with the first objective were also found to be consistent with the Persuasion theory that formed the theoretical framework for this study. The findings suggest a continuous stream of communication with church members through other means regardless of the challenges posed by the pandemic and other issues. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) underscore that persuasion is tied with consistent communication. A break in communication is likely to affect the effectiveness of persuasion. This study found that in a bid to ensure persuasion through consistent communication with members of the churches, there was a need to adopt and quickly integrate digital communication tools into church communication during the pandemic era.

Feedback communication Strategy

The study found that, across all three different denominations studied in this research, respondents believed that feedback communication strategies had played critical role for the improvement of the church. the findings suggest that in the church, feedback is essential for ensuring that the congregation's mission, goals, and activities are in line with the spiritual and social needs of its members and the community. According to the open systems theory, the church, like a living system, constantly interacts with its surroundings (the congregation, the larger community, and even worldwide Christian thinking), adjusting through feedback mechanisms that impact its practices, teachings, and outreach.

All the three different denominations have adopted feedback strategy with different approaches, for instance all the Churches have suggestion and prayer request box which solicits information from the members and acts on them. The mainline Churches in addition to the suggestion box, leaders' meetings, quarterly meetings and annual conferences where members bring their ideas and contributions for decision making and implementation. One participant posits as follows

“We have the leaders meeting where representatives of the various groups will bring the views and challenges of their members for consideration, there is also society meeting where all the Church members receive reports from leadership and asked questions for explanation. We have the annual conference where leaders from every Diocese converge for decision making”.

(Participant OR7, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

The data above is consistent with the systems theory, the findings suggest that Churches have adopted the open system approach of system theory which allowed for organizations to receive feedback from their members for decision making. Churchgoers' feedback helps church leaders

learn how successfully their teachings, ministries, and activities satisfy their congregations' spiritual needs. This open contact between the preacher and the pew is critical for cultivating a thriving, spiritually involved church. For example, a church that routinely solicits input from its members via surveys or small group discussions regarding the success of worship services, sermons, and community outreach would be able to modify its approach, providing attendees with a more spiritually rewarding experience. Another participant had this to say:

"Our church began utilizing a feedback form after each large event, such as youth retreats or mission trips. It allowed us to express how we felt about the encounters. I felt more engaged since the leadership was actively listening and adjusting depending on our feedback. It made me feel like my voice is important in the community."

(Participant CH4, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

Nature of Communication policy manual

The study was interested in finding out whether the churches had communication guides, policy documents, and strategy documents. The findings indicate that the churches barely operated with communication policies or written strategy guides. Thus, the data showed that none of the churches had communication guides that directed how they communicated strategically to the church members toward church development.

"...as of now, I cannot say we have something like that. We have written down no guide, document, or guidelines."

(Participant CH04: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

The findings indicate that in the absence of communication policy guidelines in the church, church leaders mainly developed, implemented, and directed communication strategies. Hence,

the findings made in the study suggest that leaders of the church have direct communication tendencies in the absence of written communication policy document guides. This was often done in a situational manner and in a more proactive manner to cater for the communication needs of the entire church.

"...so what we do is that the leaders who are the heads of the church direct how we communicate, the channels we use, and how we use them. These things have been done repeatedly, so it is almost like they already know what to do and how to communicate. However, they proactively meet communication needs and direct us in that regard."

(Participant PE2: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

The findings suggest that regardless of the size of the church, they did not have, had not implemented, and did not engage in internal communications within the church based on written communication policy guides. However, within the broader framework of the Persuasion theory it is essential to note that the absence of a properly developed communication policy guide or document poses a critical threat for effective persuasive communication in the church. The Persuasion theory argues for a logical and radical presentation of communication messages. Essentially, the development of a communication guide will be key in ensuring orderly presentation of communication messages in the church towards consequent church development.

4.4 RQ2: What are the implications of the churches' communication strategies for developing charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox churches in Ghana?

4.4.1 The Role of Communication on Church Development

The second research question of this study focused on understanding the role and relevance of communication in the development of the churches that were studied. The data gathered indicate that the role of communication in the development of the churches was manifested through three main dimensions – numeric growth of the church, spiritual growth of church members, and financial development of the church. Hence, the findings suggest that communication strategies engaged by the churches contributed significantly to the growth and development of the church in these three main ways.

"Without communication, we cannot reach out to the people. Communication enables you to reach every church member's doorstep; for whatever purpose, whether financial or spiritual, whether for infrastructure development or not, you must communicate the message to the members.

(Participant PE4, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

In the extract above, the respondent underscores the significance of communication in the development of the church across all three dimensions. The respondent notes that communication is the main link through which the church can achieve the desired development. The three core manifestations of communication's role in the development of the church are discussed as follows.

