



**UniMAC (INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM)**

**BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AT THE WORKPLACE: A CASE  
STUDY OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE AUTHORITY (NHIA),  
GHANA**

**BY**

**JOANA MINTAH**

**MASPRM24005**

**NOVEMBER, 2025**

## DECLARATION

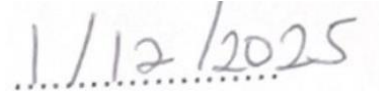
I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted for the award of the degree of Master of Art (ma) in strategic public relations and management, is my original work. It has been developed and composed entirely by me, Miss Joana Mintah, and has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other institution. All sources of information and literature used in this study have been duly referenced and acknowledged. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis represents my own work and contributions.

JOANA MINTAH



(Student)

(Signature)



(Date)

Certified by:

Dr. RHODALENE AMARTEY



(Signature)



(Date)

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God, whose grace sustained me throughout the commencement and completion of this study. I also dedicate it to my dear family, for their unwavering love, sacrifice, and immense support over the years, which have been instrumental in helping me reach this milestone. I am eternally grateful.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The successful completion of this research project is a milestone I could not have reached alone. It is with profound gratitude that I acknowledge the invaluable support, guidance, and encouragement I received from numerous individuals and institutions throughout this academic journey.

Foremost, I extend my sincerest appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Rhodalene Amartey, for her unwavering guidance, insightful critiques, and immense patience. Their expertise and scholarly advice were instrumental in shaping this work from its conceptualization to its final form. I am deeply indebted for the time and intellectual generosity they invested in me.

My heartfelt thanks also go to the management and staff of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), Ghana, for granting me the permission to conduct this study. I am particularly grateful to the managers and staff members who generously participated in the interviews and surveys, sharing their valuable time and experiences. This research would not have been possible without their cooperation and candid contributions.

I wish to express my gratitude to the faculty and staff of Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing Department of Public Relations at UniMAC (Institute of Journalism). The knowledge and research skills I acquired during my course of study provided a solid foundation for this work.

To my colleagues and friends, thank you for your camaraderie, stimulating discussions, and moral support, especially during the challenging phases of this work. Your encouragement was a constant source of strength.

On a deeply personal note, I reserve my most profound appreciation for my family. To my parents, thank you for your sacrifices, unwavering belief in me, and for instilling in me the value of education. Your love has been my anchor. To my siblings, thank you for your endless patience, understanding, and for bearing with my prolonged periods of absence. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

Finally, I give all glory to God Almighty for His divine grace, wisdom, and strength that sustained me throughout this endeavour.

To all who contributed in ways big and small, please accept my deepest thanks.

Joana Mintah

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the barriers to effective internal communication within the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) of Ghana and their impact on organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction. Employing a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the study collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with four (4) departmental managers and quantitative data via surveys from twenty-one (21) staff members across selected NHIA district offices. The findings reveal that communication at the NHIA is predominantly formal and hierarchical, characterized by a top-down flow. Key barriers identified include: (1) Hierarchical and Structural Constraints, where bureaucratic layers cause delays and restrict upward feedback; (2) Technological and Medium-Related Barriers, such as poor internet connectivity and delayed responses to digital messages; (3) Psychological and Behavioural Barriers, including employee fear of authority and reluctance to express opinions; and (4) Ambiguity and Misinterpretation of Information, stemming from unclear directives and the lack of a standardized communication policy. The study further establishes that the organisational culture, shaped by high power distance and a deference to authority, significantly reinforces these communication challenges, fostering a culture of caution rather than collaboration. Quantitative analysis demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.562, p = 0.008$ ) between communication-led employee satisfaction and organisational efficiency, confirming that communication barriers directly undermine both staff morale and operational performance. The study concludes that addressing these multifaceted barriers is crucial for enhancing the NHIA's service delivery. Recommendations include developing a comprehensive internal communication policy, institutionalizing robust feedback mechanisms, providing leadership communication training, and fostering a more open and inclusive organisational culture. This research contributes to the literature on public sector communication in Ghana and provides a framework for similar institutions seeking to improve internal communication and organisational effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Communication Barriers, Organisational Communication, Employee Satisfaction, Organisational Efficiency, Organisational Culture, National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), Ghana, Public Sector.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration .....	ii
Dedication .....	iv
Acknowledgement .....	v
Abstract .....	vi
Table of contents .....	vii
List of table .....	x
List of figures .....	xi
List of acronyms .....	xii
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
OVERVIEW OF STUDY.....	1
1.0 Chapter Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement .....	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	5
1.4 Research Question .....	5
1.5 Significance of the study.....	6
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	6
1.7 Limitations of the Study.....	7
1.8 Organisation of Study.....	7
1.9 Chapter Summary .....	8
CHAPTER TWO .....	9
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	9
2.0 Introduction.....	9
2.1 Review of Relevant Literature.....	9
2.1.1 Workplace Communication Barriers .....	9
2.1.2 Communication and Employee Satisfaction .....	11
2.1.3 Communication and Organisational Effectiveness.....	13
2.1.4 Organisational Culture and Communication .....	16
2.2 Empirical Studies.....	18
2.3 Theoretical Review .....	22
2.3.1 Organisational Communication Theory.....	22
2.3.2 Transactional Model of Communication.....	24
2.4 Operational Definitions of Terms.....	25
2.5 Chapter Summary .....	27
CHAPTER THREE.....	28

<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.1 Research Approach .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.2 Research Design.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.3 Population and Sampling Strategy.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.4 Data Collection Methods.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3.5 Data Analysis.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.6 Ethical Consideration.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.7 Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>4.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>4.1 Demographic Information .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4.1.1 Demographics of Interview Participants .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4.1.2 Demographics of Survey Participants .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.2 RQ1. How is Communication Practiced within NHIA?.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4.3 RQ2. What are the major communication barriers within the NHIA? .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>4.4 RQ3. In what ways does organisational culture influence communication challenges at the NHIA?.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>4.5. RQ4. How do communication barriers affect organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction at the NHIA?.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>4.6 Discussion of Findings.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>4.7 Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>5.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>5.1 Summary of the Study.....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>5.2 Major Findings.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>5.3 Conclusions.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>5.4 Recommendations.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>5.5 Recommendation for Further Studies .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>5.6 Chapter Summary .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM.....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>1. Invitation to Participate .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>2. Purpose of the Study.....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>3. What Your Participation Involves .....</b>	<b>94</b>

<b>Survey Participation</b> .....	94
<b>Interview Participation (if selected/volunteered)</b> .....	94
<b>4. Potential Risks and Benefits</b> .....	94
<b>Risks</b> .....	94
<b>Benefits</b> .....	94
<b>5. Confidentiality and Anonymity</b> .....	95
<b>6. Voluntary Participation</b> .....	95
<b>7. Contact Information</b> .....	95
<b>8. Statement of Consent</b> .....	95
APPENDIX B.....	96
APPENDIX C.....	98
Section A: Demographic Information .....	98
Section B: Communication Practices at NHIA .....	98
Section C: Communication Barriers.....	99
Section D: Communication and Employee Satisfaction.....	99
Section E: Communication and Organisational Effectiveness .....	100
Section F: Organisational Culture and Communication .....	100
Section G: Open-Ended Questions .....	101

## LIST OF TABLE

Table 4.2.5 Distribution of NHIA Staff Members' Perception of the Internal Communication Structure.....	50
Table 4.3.5 Distribution of NHIA Staff Members' Perception of Internal Communication Barriers.....	60
Table 4.4.4 Distribution of NHIA Staff Members' Perception of the Organizational Culture Influence on Communication.....	68
Table 4.5.1 NHIA Staff Members' Perception on the Influence of Communication Barriers on Employee Satisfaction.....	71
Table 4.5.2 NHIA Staff Members' Perception of the Influence of Communication Barriers on Organizational Efficiency.....	73
Table 4.5.3 Correlation between Communication-led Employee Satisfaction and Organizational Efficiency at NHIA.....	74

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1.2.1 Gender of Survey Participants.....	42
Figure 4.1.2.2 Age Range of Survey Participants.....	
Figure 4.1.2.3 Departments of Survey Participants.....	
Figure 4.1.2.4 Years of Service at NHIA of Survey Participants.....	43

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

**NHIA:** This stands for National Health Insurance Authority. It is the main organization being studied.

**NHIS:** This stands for National Health Insurance Scheme. It is the program managed by the NHIA.

**SPSS:** This stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. It is the software mentioned for analysing quantitative data.

**ICT:** This stands for Information and Communication Technology. It is mentioned as a structural issue (inadequate ICT infrastructure).

**SEM:** This stands for Structural Equation Modelling. It is a statistical method mentioned in the empirical review.

**fsQCA:** This stands for Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis. It is a research methodology mentioned in the empirical review.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **OVERVIEW OF STUDY**

#### **1.0 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter covers the background to the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. The chapter underscored the basis for conducting the study and also outline the significance of the study to the literature and policymakers.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Effective communication is the lifeblood of every organisation, influencing operational efficiency, employee morale, innovation, and public perception. In the context of public sector institutions, where transparency, accountability, and coordination are paramount, communication plays an even more critical role (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Yet, many public organisations continue to struggle with persistent communication barriers that hinder performance, delay service delivery, and erode stakeholder trust. Successful and meaningful communication in the workplace is determined by the ability of parties to understand one another and provide appropriate responses. Achieving successful communication is essential in the workplace (Keyton, 2011). Workplace communication is defined as the exchange of information between individuals or group communication within an organisation (Adu-Oppong & Agyin Birikorang, 2014). This can include emails, text messages, voicemails, notes, and more. Conflicts that arise in verbal communication can have an immediate negative impact on the speaker and the listener, potentially leading to awkwardness in the work environment.