Numeric Development of the Church

The study found that, across all three different denominations studied in this research, respondents believed that effective communication strategies had critical implications for the numeric increment of the church. Hence, the findings suggest that the communication strategies the churches had implemented ensured increased church turnout.

It has increased our membership; we have won more souls through that. We are keeping members.

(Participant PE7, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

In the extract, the respondent indicates that due to communication strategies engaged by the church, there has been growth in the church's numeric development. As noted in the above extract, the respondent perceives that communication strategies adopted in the church have been instrumental in two main dimensions. Thus, the extract supposes that communication has been essential in winning more souls, expressing the notion that communication has been vital in attracting new members to the church. Secondly, the respondent notes that communication has been essential in maintaining old members, so the church does not lose old members while attracting new members.

Furthermore, the study found that the church's numeric development was established due to the church's use of newer forms of communication technology, such as social media and other forms of media. For instance, one of the respondents acknowledges that social media has become an essential communication tool in reaching new youthful people to join the church.

"Looking at the trends in Ghana now, the youth follow them regarding social trends and everything. So, we are targeting them, and they are using their media and communication strategies to bring that up."

(Participant PE7, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

Another revelation made in the study is that digital communication strategies also had a critical impact on the numeric development of the church. The findings suggest that beyond the increase in church turnouts, some of the churches had observed that due to the digital communication strategies they had implemented, online attendance of the church had also improved significantly. Thus, the church's numeric development was observed in physical turnout to church alone rather than in virtual visits to church services and other programs on the various churches' websites.

"Our congregation's numerical strength has also experienced an impact, albeit modestly. For instance, during a sermon on a specific week, our online service might witness approximately 150 participants, yet throughout that week, our site attracts over 1600 visitors."

(Participant OR2: Source, Field Interview, 2023)

In the extract above, the respondent alludes that one aspect where the church had observed numeric development was on the church's website. This is expressed in how, over an observed period, there was a consistent increase in the visits to the church's websites.

The increase in the number of church members indicates a critical instance of the development of the church. As Asuquo (2018) notes, an increment in the number of congregants in a church signifies to many churches that the church is growing and expanding. The findings of the study show that communication strategies were used as a key means of actualizing this form of development in churches. A pivotal linkage can be drawn between this form of church

development, heralded by communication and communication strategies adopted by the different churches. The findings can be linked to the tenets of persuasion theory. As Petty and Cacioppo (1989) indicate, the persuasion theory hinges significantly on the idea that the attractiveness of the information and the messenger have critical implications for persuading the receiver of the communication.

Furthermore, Asuquo (2018) avers that churches ensure a high level of attractiveness of church information to new members to persuade them to join the church. This study found that churches are often strategic in communicating. Hence, implementing different communication strategies, such as using social media to attract new members, exacts the workings of persuasion theory within this context. Moreover, deliberate efforts to target the youth through media and communication strategies align with studies emphasizing the importance of adapting communication approaches to connect with different demographic groups (McAdoo, 2010). On the other hand, systems theory is reflected in recognizing communication as a complex and multifaceted process within the organizational context. The structured and organized approaches to communication, the acknowledgement of communication as a lifeline for institutional development, and the holistic impact of communication on various aspects of church life align with the principles of systems theory, which views organizations as interconnected and dynamic systems (Monge & Contractor, 2003).

Financial and Economic Development

The study further found that communication strategies adopted by the different church organizations had implications for the financial and economic development of the churches. The findings indicate that communication was key in soliciting financial help from church members to improve the various churches' financial status. Hence, the data gathered show that

respondents believed that communication in the various churches contributed to ensuring that members of the church offered financial assistance to the church.

The data showed that this was typically evident in how communication was engaged to encourage members of the churches to give financial offerings and tithes to improve the financial status of the churches. The study observed that this was a critical form of development for the church because, for most churches, there was some reliance on these funds to manage the church's affairs with little help from external funding sources.

"Communication has significantly influenced our church dynamics. Even individuals who are not physically present in church contribute their offerings when the time for giving arises. This practice has had a noticeable impact on our financial resources."

(Participant OR3, Source: Field Interview, 2023)

To underscore the relevance of financial development to the church, the findings from the study indicate that the churches placed much emphasis on developing different communication strategies to ensure that they communicated effectively towards raising funds from church members. That is to say that the study found that in a bid to be more effective in communicating the church's financial needs to members and non-members towards financial development, the churches engaged in critical communication strategies. The study found that a critical strategy was to use financial and communication experts to communicate the church's financial needs to members in fundraising ceremonies. The study found that it was strategically done in line with sermons and scriptures.