Moreover, communication conflicts through technology, such as emails, phone calls, and text messages, can prevent work from being carried out correctly (Sims, 2018). Each organisation may face different communication barriers (Rahmat, 2019).

According to Shaw (2011), the greatest challenge with communication is the perception that it has been completed. This illusion might lead employees (particularly) to be judged by employers as persons who are unable to follow instructions. Communication barriers fall into two categories: environmental and personal (Pauley, 2010). Both barriers can prevent, filter, or distort messages when they are encoded and sent, as well as when they are decoded and received (Hussain, 2013). Some difficulties in communicating include a distinct accent and a lack of clarity. To begin, even when two people speak the same language, communication can fail at times. However, Evans and Suklun (2017) suggest that these two speakers' accents may differ. Organisational communication issues can arise when messages are unclear to both the sender and the receiver. Lack of clarity is also a common reason for communication failure (Adu Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014).

The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) of Ghana, mandated to provide equitable access to healthcare through the management of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), operates within a complex, bureaucratic, and multi-layered organisational framework. Like many large public institutions, the NHIA relies heavily on seamless internal and external communication to execute its mandate effectively. However, communication lapses, including information bottlenecks, unclear messaging, hierarchical barriers, and technological challenges, frequently obstruct the smooth flow of information within and across departments of most public institutions (Ofori et al, 2023; Agyemang-Duah et al, 2021). Such communication challenges can have far-reaching consequences. In the NHIA, for instance, delays in interdepartmental communication can affect claim processing, customer service, policy dissemination, and even crisis response. These issues are not unique to Ghana or NHIA;

they reflect broader communication deficiencies observed across public institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2018). Nevertheless, given the NHIA's centrality in Ghana's healthcare financing, understanding and addressing these communication barriers is both urgent and essential. This study, therefore, investigates the barriers to effective workplace communication within the NHIA. It explores the root causes of these challenges, assesses their impact on organisational performance, and recommends actionable strategies to enhance information flow and stakeholder engagement.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

In today's fast-paced and interconnected corporate environment, efficient communication is critical to the success and productivity of any company (Bahrain et al, 2023). Furthermore, good workplace communication promotes cooperation and teamwork, conflict resolution, employee engagement and resolution, trust and relationship development, clear direction and alignment, and employee innovation and creativity (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020). According to Vaughan (2022), a company requires regular engagement with a variety of stakeholders, including management, employees, and customers to prevent misunderstanding and ensure collaboration within its workforce. Effective communication help reduce these misunderstandings, unhappiness, and lack of trust by ensuring information flows to all parties involved.

Despite its importance, effective communication can be hampered by several barriers, resulting in misunderstandings, inefficiencies, and workplace conflicts (Bahrain et al, 2023). According to Martic (2023), in multigenerational workplaces, the rise of remote work, a dispersed workforce, the introduction of new communication tools, and shifting employee expectations are just a few of the obstacles that have emerged in recent years to hamper successful

communication. Communication barriers enable communications to become distorted, leading to confusion, misunderstanding, and, in some cases, offence (Beqiri 2018). Rani (2016) defines a communication barrier as anything that prevents the reception and comprehension of messages used by others to express information, ideas, and opinions. In other words, communication obstacles are the characteristics and conditions that prevent effective communication from occurring because information cannot be conveyed adequately.

Despite these known challenges, there remains a notable gap in the empirical literature specifically analysing workplace communication barriers in Ghana. In other contexts, studies have explored barriers to workplace communication. For example, in India, Kapur (2018) identified five key barriers: environment, semantics, cultural factors, psychological issues, and perceptions of reality. In Australia, Icten (2010) examined the types of obstacles faced by migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds in Australian workplaces. Similarly, Lopez and Malabanan (2019) evaluated communication barriers among workers at Yazaki Torres, Manufacturing Incorporated in the Philippines, highlighting credibility of the sender, information overload, emotions, language, and lack of feedback as primary issues. Yusof and Rahmat (2020) also investigated how communication barriers hinder the flow of information at workplaces in Malaysia, discovering that both verbal and non-verbal communication significantly contribute to ensuring smooth organisational exchanges. Most existing studies on organisational communication in Ghana broadly focus on public administration or health delivery systems, with limited attention to institutional-level dynamics and employee experiences (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2018; Ganle et al., 2016). Many of these studies primarily examine how organisational communication influences employee job satisfaction (Amadu & Anyarayer, 2022; Abugre, 2011; Abolade, 2020; Benarkuu et al., 2024), with little focus on specific institutional communication challenges.

This study fills that gap by providing a detailed investigation of the specific communication barriers experienced within the NHIA. Understanding these barriers is critical not only for improving internal operations but also for enhancing the Authority's responsiveness, accountability, and service delivery. The study also provides new insights into workplace communication barriers in Ghana.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To examine how communication is practiced within NHIA.
2. To identify the major communication barriers at NHIA.
3. To examine the influence of organisational culture on communication challenges within the NHIA.
4. To examine the impact of these barriers on organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction.

### **1.4 Research Question**

1. How is communication practiced within NHIA?
2. What are the major communication barriers within the NHIA?
3. In what ways does organisational culture influence communication challenges at the NHIA?
4. How do these communication barriers affect organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction at the NHIA?

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is significant as it addresses a critical yet often overlooked challenge in organisational performance. With language differences, cultural misunderstandings, technological limitations, and rigid hierarchies increasingly present in today's diverse and fast-paced work environments, organisations face heightened risks of inefficiencies, low morale, and productivity loss (Smith & Johnson, 2023). The study's relevance is highlighted by recent findings showing that poor communication can lead to stress, project delays, and substantial economic losses, contributing to an estimated \$8.8 trillion in global productivity losses due to employee disengagement in 2022 alone (Gallup, 2023). By empirically identifying communication barriers at the NHIA, this study provides data-driven insights into how these barriers impact the organisation's efficiency and employee satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings can assist in developing targeted communication strategies to enhance workplace cohesion and efficiency (Forte et al., 2024). The study also fills a gap in the literature regarding institution-based communication challenges in Ghana and contributes to the broader field of organisational behaviour and communication by identifying the main barriers to effective workplace communication and examining how organisational culture influences these barriers.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study is focused on examining the barriers to effective internal communication within the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) and their impact on organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction. The study explores how organisational structure, leadership style, and institutional culture influence communication flow, feedback, and collaboration among employees. It specifically assessed the perceptions of NHIA staff and managers across selected

offices using both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. The research concentrated on internal communication processes while excluding external communication with clients or stakeholders. The study was geographically limited to selected NHIA district and head offices in Ghana, providing a contextual understanding of communication challenges within a public sector environment. The findings aim to inform organisational communication strategies, enhance efficiency, and promote a culture of openness and engagement within the NHIA and similar public institutions.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to selected NHIA offices, and the relatively small sample size may affect generalisability. Additionally, time and access constraints prevented interviews with higher-level management, whose insights might have provided broader perspectives on strategic communication policies.

### **1.8 Organisation of Study**

The study consists of five chapters. The first chapter, which is the introduction part, consists of the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and organisation of the study. The second chapter, on the other hand, is centred on the literature review and the theoretical frameworks of the study. Chapter three comprises the process and procedures in the collection and analysis of data, sampling technique, sample size, data collection methods and procedure, data collection process, the data analysis method, and ethical issues. Chapter Four focuses on the findings and analysis of the collected data. The issues are presented and explained by using concepts in the

literature review and the theoretical frameworks. Chapter five provides a summary of the entire study, concludes the findings, and makes recommendations for future studies.

### **1.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has outlined the purpose of examining barriers to effective communication at the National Health Insurance Authority. It has been able to show the deficiencies in the literature and set objectives that will enable the gap in the literature to be filled. The next chapter reviews various literature that relates to the study and discusses the theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of concepts, empirical reviews, and a theoretical review of the study. It considers relevant materials and publications available on the subject of study. This is to ensure a thorough understanding of the topic and to be able to situate the barriers to effective communication at the NHIA, as well as to explore related literature on the subject of the study.

#### **2.1 Review of Relevant Literature**

##### **2.1.1 Workplace Communication Barriers**

Effective communication is fundamental to organisational success, yet numerous barriers ranging from language differences and cultural misunderstandings to technological limitations and hierarchical structures hinder clear and efficient information exchange (Duarte, 2023). These barriers lead to misinterpretations, decreased productivity, and workplace conflicts, negatively impacting organisational performance (Jiang & Chen, 2024). Although communication obstacles exist across industries, their impact varies depending on the organisation's structure, workforce composition, and operational model. Understanding these challenges in diverse settings allows organisations to refine communication strategies and

create more inclusive workplaces. But above all, some communication problems are still happening at the workplace. One of which is language barrier.

Language differences represent significant barriers to communication, especially in multinational corporations and culturally diverse organisations (Gibson, 2022). Employees who speak different languages often struggle with comprehension, resulting in inefficiencies and misunderstandings (Wang et al., 2023). In global corporations, multilingual teams necessitate translation tools, linguistic training, and standardised communication frameworks to alleviate these issues (Dwivedi et al., 2024). Conversely, smaller organisations operating in a single-language context may face fewer language-related obstacles but can still experience miscommunication when employees from varied linguistic backgrounds interpret messages differently (Hofstede, 1980). Thus, prioritising language-inclusive strategies is essential to foster collaboration and minimise misunderstandings in corporate organisations.

Additionally, Cultural diversity, while beneficial for innovation, can introduce communication challenges rooted in differing communication styles, values, and workplace expectations (Huynh et al., 2023). In multicultural organisations, employees bring distinct perspectives, sometimes leading to tension when communication norms clash (Brown & Sweeting, 2025). For example, direct communication may be valued in Western workplaces but perceived as confrontational in Eastern cultures (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). Misalignments in non-verbal cues, etiquette, and decision-making processes further complicate interactions (Hall et al., 2023). Although organisations with relatively homogeneous cultures face fewer cultural misunderstandings, they must remain aware of potential friction when integrating employees from diverse backgrounds (Thomas et al., 2015).

The growing reliance on digital tools has introduced new communication obstacles, particularly in remote and hybrid work environments (Luthans et al., 2024). Poor internet

connectivity, unfamiliar digital platforms, and disparities in digital literacy contribute to communication breakdowns (Waty, 2024). Remote teams often struggle with reduced non-verbal cues, leading to misinterpretations and weaker collaboration (Cohen et al., 2024). Although traditional office-based organisations rely on face-to-face interactions, they too encounter challenges such as geographical constraints and scheduling conflicts (Fayard et al., 2023). Overcoming technological barriers may require investment in user-friendly communication platforms, digital literacy training, and improved virtual collaboration techniques (Sharma, 2025).

Yusof and Rahmat (2020) categorise workplace communication into environmental and personal barriers. Environmental barriers are all the things that can cause the organisation to not function well. Other than that, the negative things that revolve around the organisation can also be contributors to the barriers (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020). Environmental barriers at the workplace include the competition for attention and time between two sides sender and receiver (Jelani & Nordin, 2019). Personal barriers, on the other hand, are the internal beliefs that one has towards communication. It is based on the culture and values of where the person comes from. Different cultures may have different approaches towards communication. Therefore, having to work with employees from different cultural backgrounds can sometimes be a problem.

### **2.1.2 Communication and Employee Satisfaction**

Communication is the bedrock of meaningful workplace relationships and a critical driver of employee satisfaction. A growing body of research highlights that when internal communication is open, timely, and reciprocal, it fosters stronger engagement and job contentment among employees. (Anchor, 2009; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades

& Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995). The most conscientious of employers recognise that bidirectional communication provides for avenues to recognise employee contribution and build organisational commitment (Curado et al, 2022). Various studies have resulted in the supposition that employees develop beliefs concerning their value to the organisation in order to satisfy socio-emotional needs and to determine the organisation's readiness to recognise and reward increased work effort and performance (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995). Bi-directional communication promotes feelings of being valued and increases job satisfaction. According to Curado et al. (2022), employee satisfaction emerges from a combination of communication at three levels: organisation-wide messages, leadership communication, and peer-to-peer interactions. These forms of communication satisfy employees' psychological and social needs through mutual trust and reciprocity, tenets central to social exchange theory.

Employees who perceive communication from their supervisors and colleagues as respectful, frequent, and supportive are more likely to experience satisfaction and emotional investment in their roles (Men & Yue, 2019). Moreover, studies in the service sector, such as that by Jacobs et al. (2015), show that internal communication significantly affects employee satisfaction and, by extension, organisational integration. Jacobs et al. (2015) also revealed that employee satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between communication and internal performance outcomes. Supporting these findings, Gautama So et al. (2018) found that organisational communication, especially in terms of clarity, accuracy, and performance feedback, positively influenced employee motivation and satisfaction in Indonesian broadcasting firms. Gautama So et al. (2018) posit that communication should be a two-way street, allowing for employee voice and participation in decision-making, as this bolsters morale and motivation. Without such reciprocal communication channels, employees often feel ignored, leading to disengagement and diminished performance.

Communication allows employees to share information, foster relationships, and absorb organisational culture and values, while also developing mutually beneficial connections with their organisations (Men & Bowen, 2017). The social relationship and communication frameworks that employees build contribute to their feelings of satisfaction and reciprocity toward the organisation (Mehra & Nickerson, 2019; Men & Yue, 2019). Satisfaction is a positive emotional state stemming from work experiences (Locke, 1976) and the fulfilment of needs, wishes, and desires (Sageer et al., 2012, p. 32). It includes a sense of pride and achievement when performing specific tasks (Saleem, 2015). Factors influencing satisfaction include employees' ability to complete tasks, communication quality, and treatment from superiors. Satisfaction has two dimensions: affective, related to positive emotions about work, and cognitive, based on evaluations of work aspects such as pay, schedules, and benefits (Eyupoglu et al., 2016). Organisations enhance employee satisfaction when their work aligns with company expectations and values (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017). Ultimately, satisfaction fosters positive workplace attitudes like loyalty, retention, and improved performance.

### **2.1.3 Communication and Organisational Effectiveness**

Effective communication is widely recognised as a foundational element of organisational success. It acts as the connective tissue that integrates people, processes, and goals across departments and hierarchical levels. Earlier studies by Borcaa and Baesu (2014) and Byrne and LeMay (2006) suggest that strong employee communication is linked to improved organisational outcomes like commitment and satisfaction. Internal communication can serve as a motivator, enhancing customer engagement and individual fulfilment (Vercic et al., 2012). Communication influences strategic alignment, decision-making, innovation, and overall operational performance, making it a critical determinant of organisational effectiveness (Tourish & Robson, 2006; Verčič et al., 2012). According to Welch and Jackson (2007),

internal communication enhances organisational effectiveness by strengthening relationships, supporting employee engagement, and aligning organisational values with everyday practices. Jacobs et al. (2015) show that effective internal communication functions not only as a facilitator for task coordination but also as a strategic asset that supports organisational integration and performance. Their research in the manufacturing and service sectors found that companies with transparent internal communication reported greater internal cohesion and operational efficiency. Likewise, Vercic et al. (2012) highlight that internal communication acts as a mechanism for fostering positive relationships and coordinating strategic decisions, ultimately boosting performance. Gautama et al. (2018) further observed that in fast-paced industries like media, strong organisational communication is closely linked to employee performance and overall organisational success. Specifically, when communication systems offer clear feedback and encourage bottom-up input, performance tends to improve as employees feel more connected to their tasks and organisational objectives.

Building on this, Kalla (2005) stresses that internal communication should be viewed as a strategic management function, not merely a support activity. Communication should be deliberately managed to serve organisational objectives. When organisations communicate clearly and consistently, particularly around expectations, roles, and decision-making, employees are more confident, aligned, and motivated. Conversely, ambiguous or inconsistent messaging leads to confusion, duplication of efforts, and resistance to change. Downs and Adrian (2004) argue that effective communication increases the quality of work relationships, facilitates faster problem-solving, and leads to more accurate decision-making. For public sector institutions like NHIA, where timely service delivery and public trust are paramount, communication inefficiencies can have serious consequences. Delays in interdepartmental information exchange, failure to communicate policy changes, or lack of access to senior leadership are often cited as bottlenecks in public administration (Ofori et al., 2023).

From a systems theory perspective, Cheney and Christensen (2001) emphasise that communication is not a component of the organisation; it is the organisation. They argue that organisational processes (such as planning, coordination, and performance evaluation) are fundamentally communicative acts. Therefore, organisational breakdowns are often communication breakdowns in disguise. Improving communication practices thus becomes central to transforming organisational effectiveness. Moreover, Clampitt and Downs (1993) found that effective communication significantly predicts organisational productivity, adaptability, and employee commitment. This has been echoed in more recent research, such as Karanges et al. (2015), who found that internal communication quality predicts employee engagement, which in turn enhances organisational outcomes like innovation and productivity. In more recent literature, Men and Bowen (2017) note that communication also plays a crucial role in building organisational identity and reputation, both internally and externally.

The literature underscores three interconnected mechanisms through which communication enhances organisational effectiveness. Firstly, when communication flows clearly across units and hierarchies, tasks are executed with fewer errors, and organisational objectives are achieved more smoothly (Jacobs et al., 2015; Welch, 2012). Additionally, effective communication ensures that all staff, from top management to junior officers, understand the organisation's goals, roles, and performance expectations (Kalla, 2005; Verčič et al., 2012). Finally, Open communication builds a sense of ownership and accountability, empowering employees to contribute proactively to organisational success (Men & Bowen, 2017; Karanges et al., 2015).

As espoused above, organisational effectiveness is deeply intertwined with how well communication flows within and between departments. Effective communication helps ensure that goals, expectations, feedback, and performance standards are clearly understood and aligned across all levels of the organisation. This alignment is especially critical in bureaucratic

institutions like NHIA, where rigid hierarchies can slow down or distort information flow. Moreover, the NHIA, being a public service agency, faces external pressures to deliver transparent and efficient service. Poor communication internally can ripple out to affect client satisfaction and public trust. Thus, internal communication not only affects intra-organisational effectiveness but also NHIA's broader public service mission. Hence, the current study examines how barriers to effective communication at NHIA, which culminate in poor communication, affect the organisation's efficiency and employee satisfaction.

#### **2.1.4 Organisational Culture and Communication**

Organisational culture is both shaped by and reflected in communication practices. Schein (2010) defines culture as the shared values, norms, and assumptions that guide behaviour within an organisation. Communication is the primary vehicle through which these cultural elements are expressed and transmitted. In turn, the nature of communication, whether open or closed, formal or informal, offers insight into the type of culture that prevails. Curado et al. (2022) found that an open and supportive organisational culture enhances communication effectiveness and employee satisfaction. Specifically, they highlight how communication at the organisational level, such as transparency in leadership messaging and policy discussions, builds trust and contributes to a healthier, more collaborative culture. Similarly, Men and Bowen (2017) point out that the quality of communication mirrors the ethical climate and interpersonal dynamics of a workplace. Gautama So et al. (2018) reinforce this idea, noting that effective communication helps transmit organisational values and norms, thereby reinforcing a consistent and unified culture. In their study of the broadcasting industry, organisational culture did not directly influence performance unless mediated by communication and motivation (Gautama So et al., 2018). This highlights that culture alone is insufficient; it must be activated through effective communicative practices.