"And so for everything we do, whether it is about finances, the church had gotten financially sound people, professionals in finance, who had been called upon to propagate such messages. Suppose it is about infrastructure or fundraising. In that case, we know we have fundraising

harvest committees in every church. We have tried to find somebody well-versed in asking for influence or talking to people to vote to change their minds. Then, the most important thing is to remember that by letting the members know the benefits of giving to the Christian, the spiritual, and otherwise, whatever benefit there are for us, we will find these to educate them."

(Participant OR6: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

The extract above illustrates the strategy developed and implemented by some of the churches to improve the financial development of the church. In the extract above, the respondent notes that the church had brought in communication and financial experts to aid and persuade church members to give to the church. Furthermore, the extract shows clear communication to ensure financial development; committees headed church programs where church members were communicated with to donate to the church.

Another participant further emphasized how effective communication has influenced the financial dynamics of the church. It illustrates that communication has encouraged members, even those not physically present, to contribute offerings, positively impacting the church's financial resources.

"Communication has significantly influenced our church dynamics. Even individuals who are not physically present in church contribute their offerings when the time for giving arises. This practice has had a noticeable impact on our financial resources."

(Participant OR3: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

Another dimension of the financial development of the church that was observed in the study concerned the financial accountability of the church. This was observed as a critical dynamic in the financial development of the churches. Thus, when the church engages in high levels of accountability and transparency, there is a vivid expression that the church has developed to

that extent where they perceive accountability and transparency as key to an organization. The study found that communication was central to ensuring that church leaders were financially accountable to the entire church. Hence, the churches engaged in different approaches to communicate what the church had used the monies they had solicited from the churches for.

"Communication has been good, and it has been selling well in terms of development infrastructure to build a new headquarters, and then a church has decided to inform the churches in Accra first. So, they called the whole conference last Friday and then informed us. Right after the information, they sent the images and animation plan of the building through all the WhatsApp platforms, and by Sunday, all the images are sent to all the Accra churches so that members will see what we are planning to do."

(Participant PE7; Source: Field Interview, 2023)

In the excerpt above, the respondent indicated how communication enabled financial accountability and transparency, indicating a form of the church's financial development. The respondent notes that a bottom-up approach was used to request financial accountability from the church's leaders, and a top-down approach was used to communicate necessary relevant information about the use of church finances to church members. The study notes that this illustrates a significant level of development for the churches.

The involvement of professionals in finance and fundraising committees reflects a strategic approach, acknowledging the need for specialized expertise in effective communication about financial matters (Ehrlich & Meyerhoff, 2014). Additionally, educating members about their contributions' spiritual and practical benefits resonates with studies emphasizing the importance of transparent communication in building trust and encouraging participation (O'Dell, 2010).

Furthermore, it can be observed that the persuasion theory relies heavily on soliciting financial support from church members. For instance, the study found that the churches relied on using experts to ensure effective communication in line with raising funds for the church. Petty and Cacioppo (1989) acknowledge that the credibility of the source of the information is central to persuading people to behave in a particular way. In the same way, the study observed that expert communicators were often used to persuade church members.

Spiritual Development

The study further found out that development within the churches was expressed in the form of spiritual development of the church members. The study found, therefore, that communication was central to improving the spiritual lives of the members of the various churches, which is considered a vital element of the development of the church. Respondents, therefore, perceived that due to different communication strategies adopted by the churches, church members were ushered into a higher realm of spiritual maturity, which is reflected in the general spiritual development of the entire church.

One of the respondents underscored the importance of communication during religious services. According to him, communication efforts, including sermons, contribute to the spiritual development of the members by conveying religious teachings and values.

"I have mentioned some of the programs that we do at the beginning of the year and then in six months, and all these programs are part of trying to develop them spiritually, to grow into maturity..."

(Participant CH1: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

"One of the major programs we undertake is the Prophetic Empowerment week, and currently, we are gearing up for a conference..."

(Participant CH4: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

The respondents in the extracts above emphasize programs that touch on multiple aspects, including physical and spiritual, demonstrating the comprehensive approach taken by the churches to cater to the diverse needs of their members. The mention of prophetic empowerment and war conferences suggests a focus on the spiritual enrichment of the members, which translates to the entire spiritual development.

The data emphasizes the impact of communication through church programs on members' spirituality. The intentional efforts to organize programs throughout the year align with studies emphasizing the role of religious rituals and events in shaping spiritual experiences and growth (Hood et al., 2009). The focus on fostering spiritual growth and maturity reflects a strategic use of communication in addressing the congregation's spiritual needs. In addition, the comprehensive approach of the churches, addressing physical, spiritual, and development through programs like prophetic empowerment and war conferences, resonates with studies highlighting the multifaceted nature of member development within religious communities (Koch, 2017). This holistic strategy reflects an understanding of the diverse needs of members and the role of communication in catering to those needs.