This cultural dynamic is especially relevant in African public institutions, where traditional authority structures and formal bureaucracies can limit open communication. Ofori et al. (2023), studying public sector communication in Ghana, found that entrenched hierarchical cultures often suppress bottom-up communication and discourage dissent or constructive criticism. Such cultures create bottlenecks for innovation and responsiveness, especially in agencies, where service efficiency is paramount. The impact of culture on communication is also evident in decision-making, as highlighted in Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory that high power distance cultures (common in many African and Asian contexts) tend to favour centralised decision-making and formal communication channels. In such environments, employees may be reluctant to challenge authority or offer suggestions, even when they identify inefficiencies (Schein, 2010). This leads to what Tourish and Robson (2006) describe as a "distortion of upward communication," where fear of reprisal results in filtered or sanitised feedback reaching leadership.

From a systems perspective, Keyton (2011) explains that communication both reflects and sustains organisational culture. Rituals like regular meetings, performance reviews, or onboarding processes all carry implicit messages about what the organisation values. A culture that celebrates openness will design communication systems to encourage participation, whereas a control-oriented culture will prioritise unidirectional information flow. Some scholars suggest that communication is not only shaped by culture, but can also be used as a lever to change it. For instance, Cameron and Quinn (2011) argue that leaders can shift culture over time by modelling transparent communication, fostering dialogue, and encouraging feedback. In organisations undergoing reform, such as public health institutions, these communication strategies are essential for breaking entrenched norms and establishing more adaptive, learning-oriented cultures (France et al, 2017). Further, Karanges et al. (2015) found that strong internal communication practices can align cultural values across diverse teams,

reduce ambiguity, and create shared meaning, particularly important in large or multi-regional organisations. When communication is managed strategically, it can close cultural gaps, unify employee perspectives, and support a cohesive organisational identity.

In a public institution like NHIA, cultural barriers can significantly hinder communication. For instance, a rigid, top-down culture might discourage open feedback or whistleblowing, allowing inefficiencies to persist. Therefore, it's important to examine how the organisational culture at NHIA influences communication at the institution.

## **2.2 Empirical Studies**

Jacobs et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study to examine the relationship between internal communication, employee satisfaction, and supply chain integration using structural equation modelling (SEM) on survey data collected from 214 Chinese manufacturing firms. The study found that internal communication significantly enhances employee satisfaction, which, in turn, facilitates both internal and external supply chain integration. Effective communication was shown to enable smooth coordination between departments, reduce operational inefficiencies, and promote collaborative performance. The study concluded that communication acts as a strategic resource rather than just a supportive function. While insightful, this research is limited to a supply chain context in a manufacturing setting, which differs from public service institutions. The current study builds on Jacobs et al.'s framework by contextualising communication barriers within a public health insurance agency and assessing how they impact not just integration but also service efficiency and employee morale.

Curado et al. (2022) used a fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to examine how communication contributes to employee satisfaction across 163 participants in Portuguese service firms. Drawing on social exchange theory, the study evaluated communication on three

levels: organisational, leader, and peer. Their results revealed that no single factor independently guarantees satisfaction, but rather specific combinations of communication quality across these levels lead to high or low employee satisfaction. The presence of two-way, frequent, and sincere communication was a consistent feature in all satisfaction-producing configurations. The study contributes to theory by mapping causal pathways to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. However, its service-industry focus in a European context may limit generalizability to African public sector institutions. The current study seeks to adapt and apply this three-tier communication framework within Ghana's public health system, specifically the NHIA, to explore how contextual factors, such as hierarchy, cultural norms, and public accountability, mediate communication effectiveness and job satisfaction.

In a study examining Indonesian broadcasting companies, Gautama So et al. (2018) explored the influence of organisational communication and culture on employee motivation and performance. Using quantitative survey data and correlation analysis, they found that effective communication significantly enhances motivation, which then improves individual and organisational performance. Specifically, open and transparent communication systems enabled employees to understand their roles better, receive feedback, and feel valued within the organisation. The study concluded that without effective communication, even a strong organisational culture may not lead to improved performance outcomes. The study gives limited attention to structural communication barriers. By focusing on NHIA, a bureaucratic and non-profit public agency, the current study fills this gap by identifying how communication constraints rooted in culture, policy, and hierarchy impact not just employee satisfaction, but also organisational responsiveness.

Men and Bowen (2017) investigated how internal communication systems influence employee engagement and organisational culture using surveys, case studies, and communication audits in various U.S. firms. They emphasised the concept of "symmetrical communication", where

information flows freely both upward and downward, as essential to building trust, transparency, and employee empowerment. Their research revealed that organisations practising two-way communication experience higher employee engagement, fewer conflicts, and smoother organisational change processes. They also identified leadership communication behaviours, such as empathy, clarity, and consistency, as key cultural indicators. This work is valuable for highlighting leadership communication behaviours that shape workplace culture. Yet, the corporate and Western focus may not capture the nuances of public institutions in the Global South. The current study addresses this gap by evaluating how the NHIA's communication system functions within Ghana's hierarchical public service structure and its effects on employee satisfaction and efficiency of the organisation.

Welch and Jackson (2007) proposed and empirically tested a stakeholder-oriented framework for internal communication using survey research. Their findings revealed that different communication channels and styles are needed to manage relationships with diverse internal stakeholders, such as employees, teams, and departments. They found that effective communication enhances not only operational efficiency but also psychological alignment, fostering shared values and engagement. Employees who experienced high-quality communication reported feeling more connected to their organisation and more committed to its success. While the model is comprehensive, its application remains abstract and lacks a detailed assessment of real-life communication breakdowns in bureaucratic environments. The current study extends this research by empirically examining internal stakeholder communication gaps within NHIA between leadership, mid-level managers, and frontline staff, and their effects on employee satisfaction and overall efficiency.

Ofori et al. (2023) explored communication practices in Ghana's public sector, focusing on social media adoption and internal communication mechanisms. Through qualitative interviews and content analysis, they discovered that despite the availability of digital tools,

communication in public institutions remains largely hierarchical, with limited employee input and delayed feedback. Structural issues, such as inadequate ICT infrastructure, bureaucratic rigidity, and lack of communication training, were cited as persistent barriers. The study concluded that unless communication is actively integrated into institutional strategy, new tools alone won't improve organisational outcomes. The study underscores the need for cultural and procedural reforms in public sector communication. This work is especially relevant because it situates communication barriers within local cultural and institutional realities. However, the study adopts a broad focus across multiple public agencies and doesn't offer deep empirical insight into a single institution. The current study narrows this focus to the NHIA, enabling a more detailed organisational-level analysis of communication challenges.

Karanges et al. (2015) conducted a pilot study in Australia to examine the influence of internal communication on employee engagement across various industries. Using surveys and statistical analysis, they demonstrated that internal communication quality, measured by openness, frequency, clarity, and feedback, was a strong predictor of employee engagement. Engaged employees were more likely to demonstrate higher performance, loyalty, and organisational citizenship behaviours. The study highlighted the role of communication in building trust and emotional commitment among employees, noting that one-way or ambiguous communication often leads to disengagement. This study is useful in establishing communication as a predictor of both emotional and behavioural outcomes. However, it is set within a private sector, Western framework, where job security and communication openness are more culturally ingrained. The current study brings a new lens by examining how communication affects engagement in a public health institution and how systemic communication challenges affect employee satisfaction and efficiency.

## **2.3 Theoretical Review**

### **2.3.1 Organisational Communication Theory**

Organisational Communication Theory refers to the study and systematic analysis of how communication operates within an organisation to facilitate decision-making, coordination, conflict resolution, and relationship building. It encompasses a range of processes and structures that enable individuals and groups within organisations to exchange information effectively (Keyton, 2011). In essence, this theory explores both the formal and informal networks that support internal and external communication and how these networks influence organisational culture, performance, and employee satisfaction.

At its core, organisational communication is not simply about sending messages, but about understanding the environment in which those messages are created, transmitted, and received. It recognises that every message is shaped by the sender's position in the organisational hierarchy, cultural background, and the prevailing norms of the institution (Miller, 2012). Therefore, this theory investigates communication as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that is deeply intertwined with power, structure, culture, and identity in the workplace.

Organisational Communication Theory can be examined through several perspectives. The classical perspective, rooted in scientific management theories like those of Frederick Taylor (Taylor, 2004), emphasised top-down, formal, and task-oriented communication. In contrast, the human relations approach, exemplified by Elton Mayo's Hawthorne Studies, highlighted the importance of interpersonal communication, employee morale, and feedback loops (Shockley-Zalabak, 2011). More contemporary frameworks incorporate systems theory, cultural perspectives, and critical theories that examine power dynamics, communication inequalities, and cultural diversity within organisational life (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009).

One of the more influential modern approaches is the cultural approach, which views communication as the means by which organisational culture is constructed and maintained. According to this perspective, communication is not merely a tool used within organisations—it is what constitutes the organisation itself. Schein (2010) argued that organisational culture is formed through shared assumptions, values, and beliefs, all of which are expressed and reinforced through communication practices. Critical perspectives in Organisational Communication Theory also focus on how communication practices reproduce power structures. Deetz (1992) argued that organisational discourse often silences dissent and privileges managerial interests. Through subtle control mechanisms like strategic ambiguity or selective transparency, organisations can maintain control while appearing open and democratic (Deetz, 1992). This view encourages scholars and practitioners to scrutinise not just *what* is communicated, but *who* controls the communication process and *why*.