The findings of our study illustrate the relevance of communication in the development of churches. The findings indicate that communication was central to the churches' financial, spiritual, and numeric development. The findings indicate that within the broader scope of the numeric development of the church, communication is central. Effective communication plays a crucial role in nurturing the spiritual growth and maturity of believers within the church community. Through teaching, mentoring, small group discussions, and pastoral care, churches communicate biblical truths, theological insights, and practical wisdom that equip believers to live out their faith in everyday life. Intentional communication strategies promote engagement,

accountability, and discipleship relationships that empower individuals to grow in their relationship with God and others, fostering numeric growth through the multiplication of committed and mature disciples. Communication is essential for assimilating new members into the church community and retaining them over the long term. Clear and welcoming communication about church programs, ministries, and opportunities for involvement helps new members feel connected and engaged from the outset. Personalized follow-up, pastoral care, and relational connections further reinforce a sense of belonging and commitment, reducing attrition and fostering long-term retention within the church community.

Furthermore, the findings point toward the general implications of effective communication for financial development of the church. The role of communication in the financial development of churches is significant and multifaceted. Effective communication strategies not only facilitate financial sustainability but also cultivate a culture of stewardship, generosity, and transparency within the church community. Communication plays a vital role in educating congregants about the biblical principles of stewardship and financial responsibility. Through sermons, teachings, and educational materials, churches communicate the importance of honouring God with their finances, managing resources wisely, and prioritizing generosity and giving. Clear and compelling communication about the spiritual significance of financial stewardship motivates congregants to embrace a lifestyle of generosity and support the financial health of the church.

Transparent communication fosters trust and confidence among congregants regarding the church's financial practices and decision-making processes. Churches should communicate openly and transparently about financial matters, including budget allocations, fundraising initiatives, and use of funds. Providing regular financial reports, updates, and disclosures

ensures accountability and demonstrates responsible stewardship of resources, inspiring greater confidence and support from congregants.

Communication is essential for fundraising and development efforts aimed at securing financial resources for the church's mission and ministry initiatives. Through targeted appeals, campaigns, and fundraising events, churches communicate compelling narratives and opportunities for congregants to invest financially in the church's vision and impact. Effective fundraising communication emphasizes the impact of donations, celebrates generosity, and provides clear calls to action that motivate congregants to give generously and sacrificially. Building strong relationships with donors is essential for fostering long-term financial support and engagement within the church community. Communication strategies should prioritize donor cultivation, stewardship, and appreciation, acknowledging donors' contributions and expressing gratitude for their generosity. Personalized communication, such as thank-you letters, donor newsletters, and donor appreciation events, strengthens relationships, deepens engagement, and encourages continued support over time.

Hence, the findings imply an essential and central communication strategy for reaching different levels of development for churches.

4.5 RQ3: What challenges do churches face in integrating modern communication tools or channels in their internal communication?

The final objective of the study was to ascertain the communication challenges that churches face. Thus, the study was interested in understanding the challenges confronting the communication of the three church forms in Ghana. The analysis of communication challenges faced by Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Churches reveals distinct obstacles that these denominations encounter in conveying information effectively within their congregations. Each denomination grapples with unique issues.

While each denomination faces unique challenges, a comparative analysis reveals some commonalities. Training and structured communication processes are critical across Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches. The balancing act required to address language diversity within Pentecostal Churches resonates with the nuanced approach needed for effective communication in diverse congregations, as observed in Charismatic Churches. Financial challenges are associated with implementing communication strategies, particularly in creating positive first impressions and adopting technology, reflecting shared concerns across denominations.

The challenges in Orthodox Churches, especially the lack of training and structured communication, align with elements of persuasive theory. Ineffective communication due to insufficient training can hinder the persuasive impact of messages, making it essential to address training disparities. The challenges Pentecostal Churches face, such as language usage and overwhelming traditional delivery of announcements, reflect systemic issues. These challenges highlight the need for a balanced and adaptable communication system that considers language diversity and prevents information overload.

Lack of Training

The findings made from the study indicate that a key area where most churches struggled within the space of effective communication for church development concerned the unavailability of skilled expertise in communication within these churches. The study found that the churches lacked experts in strategic communication which is essential in facilitating the development of the churches.

While this challenge was observed across the different denominations studied for this research, the findings indicate that orthodox churches struggled more with expert communication and the training of personnel to engage in strategic communication for church development.

Orthodox Churches primarily face challenges related to the lack of adequate training for church personnel involved in communication roles.

The absence of structured training programs results in errors, mispronunciations, and a general difficulty in conveying messages. In line with this, one of the participants highlighted a key challenge related to the absence of adequate training for church personnel, including stewards and ministers. According to the interviewee, the lack of training can hinder effective communication within the church.

"One of the primary challenges we face is the lack of training for our personnel, including stewards and ministers."

(Participant CH1; Source: Field Data, 2023)

Another respondent highlighted the overarching challenge, emphasizing the significant gap in communication capabilities resulting from inadequate training, seminars, or opportunities for skill enhancement within the church context. In the extract below, the respondent refers to the lack of training on communication as a *significant gap* to illustrate that a lack of communication has an adverse significant impact on the development of the entire church as it creates some form of lacuna.

"Consequently, there is a significant gap in our capabilities due to the absence of training, seminars, or opportunities to enhance and upgrade communication skills within the church."

(Participant OR2: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

The findings indicate that orthodox churches often struggled especially with digital communication as a result of the lack of trained and skilled personnel in strategic church communication. As churches increasingly rely on digital platforms for communication, many

congregations may lack the necessary skills and resources to leverage technology effectively. Issues such as outdated websites, limited social media presence, or ineffective use of digital tools may hinder communication efforts and limit the church's ability to reach out to and engage with a broader audience, particularly younger demographics.

“It has become a challenge. I mean now it is better because everything has become technology now and so we have very few people helping here and there. But the issue is that the church itself does not have, say someone that is trained in digital aspects of communication. So sometimes we have to out-source or even fore-go some of things just because we have to rely on digital media and social media.”

(Participant OR4; Source; Field Interview, 2023)

Furthermore, the data further pointed out a specific consequence of the lack of training – individuals being appointed to communication roles without proper guidance on effectively giving announcements. This can lead to difficulties in conveying information clearly and professionally.

“Individuals are appointed as stewards or ministers without guidance on how to present announcements effectively.”

(Participant CH1; Source: Field Data, 2023)

Again, another respondent highlights the overall impact of the lack of training, stressing on how it hampers the ability of church communicators to convey messages effectively and efficiently to the congregation. Without proper training, church leaders and communicators may lack the necessary skills and competencies to communicate effectively. This includes skills such as public speaking, writing, digital communication, interpersonal communication, and conflict resolution.

Limited skills development can result in ineffective communication, misunderstandings, and missed opportunities to engage with congregants and the broader community. Furthermore, the data showed that without training, communicators in the church may struggle to maintain consistency in their messaging across different channels and platforms, leading to confusion, message dilution, and a lack of coherence in communication efforts.

"The lack of training hampers their ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with the congregation."

The absence of structured training programs results in errors, mispronunciations, and difficulty in conveying clear messages. Furthermore, the decentralized approach to communication and insufficient knowledge about church members hinder the development of organized and tailored communication strategies. This aligns with existing studies emphasizing the importance of training and structured communication processes for effective church communication (Crespo, 2020).

In the extract below, one of the research respondents emphasized insufficient knowledge about the church members, hindering the communicators' ability to tailor messages based on members' backgrounds, preferences, and appropriate communication language.

Moreover, those responsible for communication often have limited knowledge about the church members beyond their role as attendees.

(Participant OR3; Source: Field Data, 2024)

Language Barrier

Language usage emerged as a central challenge for the churches, reflecting the diverse linguistic composition of their congregations. The tension between the desire for a more

uniform language approach, particularly emphasizing English, and the dissatisfaction among some individuals not fluent in English underscores the delicate balance needed to address linguistic diversity.

The researcher identified a challenge related to language usage, where concerns are raised about the excessive use of a particular language. It suggests that the church faces difficulties finding a balance in language communication. One of the participants indicated there had been frequent concerns by church members on the issue of language use as a barrier to effective communication in churches.

"At times, there are concerns raised by individuals or companies about the excessive use of a particular language, posing a challenge."

(Participant PE1; Source: Field Data, 2024)

To further typify this challenge, another participant presented an opposing view, indicating dissatisfaction among some individuals who do not speak English fluently. It suggests a perception of an overemphasis on English, leading to discontent among specific segments of the church community.

"...On the contrary, others, who do not speak English fluently, have expressed dissatisfaction, feeling that we sometimes overly emphasize the use of English language."

(Participant PE8; Source: Field Data, 2023)

The study found that these churches often faced significant language challenges because of their heterogeneous nature. Typically, Pentecostal churches are open to many persons with different demographic characteristics. This includes persons who speak different languages.

This often becomes a key communication challenge that, in the long run, affects the development of the church.

"A significant hurdle we face is the heterogeneous nature of the church, with diverse demographics and age bracket... The varied age groups demand a nuanced communication style, as the syntax and approach must differ based on the specific brackets selected."