In today's increasingly virtual and diverse workplaces, Organisational Communication Theory remains essential. The rise of digital tools, remote work, and global teams has made effective communication more challenging and more important than ever (Ofori et al, 2023). Miscommunication, lack of clarity, or exclusion from key conversations can lead to disengagement, conflict, and poor performance (Smith, Allan, & Blustein, 2024). A robust understanding of communication theory enables organisations to design better systems, train employees, and foster a culture of transparency and collaboration. For public institutions like NHIA, communication affects not just internal efficiency, but public trust and service delivery. Bureaucratic silos, hierarchical messaging, and lack of feedback are all areas where Organizational Communication Theory can offer valuable insights and tools for improvement (Ofori et al., 2023).

### **2.3.2 Transactional Model of Communication**

Originally developed by Dean Barnlund, the Transactional Model asserts that communication is continuous, irreversible, and affected by the environment, context, and feedback. Unlike the Shannon and Weaver (1949) linear model, which treated communication as message delivery from sender to receiver, the transactional approach considers both parties as communicators who decode and encode messages simultaneously. This model recognises that communication is not a one-way process, but an ongoing, mutual, and interdependent interaction where both participants function as sender and receiver simultaneously (Barnlund, 1970). Communication is also embedded in contexts (social, relational, and cultural) and influenced by internal "noise" (e.g., emotions, attitudes) and external "noise" (e.g., distractions, technological issues) (Adler, et al, 2018). This framing makes the model particularly useful for understanding how organisational and personal barriers intersect to complicate workplace communication.

One of the core strengths of this model lies in its acknowledgement of contextual influences (social, cultural, relational, and psychological factors) that shape the way messages are interpreted (Barnlund, 2017). Every act of communication is embedded in a context, and these contexts influence how messages are encoded and decoded. In a workplace such as NHIA, for example, the formal setting, power dynamics, and institutional culture can all affect how an employee understands a directive from a manager and how the manager interprets the employee's response. The continuous feedback loop that characterises transactional communication is crucial here: it enables corrections, clarifications, and mutual understanding in a dynamic environment (Adler et al, 2018).

A particularly relevant concept within this model is noise, thus, any interference that disrupts or distorts communication. (Barnlund, 2017). Noise can be external, like a noisy office or poor internet connection, or internal, such as stress, fatigue, or cultural misunderstanding. Within workplaces, these interferences manifest in several ways. For instance, poor digital

infrastructure may delay message delivery, while hierarchical barriers may prevent honest upward feedback. Such issues are well-documented in organisational contexts, where complex reporting lines and a lack of transparency lead to distorted or incomplete communication (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020). The transactional model highlights that communication is rarely perfect and that both parties must work collaboratively to overcome barriers.

The transactional model also aligns well with the study's objective of examining how communication barriers impact organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction. The model accentuates that poor communication, whether due to rigid hierarchies, lack of feedback mechanisms, or unclear messaging, can lead to project delays, interpersonal conflict, and reduced employee morale. These outcomes stem not simply from message failure, but from a breakdown in the mutual construction of meaning (Barnlund, 1970).

## **2.4 Operational Definitions of Terms**

### **Effective Communication**

This refers to the clear, timely, and reciprocal exchange of information among employees and departments that results in shared understanding, reduced conflict, and improved workplace coordination. In the context of this study, it includes verbal, non-verbal, written, and digital communication that supports NHIA's operational and service delivery goals (Keyton, 2011; Robbins & Judge, 2019).

### **Communication Barriers**

These are obstacles that hinder the effective exchange of information within an organisation. They may be environmental (e.g., noise, physical layout), personal (e.g., language, perception), technological, or organisational (e.g., hierarchy, policy). In this study, barriers are identified as

factors within NHIA that distort or prevent accurate communication, causing inefficiencies and misunderstandings (Pauley, 2010; Rani, 2016; Yusof & Rahmat, 2020).

### **Organisational Culture**

This encompasses the shared values, beliefs, rituals, and practices that influence communication and behaviour within NHIA. It affects how information flows, how open feedback is, and how authority is exercised and perceived in the workplace (Schein, 2010; Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

### **Employee Satisfaction**

This is defined as the emotional and cognitive response of employees toward their jobs and work environment, influenced by communication, recognition, and the sense of inclusion in decision-making. Within NHIA, it reflects how communication practices affect employees' morale, engagement, and sense of fulfilment (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Curado et al., 2022).

### **Organisational Effectiveness**

This refers to the extent to which NHIA achieves its mission, strategic objectives, and service delivery outcomes. In this study, it is assessed through the lens of communication systems that support coordination, efficiency, decision-making, and policy implementation (Welch & Jackson, 2007; Verčič et al., 2012).

### **Internal Communication**

The structured and informal flow of information among various departments and personnel within NHIA. It includes top-down (manager to staff), bottom-up (staff to leadership), and horizontal (peer-to-peer) communication, all of which impact the institution's cohesion and responsiveness (Men & Bowen, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2015).

## **Workplace Miscommunication**

Any instance where messages are misunderstood, misinterpreted, or inaccurately conveyed between individuals or groups within NHIA. This may result from unclear language, cultural differences, digital disruptions, or hierarchical filtering (Shaw, 2011; Barnlund, 2017).

## **Transactional Communication**

A communication model in which all parties are simultaneously senders and receivers, engaging in a continuous process of feedback, shaped by social, psychological, and contextual influences. This study applies the transactional model to understand how barriers arise from misaligned interpretations, feedback failure, and contextual interferences at NHIA (Barnlund, 1970; Adler et al., 2018).

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed literature on workplace communication and the barriers to it. In so doing, the chapter provided a review of key concepts as well as theories and empirical studies that relate to the subject of discussion.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for the study, detailing the methods and procedures employed in the collection and analysis of data. It explains the overall research approach and design, describes the target population, and discusses the techniques used to gather relevant data. The chapter also highlights the processes involved in analysing the data to ensure that the study's objectives are effectively addressed.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher adopted a mixed-method research approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative strategies within a single study. Johnson et al. (2007, p. 123) define Mixed methods research as “the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.” Similarly, Creswell et al. (2011) emphasise that this approach involves the collection, analysis, and integration of both numerical and textual data to produce a more holistic understanding of a research problem.

The mixed methods approach was adopted for this study because it allows for both breadth and depth in understanding communication practices and barriers at the NHIA. Quantitative methods, through questionnaires, provide measurable data that can be statistically analysed and generalised to a larger population (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000). On the other hand, qualitative

methods, such as semi-structured interviews, capture the richness and complexity of employee perceptions and lived experiences (Cohen et al., 2007). Combining the two enables the researcher to corroborate findings, reduce biases inherent in single-method studies, and generate deeper insights into both the systemic and human aspects of workplace communication barriers.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design, a type of mixed-methods approach that allows both qualitative and quantitative data to be collected, analysed, and interpreted concurrently (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of this design was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers to effective internal communication at the NHIA by integrating numerical trends with rich, descriptive insights. In this design, both data strands were treated as equally important and were analyzed separately before being merged during interpretation to draw overarching conclusions (Demir & Pismek, 2018).

The qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with managers, aimed at exploring communication practices, organizational culture, and leadership influences within NHIA. The quantitative component comprised survey questionnaires administered to staff members, designed to measure perceptions of communication efficiency, cultural influences, and the impact on satisfaction and performance. The integration of both datasets enhanced the validity of findings through triangulation, allowing areas of convergence and divergence to be identified (Demir & Pismek, 2018). This design was particularly appropriate for the study because communication within organizations is both a human and systemic process, requiring an understanding of subjective experiences as well as measurable patterns. Thus, the

convergent parallel mixed methods design enabled a holistic assessment of communication dynamics and their implications for organizational effectiveness at NHIA.

### **3.3 Population and Sampling Strategy**

The population of a study refers to the complete group of individuals, objects, or events that possess the characteristics of interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2014). For this study, the population comprises all employees of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), Ghana. This includes staff at different hierarchical levels, senior management, middle-level administrators, and frontline operational staff. These categories were considered because they are directly involved in communication processes within the organization, and their perspectives are crucial for understanding how communication barriers affect employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness.

To select respondents, the study employed two sampling strategies that combine purposive sampling for qualitative data collection and stratified random sampling for quantitative data collection. For the qualitative component, the study employs a purposive sampling approach, also referred to as judgment sampling. Purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants based on their knowledge, expertise, or attributes related to the study (Palys, 2008). As Wimmer and Dominic (2011) explain, this method allows researchers to focus on participants who can provide rich, relevant, and reliable insights. In this case, the researcher targeted four (4) managerial-level respondents who are well-positioned to explain how NHIA management engages with subordinates and to highlight the communication barriers managers encounter in their interactions with other employees. Their perspectives provide context to organisational-level communication dynamics.

For the quantitative component, the study adopted a stratified random sampling approach, which is particularly suitable for heterogeneous populations (Fricker, 2008). Unlike simple random sampling that treats the population as a uniform entity, stratified random sampling partitions the population into homogeneous subgroups (strata) before drawing random samples from each (Elfil & Negida, 2017). This ensures that diverse groups within the population are adequately represented (Garg, 2016; Setia, 2016). In this study, the NHIA population is stratified based on departments, after which respondents are randomly selected from each stratum. The researcher recruits twenty (20) respondents across different departments to capture a wide range of employee experiences and perceptions of communication challenges within the organization.