(Participant PE6; Source: Field Data, 2023)

Language barriers may prevent individuals from fully understanding and engaging in church activities, events, and programs. Congregants who do not speak the predominant language used in church communication may miss important announcements, sermons, or instructions, leading to feelings of exclusion and disconnection from the church community (Asogwa & Amana, 2011). Language barriers can hinder congregants' ability to participate fully in church activities and ministries. Individuals who do not speak the primary language may feel hesitant to volunteer, join small groups, or participate in discussions and activities where language proficiency is required. This can result in reduced engagement and limited opportunities for fellowship, spiritual growth, and service within the church community (Hezser, 2010). Moreover, language barriers can impact congregants' ability to fully engage in worship services and understand the teaching and preaching of the Word. Individuals who are not proficient in the primary language may struggle to follow along with hymns, prayers, scripture readings, and sermons, leading to feelings of frustration and alienation during worship gatherings (Eastern, 2022).

The findings made in this study, which are in line with communication challenges, resonate with studies highlighting the need for nuanced communication strategies in diverse congregations (Stark & Bainbridge, 2007). Furthermore, it can be noted that language barriers pose critical threats to the realization of persuasive communication in the church. The study

hence draws that the findings concur with the tenets of the Persuasive theory which is the bane of communication in the church. Meanwhile, it is worth emphasizing that language barriers are however critically detrimental to the realization of persuasive communication in the church.

Financial Challenges

The findings made in this study further indicates that a core challenge that the churches faced was financial challenges associated with emphasizing effective communication, especially in dealing with first-time visitors. Creating a positive and impactful first impression becomes crucial, indicating the financial constraints of implementing strategies for a positive visitor experience. Moreover, the focus on technological communication poses challenges in managing a skilled workforce and allocating resources. This aligns with research emphasizing the financial implications of adopting and managing technological communication tools within religious organizations (Crespo, 2020).

From the perspective of the charismatic churches, respondents acknowledged that the emphasis on effective communication may pose a financial challenge for the church.

"Additionally, if you lack sufficient capital, even implementing this strategy, to be while effective, can strain the church's financial resources."

(Participant CH4: Source; Field Interview, 2023)

Financial constraints may hinder a church's ability to expand its ministries, programs, and outreach efforts. Churches may struggle to invest in new initiatives, hire additional staff, or acquire resources needed to support growth and meet the evolving needs of the congregation and community. As a result, opportunities for ministry expansion and impact may be limited, hindering church development and outreach. Churches often face ongoing expenses related to the maintenance, repair, and renovation of church facilities. Financial challenges may prevent

churches from adequately maintaining their buildings, grounds, and infrastructure, leading to deteriorating facilities and diminished aesthetics. This can impact congregants' experience in worship and fellowship and may deter new visitors from engaging with the church community.

Churches may incur debt or financial obligations to fund capital projects, facility upgrades, or operating expenses during periods of financial strain. Accumulating debt can place a burden on church finances, leading to increased financial stress, limited flexibility, and constraints on future growth and development opportunities.

Overall, financial challenges can have significant implications for church development, impacting ministry expansion, facility maintenance, outreach and evangelism efforts, staffing and volunteer support, technology investment, giving patterns, and overall financial health and sustainability

The study made critical findings common to different churches' challenges. The study found that different challenges affect communication effectiveness in church development in all the three denominations. These included financial challenges, language barriers, and lack of training for church leaders on appropriate communication and communication channels for church development.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked critically at the findings of the study. The chapter investigated the different churches' core communication strategies toward church development. The chapter also makes key findings in line with the core roles of communication in enhancing the development of the church. The study found out that this manifested in the church's spiritual, financial, and numeric growth. Finally, the findings in line with communication challenges faced by the different churches are also highlighted in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study's key findings and detailed limitations, makes some recommendations based on the study's findings, and provides a conclusion.

5.2 Summary

The core of this study was to examine the role of communication in the development of the church in Ghana. The study was focused on understanding the main communication strategies engaged by the different church denominations while also drawing out how these strategies aided church development. The study was also interested in identifying churches' key communication-based challenges.

One key finding in the study, in line with the study's first objective, was that none of the churches studied in this research had a written communication policy document or guide. Instead, communication tendencies in the various churches were led and directed by leaders of the churches. The analysis revealed a significant integration of digital communication platforms in charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Ghana. This includes using Zoom, live streaming on social media, and WhatsApp for communication and engagement. The adoption of these technologies reflects a contemporary approach to reaching and connecting with congregants. Churches in Ghana leverage communication strategies to impact their members' financial and spiritual aspects. The responses emphasized the contribution of absent members during virtual services, highlighting the financial impact and the emphasis on winning souls for Christ, indicating a focus on spiritual development.

Another critical finding in communication strategies is how to assimilate new church members. Practical strategies for engaging new members were identified across the charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox churches. These include personal visits, follow-up calls, orientation classes, and various communication channels such as WhatsApp and flyers. The emphasis is on personal engagement aligns with broader research on assimilation strategies in religious institutions. The findings align with existing research on the global integration of digital platforms in religious settings, emphasizing the holistic impact of religious engagement on financial and spiritual aspects. The challenges identified echo broader global issues religious institutions face, emphasizing the need for ongoing training and adaptability. The strategies for new member engagement resonate with existing research advocating for relational approaches to assimilation.