By integrating purposive sampling for depth and stratified random sampling for breadth, the study ensures both representativeness and contextual richness. This combined strategy provides a balanced dataset that captures the lived realities of employees while also offering statistical reliability to support generalizable conclusions about communication barriers at NHIA.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

Creswell (2014) opines that data collection involves the actual types of data and procedures, obtaining permissions, obtaining a good sample size, recording materials, and anticipating ethical issues that may arise. In line with the mixed methods approach, this study employs two primary data collection methods: semi-structured interviews for qualitative data and questionnaire administration for quantitative data. These methods complement each other and ensure both depth and breadth in addressing the research objectives.

Qualitative data is gathered through semi-structured interviews with four (4) purposively selected managerial-level staff of NHIA. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in questioning while maintaining a focus on key themes. This approach enables participants to share detailed accounts of their lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges regarding workplace communication. According to Zainal (2007), qualitative studies rely on such techniques to capture the complexities of real-world phenomena within specific organizational contexts. Through interviews, the researcher gains nuanced insights into how managers engage with subordinates, the barriers they encounter, and the strategies they employ to overcome these barriers.

Quantitative data is collected through structured questionnaires administered to twenty (20) respondents selected via stratified random sampling from different NHIA departments. The questionnaire includes both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions designed to measure employees' perceptions of communication practices, barriers, satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Questionnaires are effective for generating objective and standardized data that can be statistically analysed and generalized to a wider population (Creswell, 2014). This aligns with the study's aim to quantify the extent and impact of communication barriers across the institution.

Together, the use of interviews and questionnaires strengthens the validity of the study by combining statistical generalizability with contextual depth. As Yin (2009) notes, research benefits from using multiple sources of evidence to build a more complete picture of the issue under investigation. Thus, the combination of these methods ensures a comprehensive understanding of communication barriers at NHIA and their implications for employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with managerial staff is analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves systematically identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This method allows the researcher to explore recurring communication issues, uncover underlying meanings, and capture the lived experiences of employees. As Braun and Clarke (2013) argue, thematic analysis can reveal both manifest meanings in participants' responses and latent meanings embedded in context and expression. For this study, thematic analysis is proceeded through three key stages as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) and later adopted by Alhojailan (2012):

1. **Data Reduction:** transcribed interviews is coded to condense the data into manageable categories without losing key insights.
2. **Data Display:** codes are organized into themes using tables and matrices for clearer comparison across respondents.
3. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** patterns and themes is reviewed, cross-checked, and refined to ensure validity and consistency.

This process enables the researcher to generate individual themes while also conducting cross-analyses to identify commonalities and differences across respondents (Alhojailan & Ibrahim, 2012). The rationale for using thematic analysis is that it provides a flexible yet rigorous framework for detecting factors that explain workplace behaviors, communication challenges, and organizational practices (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002).

Quantitative data collected through questionnaires is analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations is employed to summarize respondents' demographic information and

communication experiences. Inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis, is also conducted to examine the relationship between communication barriers, employee satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness.

### **3.6 Ethical Consideration**

Dindiok (2017), states that the research ought to incorporate three crucial ethical ideas. They are conflict of interest, informed consent, and privacy (particularly secrecy and anonymity). The study avoids biases in the administration of the questionnaires and interviews and the interpretation of the results. It also avoided exaggeration in the presentation of the data. Respondents are recruited willingly with their consent for every procedure throughout the data collection, and their privacy is respected. Other ethical standards that are upheld in this study are research validity and reliability. According to Creswell (2014), research reliability denotes that the researcher's methodology is consistent with the analytical procedures used, whereas validity is the degree to which the researcher verifies the accuracy of the findings using specific procedures. For each qualitative investigation, Creswell (2014) suggested eight reliability strategies and four validation instruments. The reliability techniques are triangulation or the use of multiple data sources; member checking; using rich, detailed descriptions to convey findings; clarifying the researcher's biases; presenting negative evidence; spending a lot of time in the field; using peer briefing to improve account accuracy; and hiring an external auditor to review the entire project. Conversely, validation techniques according to Creswell (2014) include verification of transcript accuracy; refraining from redefining codes; coordinating coders in the event of team research or when the researcher receives assistance from another individual during the coding process; and utilizing intercoder reliability or agreement. The study upholds all these ethics.

### **3.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the study's methodology. It fulfilled the theoretical requirements of carrying out the study and outlined the steps involved in gathering and analysing the collected data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the findings and discussions from the research data collection. Data were collected through four (4) interviews with departmental managers at the NHIA and a quantitative survey of twenty-one (21) workers at the NHIA. The researcher analysed the qualitative data using thematic analysis to unearth the major issues (themes) in the communication structure at the NHIA and its associated challenges. The quantitative data is analysed statistically to draw relationships with the variables and the interview responses from the managers. The discussions were also done in relation to theories and related literature reviewed in this study to help conceptualise the research findings. To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the research participants, the researcher assigned alphanumeric codes to the participants in the interviews as R1, R2, R3 and R4. Also, the researcher analysed the data using the following research questions that underpinned the data collection and analysis as a guide.

RQ1. How is communication practiced within NHIA?

RQ2. What are the major communication barriers within the NHIA?

RQ3. In what ways does organisational culture influence communication challenges at the NHIA?

RQ4. How do communication barriers affect organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction at the NHIA?

## 4.1 Demographic Information

This section presents the demographic information of the study participants, both for the interview and survey participants. As part of answering the research questions, the researcher first wanted to know about the participants' demographic information to contextualise their responses to the research questions. The participants' demographic information is divided and addressed into two sections. The first part captures the interview participants selected to participate in the study. The second part covers details of the survey participants selected through stratified random sampling for the quantitative survey.

### 4.1.1 Demographics of Interview Participants

**Table 4.1.1 Demographics of Interview Participants**

<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>Position</b>
R1	Male	15	District Accountant
R2	Female	12	Head of District Public Relations
R3	Male	13	District Director
R4	Male	10	Head of District Management Information System Office

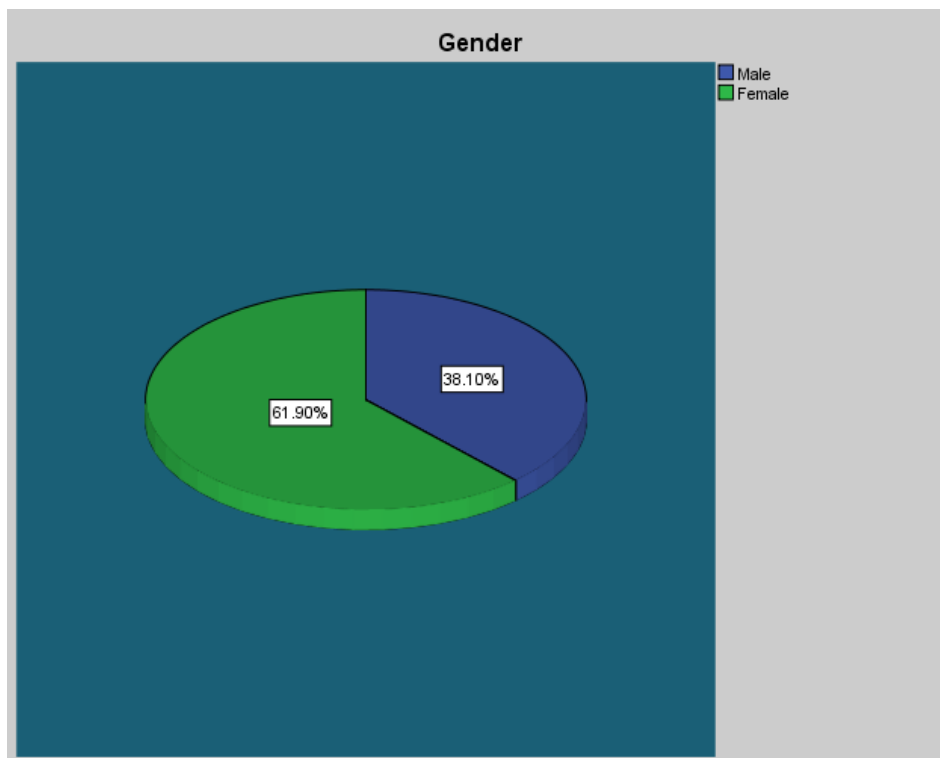
. Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 4.1.1 shows that 3 of the four interview participants are male, with only one being female. Additionally, all four managers have served 10 years or more at the National Health Insurance

Capacity. Three of the managers have served for over 10 years, while the last manager has served for exactly ten. For their positions, one is serving as a District Director, while three are serving as departmental heads at their various district offices.

#### 4.1.2 Demographics of Survey Participants

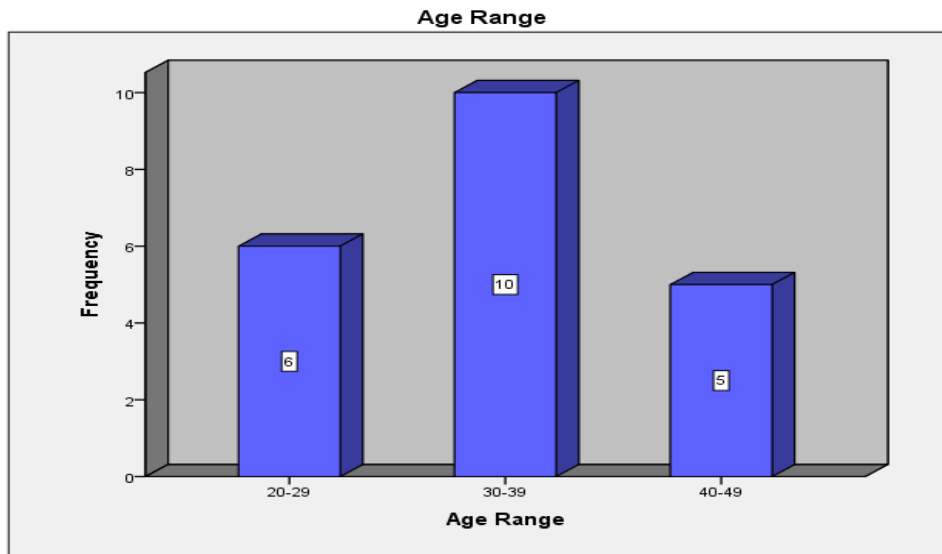
Figure 4.1.2.1 Gender of Survey Participants



Source: Field Data, 2025

Figure 4.1.2.1 shows the gender distribution of the survey participants for this study. Out of 21 participants, 61.90%(n=13) of the participants while 38.10%(n=8) are male. This shows that the majority of the survey participants, almost two-thirds, are female.

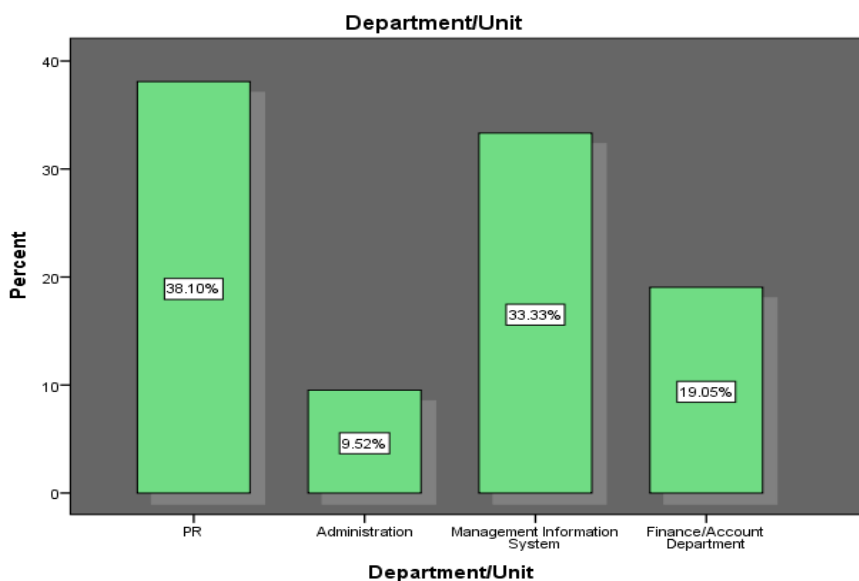
**Figure 4.1.2.2 Age Range of Survey Participants**



Source: Field Data, 2025

From Figure 4.1.2.2 above, the majority of the respondents in the survey are within the ages of 30-39 years (n=10), representing 47.60%. Six of the respondents are within the ages of 20-29 years (28.6%), while five respondents are within the ages of 40-49 years, representing 23.80%.

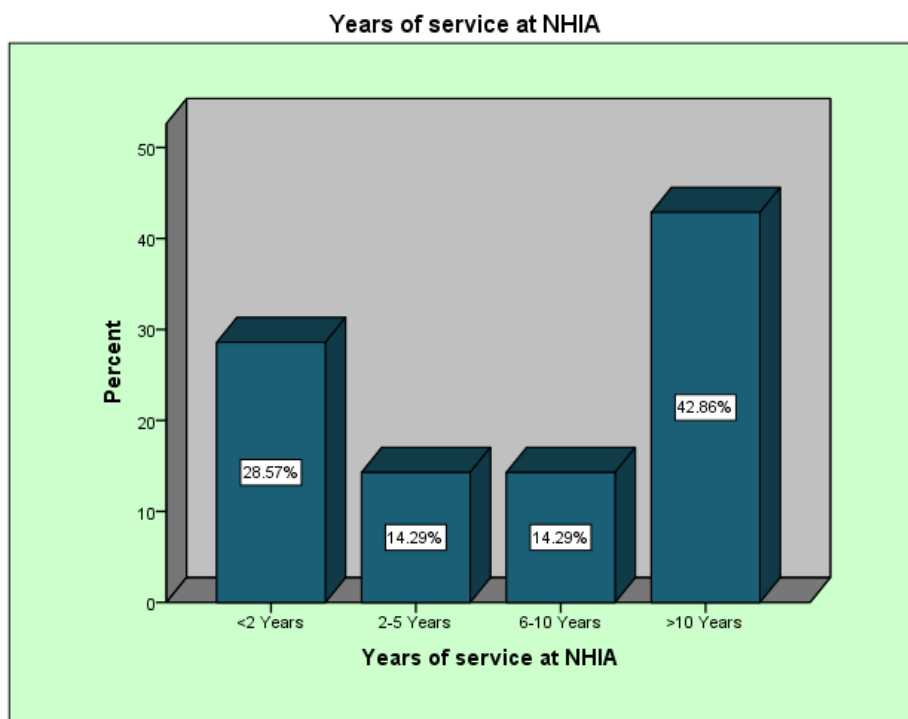
**Figure 4.1.2.3 Departments of Survey Participants**



Source: Field Data, 2025

As shown in Figure 4.1.2.3, the PR Department recorded the highest number of respondents, constituting 38.10% of the total respondents (n=8). This was followed by the Management Information System Department, which accounted for 33.33% (n=7). The Finance/Accounts Department contributed 19.05% of the respondents (n=4), while the Administration Department had the least representation at 9.52% (n=2). This distribution suggests that the majority of responses came from departments that are communication-intensive, particularly PR and MIS, which aligns with the study's focus on workplace communication.

**Figure 4.1.2.4 Years of Service at NHIA of Survey Participants**



Source: Field Data, 2025

As illustrated in Figure 4.1.2.4 above, the largest proportion of respondents, 42.86% (n=9), have worked with the NHIA for more than 10 years. This indicates that a significant number of employees possess long-term institutional experience and familiarity with the organisation's

communication systems. The second largest group, representing 28.57% (n=6), have served for less than 2 years, suggesting the presence of a relatively new category of employees. Meanwhile, 14.29% of respondents (n=3) have been with the organisation for 2–5 years and 6–10 years, respectively. Overall, the data reveal that the majority of NHIA employees surveyed are long-serving staff members, complemented by a smaller but notable proportion of newly recruited employees.

#### **4.2 RQ1. How is Communication Practiced within NHIA?**

The primary objective of this study was to understand how communication is carried out at the NHIA. This would establish a basis for identifying the challenges and barriers to NHIA's internal communication. As Welch and Jackson (2007) state, internal communication enhances organisational efficiency by strengthening relationships, supporting employee engagement, and aligning organisational values with daily practices. Internal communication structures differ from organisation to organisation and present various challenges. Therefore, the researcher aimed to first understand NHIA's internal communication framework before pinpointing the underlying issues. To do this, the researcher inquired with managers about how communication is managed across different departments and the organisation as a whole. The researcher, among other things, inquired about how general communication flows within departments at NHIA, the formal communication channels that are commonly used at NHIA for disseminating information, and how managers ensure that important information is clearly communicated to their subordinates. Additionally, the quantitative survey with staff members of the NHIA also inquired about how communication is structured at the institution. The responses from the managers were coded, and four major themes emerged describing how communication is conducted at the NHIA. The themes are: *Communication Flow and Structure, Communication Channels Used, Feedback and Employee Engagement, and Clarity*

*and Effectiveness of Communication*. These themes are explained and supported in with quotes in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### **4.2.1 Communication Flow and Structure**

From the analysis of the interview data, it emerged that the flow of communication within the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) follows a mix of top-down and two-way structures, depending on the department and managerial approach. The data revealed that while some managers promote a participatory environment that allows for openness and the exchange of ideas, others described a more formal and hierarchical structure where communication moves from management to subordinates through defined chains of command.

In some departments, communication is characterised by flexibility and openness. Managers in these settings encourage employees to freely express their thoughts and contribute ideas during discussions.

One manager explained that within his department

*“It’s flexible. I mean, we allow people to say what they feel, bring their thoughts. Nobody is capped or limited to anything. I like open-minded discussions, so everybody is free to bring their ideas on board” R1.*

This view shows that in certain parts of the organisation, communication is not restricted to authority lines but operates in a participatory and inclusive manner, allowing employees to actively engage in decision-making processes.

However, this open approach does not reflect the experience across all units of the NHIA. Other managers described a more hierarchical and structured flow of communication in which information travels predominantly from top management down to lower levels.

As one participant stated,

*“Usually, it’s vertical, from management to staff. But we also encourage horizontal, where staff are encouraged to share their ideas and advice”* R2.

This position suggests that while management recognises the value of horizontal communication, formal communication still largely follows a vertical pattern where authority and direction come from the top.

This sentiment resonates with another manager who reported that:

*“It is a two-way flow (top-down and bottom-up)”* R4.

This indicates that although managerial communication begins at the top, there are deliberate efforts to integrate upward communication, especially through departmental meetings and internal reporting systems. Such a structure reflects a gradual shift from strictly bureaucratic processes to a more balanced model that accommodates feedback from subordinates.

Nevertheless, some managers still operate in contexts where communication is primarily top-down, especially in the regional and district offices. One manager described this flow as

*“Basically, top-down where the instructions or directives come from the head office to the regional office, and then they are communicated to the district manager and then to all heads of departments and then to the other staff”*, R3.