The study's second objective looked at the role of church communication in the development of the church. Based on the data collected, it was observed that communication significantly influenced the development of churches along three key dimensions: the church's numerical expansion, the spiritual growth of its members, and its financial development. According to the research, participants in all three faiths under investigation felt that successful communication techniques significantly impacted the church's numerical growth. Additionally, the research revealed that the church's numerical growth was established due to its utilization of more recent types of communication technology, such as social media and other media. The results imply that, in addition to the reported rise in church attendance, a few churches reported a notable improvement in online attendance due to the digital communication methods they had implemented.

The study also discovered that the various religious organizations' communication tactics impacted the churches' financial and economic growth. The results show that asking for

financial assistance from church members to enhance the financial standing of the various churches required effective communication. The study discovered that using financial and communication specialists to explain the church's financial requirements to members during fundraising events was a crucial tactic. According to the study, this was purposefully done using scripture and teachings. The study also discovered that church members' spiritual growth was one way that churches displayed development within them. Therefore, the study discovered that communication was essential to enhancing the spiritual lives of the various church members.

Communication challenges were identified across different church types. The lack of training for church personnel, concerns about language usage, and managing a large and diverse congregation were common challenges. These challenges transcend denominational boundaries, indicating shared struggles in effective communication that Ghanaian churches face.

While communication approaches contribute positively to church development, the analysis also identifies challenges. The lack of training for church personnel and occasional technical issues during services pose potential hindrances to effective communication. Addressing these challenges is crucial for sustaining the positive impact of communication on church development. The findings align with existing research that emphasizes the role of effective communication in the growth and development of religious institutions. The identified financial contributions and outreach efforts resonate with studies highlighting the interconnectedness of financial sustainability and religious outreach. Additionally, the focus on spiritual development and soul-winning aligns with broader research on the transformative power of effective religious communication.

The analysis reveals that great challenge churches face in integrating modern communication tools is the lack of personnel training. Some church officers essentially do not have formal training in effective communication. The skill gap becomes a barrier to utilizing modern tools efficiently, hindering seamless internal communication. The use of different languages emerges as a notable challenge. Congregants have varied language preferences, creating a dilemma for churches. Some advocate for the consistent use of English for broader impact, while others feel marginalized when English is overly emphasized. Navigating this linguistic diversity becomes a complex task for effective internal communication. These limitations affect the projection of readings, singing, and other digital content during services. The dependence on technology introduces vulnerabilities that impact the seamless flow of internal communication. The diverse demographic and age brackets within churches present a unique challenge in internal communication. Different age groups have varying levels of tech-savviness, requiring nuanced approaches to communication. The need for a customized communication style for distinct age brackets adds complexity to the internal communication strategies employed by churches.

The challenges identified align with existing research highlighting common hurdles organizations face in integrating modern communication tools. The skill gap and technological limitations are recurrent themes in studies exploring adopting digital communication tools across various sectors. Addressing linguistic diversity and generational differences is also a recognized challenge in organizational communication research.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of communication strategies adopted by churches in Ghana, particularly within the charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox denominations, has provided valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of church communication. The findings shed light

on various practices, challenges, and implications for church development. This discussion will delve into the implications of the research findings for persuasive and systems theories.

The communication strategies employed by churches in Ghana reflect a dynamic interplay of persuasive elements to foster a sense of community, engagement, and commitment among members. The persuasive theory, which emphasizes the influence of communication in shaping attitudes and behaviors, is evident in the intentional efforts to create a positive image of the church. Using testimonies and personal narratives underscores a persuasive approach, where positive experiences are shared to attract and retain members. This aligns with the persuasive theory's emphasis on creating messages influencing individuals' beliefs and actions.

Furthermore, the research findings highlight the role of systems theory in understanding the intricate web of communication within churches. The churches examined operate as complex systems where various components interact to achieve common goals. The segmentation of communication channels, such as using WhatsApp for new members and integrating physical visits, calls, and social media for outreach, exemplifies the adaptability and interconnectedness within the church communication system. The feedback loops, as observed in the analysis, where information about church events is disseminated through various means and reinforced through multiple channels, contribute to the resilience and effectiveness of the communication system.

However, the challenges identified in integrating modern communication tools unveil potential areas for improvement within the church communication systems. The limitations in training, access to technology, and occasional technical difficulties underscore the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach. The persuasive theory suggests that addressing these challenges is vital for maintaining a positive image and fostering member engagement.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The research on communication strategies adopted by churches in Ghana, with a focus on charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox denominations, is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, the sample size and representativeness of the data may not fully capture the diverse communication practices across all churches in Ghana. Considering the variations in church dynamics, the insights derived from the analyzed transcripts might not be universally applicable. Additionally, the contextual specificity of the study raises concerns about the generalizability of findings beyond Ghana's unique cultural, social, and religious context. Furthermore, the temporal constraints associated with the data used for analysis may not reflect the most current trends or changes in church communication practices, potentially impacting the relevance of the recommendations. The absence of a documented communication strategy by the churches made it impossible to conduct a document analysis on the communication strategies of the churches. Hence, the analysis was limited to the responses obtained through interviews. Despite these limitations, the findings of this study are not undermined in any way.

5.5 Recommendation

In light of the research findings on the communication strategies adopted by churches in Ghana, mainly focusing on the charismatic, Pentecostal, and orthodox denominations, several recommendations emerge to address challenges and improve communication practices. Three key recommendations include are discussed in this section.

Firstly, to overcome the lack of training in communication for church personnel, it is crucial to implement comprehensive training programs. These programs should cover a spectrum of skills, from the practical usage of modern communication tools to the nuances of clear and error-free communication. This training will empower stewards, ministers, and other personnel

to navigate communication challenges and enhance the overall quality of information dissemination within the church.

Secondly, in recognizing the diversity in technological access among congregants, churches should diversify their communication channels. While embracing modern tools like digital platforms and social media, churches should maintain traditional methods like notice boards, flyers, and SMS. This multifaceted approach ensures that information reaches a broader audience, accommodating members with varying levels of technological familiarity.

Thirdly, to address the generational differences in the congregation, churches should tailor their communication approaches based on age demographics. Younger generations may gravitate towards technology-driven methods, while older members prefer traditional methods. Striking a balance by adopting age-appropriate strategies ensures that communication resonates effectively with all age groups, fostering a more inclusive and engaged church community.

Fourthly, churches must have a communication department with trained communication personnel.

Fifthly, churches should officially document their communication strategies to ensure every branch and member in leadership will be guided.

Finally, there should be communication strategy and policy manual documents, which should guide all churches, especially those with many branches.

By implementing these recommendations, churches in Ghana can overcome challenges, enhance their communication strategies, and create a more connected and informed congregation. These proactive measures will contribute to the overall development and vibrancy of church communities across denominations in the country.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is very Reverend Samuel Glover Asante, a final year M.Phil. student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC – IJ) (A merger between Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), NAFTI, & Ghana Institute of Languages (GIL), Accra I am conducting research that aims at examining church communication strategy and their Implication for the Development of Churches in Ghana. The study is purely for an academic purpose and as such, the researcher will like to assure you that your responses would not be used for any other purpose, all information provided will be kept anonymous. I would be grateful if you could spare me some few moments to have you respond to these few interview questions. Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study. You can contact me on 0244666539, samuelgloverasante@gmail.com for any clarification.

Goal: understand the communication strategies and approaches adopted by Ghanaian Churches and their implications to church development.

PARTICIPANTS

Rev minister/pastor

Head of communications

Steward/ church secretary/ announcer

PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF RESPONDENT (DEMOGRAPHICS)

gender.

Male

Female

Age.

What is your highest level of education attained?

Doctorate (PhD or other)

Masters

Bachelors

Other (please specify.....)

Please tell me the full name of your church

Please tell me the number of years you have been a member of this church.....

Please tell me the nature of your work

Kindly tell me your Designation/ Position (e.g., rev minister/pastor, head of communications, church secretary/steward/announcer.)

Do you have any communication background?.....

Objective 1: To investigate the communication strategies adopted by charismatic, Pentecostal and orthodox churches in Ghana.

Interview Questions

1. How has your church been faring in terms of development (spiritual and personal life of members) with many churches in competition. (are you loosing or gaining members)?
2. Communication is important in the success of any organization including the church. What do you think or view about communication on the development of your church?

3. Generally, how does your church communicate with members, (letters, preaching, Email etc.)?
4. Is there a standardized communication approach throughout your church nationwide?
(codified, published communication strategy, policy documents, any guide manual)
5. Do you have a communications department or unit? who is in charge of your communications? what does he/she do?
6. How has your church come to terms with the digital age as far as communication is concerned?
7. Have you adopted a digital communication strategy? Yes /no (if no, why?)
8. If yes, what digital communication strategy have you adopted? How has it impacted your church's development?
9. What specific communication channels or platforms does your church use and which ones do you consider particularly effective in reaching different demographic groups within the congregation?
10. What was the size of your congregation before its implementation of the communication strategy and how has your church increased till date?
11. How consciously do you communicate with your members for them to grow or develop spiritually and physically?
12. What communication challenges does your church face; how do you address them?
13. How does your church actively engage with newcomers and existing members to foster a sense of belonging and commitment?
14. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your churches' communications?

Thank you very much for your assistance.