This shows that hierarchy remains a dominant influence in some parts of the organisation, particularly where institutional authority is closely tied to operational directives from the head office.

The shared perspectives of the managers show that communication flow at the NHIA is not uniform across departments. While some units foster openness, interaction, and staff input, others maintain a strict vertical chain of command where communication is formalised through

directives and instructions. This inconsistency reflects the organisation's diverse managerial culture and structural design. The data also suggest that leadership style plays a central role in determining how communication flows within departments. Managers who value collaboration tend to encourage two-way communication, while those operating within bureaucratic contexts maintain traditional hierarchical models.

#### **4.2.2 Communication Channel Used**

The analysis also revealed that communication at the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) is conducted through a combination of formal and informal channels, reflecting a diverse and adaptive communication culture. The respondents explained that while official communication is largely conducted through structured media such as emails, memos, and meetings, informal platforms such as WhatsApp and phone calls have become equally important for day-to-day interaction and the timely dissemination of information.

In some departments, managers reported that they rely on multiple tools to communicate effectively with their staff.

One manager explained that within his department,

*“We do verbal communication... we can verbally tell informers, you can use the Outlook. We also use, you know, phones, WhatsApp, anything we feel conveniently will get a client-intentional communication to whomever we are communicating with” R1*

This statement suggests that managers prefer flexibility and convenience when choosing communication channels, often mixing formal and informal methods to ensure that messages reach their intended recipients quickly and efficiently.

Another manager confirmed this observation, adding that:

*“Mostly we use the Outlook... we use the Outlook and then the newsletters. But within the district office, we mostly use direct communication and then the WhatsApp platforms”, R2.*

This shows that formal channels like Outlook and newsletters are used for official correspondence and documentation, while informal ones, such as WhatsApp, are preferred for internal coordination due to their speed and accessibility. The manager’s emphasis on using both formal and informal channels points to a pragmatic communication approach that prioritises efficiency over rigidity.

Similarly, another respondent indicated that the organisation relies on emails and memos for most formal communication. In the larger offices, particularly at the regional and district levels, communication channels appear more institutionalised. A manager described that

*“Aside from that, there are quarterly staff meetings where communications or directives are communicated to staff, and there are notice boards that also help us to communicate to staff”, R3.*

This statement highlights the use of physical communication platforms like notice boards and meetings, which remain central to information dissemination in traditional bureaucratic settings such as the NHIA.

Across all interviews, Outlook email emerged as the dominant official communication tool, used for the transmission of formal information, policy updates, and managerial directives. However, WhatsApp and phone calls were cited as preferred alternatives for urgent matters and team coordination, especially where internet access or response time posed challenges. The combination of these tools reflects an evolving communication culture within NHIA, where digitalisation and informality coexist to enhance efficiency. The reliance on multiple media

shows adaptability and responsiveness to both organisational and technological demands. However, it also suggests that without a unified communication policy, the variety of channels may sometimes result in inconsistency and message overlap.

#### **4.2.3 Feedback and Employee Engagement**

From the analyses of the data obtained from the interviews, it became evident that feedback plays a central role in the communication practices of the NHIA. The responses from the managers revealed that the organisation generally encourages feedback and open dialogue between supervisors and subordinates. Although the degree of openness varies across departments, there was a shared acknowledgement that feedback is not only valued but also considered essential to effective teamwork and organisational learning.

Several of the managers noted that within their departments, employees are encouraged to express their opinions freely and provide feedback on assigned tasks. One manager described feedback as an integral part of their daily operations, explaining that:

*“Feedback, it’s a key thing. I always want whoever I assign to a thing or whoever feels he’s responsible for a thing to report to the appropriate person for whom or with whom they are working. So, feedback, I encourage it, and it should be, we are all consistent with that” R1.*

This statement demonstrates a managerial approach that values accountability, responsiveness, and the completion of communication cycles, ensuring that tasks and directives are followed through effectively.

Similarly, another manager shared that feedback is encouraged through structured discussions and departmental meetings. He remarked that:

*“Feedback is very encouraged through open communication or discussion during meetings... staff are free to share their views and ideas on policies or operational challenges” R2.*

This response highlights an environment where interaction and dialogue are deliberately fostered, enabling employees to contribute to operational decision-making. The introduction of a suggestion box, as mentioned by the same manager, further illustrates an institutional effort to formalise feedback mechanisms, even though he acknowledged that its usage was still minimal.

Another participant indicated that his department operates in a way that ensures inclusiveness in communication, stressing that:

*“Every officer in my department is free or allowed to express his or her views for the interest of the department”, R4.*

At the district level, one manager described a more structured approach to feedback management, combining both formal and informal methods.

*“There’s an open-door policy where anyone at all feels comfortable sharing their suggestions, their concerns, and operational challenges. During meetings, team meetings and briefings, staff are given the chance to give feedback, and then during performance reviews, there are structured appraisals which include opportunities for two-way feedback”, R3 explained.*

This account reflects a systematised feedback process where regular meetings and appraisals are used not only to review performance but also to identify communication gaps and improve staff relations. These perspectives of the managers suggest that feedback and employee engagement at NHIA are guided by principles of openness, accountability, and mutual respect. While individual managers employ different methods, ranging from direct reporting and

suggestion boxes to meetings and appraisals, the underlying aim is to sustain dialogue and enhance collaboration.

#### **4.2.4 Clarity and Effectiveness of Communication**

The final theme that emerged from the analysis shows that clarity and effectiveness form a crucial part of the communication process within the NHIA. The data revealed that managers place strong emphasis on ensuring that information shared within departments is clearly articulated, concise, and well-understood by staff. The respondents indicated that several strategies are employed to enhance clarity, including personal calls, written reminders, repetition of messages, and regular meetings. These practices are seen as essential in preventing misunderstandings and maintaining operational effectiveness across different levels of the organisation.

Some managers reported that they take a personal approach to ensure that messages are properly communicated and comprehended. One manager explained,

*“I call them personally, I do that personally. But other times I’m not around, I send them texts and emphasise what I want them to do”* R1.

This account illustrates a leadership style that combines both personal engagement and follow-up to achieve clarity and accountability. It also suggests that the manager recognises the potential for miscommunication and therefore reinforces messages through multiple channels.

Similarly, another manager emphasised the importance of precision and repetition in internal communication. He stated that:

*“I make sure all messages are clearly stated, concise, and then sometimes repeated... multiple times if necessary, to encourage confirmation and acknowledgement and also to ensure understanding”, R2.*

His comment underscores a deliberate effort to make communication transparent and to minimise ambiguity.

At the district level, a manager explained that meetings serve as an important mechanism for ensuring message clarity and uniformity.

*“To make sure that important information is clearly communicated to our subordinates, we call short general staff meetings to communicate to their heads of departments to be communicated to them directly”, R3 Stated.*

This structured approach highlights the use of collective discussions to avoid distortion of messages as they pass through the hierarchy. By sharing information through meetings, managers aim to ensure that directives are properly transmitted and understood across all units. The respondents’ comments collectively show that managers at NHIA are aware of the potential for information loss or distortion and therefore employ multiple methods to reinforce clarity. Their responses also reveal that clarity and efficiency are achieved through a balance of written and verbal communication, supported by follow-ups and opportunities for confirmation.

#### **4.2.5 NHIA Staff Members’ Perception of the Internal Communication Structure**

To further understand the nuances of the NHIA communication structure, the researcher in the survey inquired about how communication is structured and conducted at the NHIA. This helped the researchers to compare and corroborate the responses from the managers and staff

members. The analysis of the survey responses is shown in Table 4.3.5 below. The responses are coded into Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 4.2.5 Distribution of NHIA Staff Members' Perception of the Internal Communication Structure

<i>Statements</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
Information within NHIA flows freely across all levels.	4	2	4	8	3
Communication between management and staff is open and transparent.	0	3	4	10	4
I clearly understand directives and messages from my supervisors.	0	1	4	9	7
Feedback from employees is encouraged and valued by management.	1	2	4	9	1
Important information is communicated on time to all staff.	1	3	1	9	7
The communication channels used in NHIA are effective and reliable.	1	2	2	13	3
Communication technology (emails, meetings, memos, etc.) is effectively utilised.	0	1	2	10	8
Total ( <i>N</i> )	21				

*Source: Field Data, 2025*

Table 4.2.5 presents the distribution of NHIA staff members' perceptions regarding the internal communication structure of the organisation. The data indicate that a total of 11 respondents (52.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that information within the NHIA flows freely across all levels, while 6 respondents (28.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Four respondents (19%) remained neutral. This finding suggests that although a majority perceive information flow as satisfactory, a significant portion of staff still experience challenges in accessing or transmitting information across hierarchical levels, a perception that aligns with managers' comments about structural barriers and delays in communication approval processes.

Regarding openness and transparency between management and staff, 14 respondents (66.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that communication between management and staff is open and transparent, while 3 (14.3%) disagreed and 4 (19%) remained neutral. This indicates that most staff believe management maintains some level of openness, though the interviews with managers revealed that hierarchical constraints occasionally limit free expression. A stronger level of agreement was observed regarding the clarity of communication from supervisors. Sixteen respondents (76.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they clearly understand directives and messages from their supervisors, with only one respondent disagreeing. This finding aligns with managers' claims that they often use multiple communication methods to ensure clarity.

Responses to feedback practices reveal a relatively mixed picture. Ten respondents (47.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that feedback from employees is encouraged and valued by management, while 3 (14.3%) disagreed and 4 (19%) were neutral. This moderate level of agreement reflects the qualitative data, where some managers emphasised open feedback systems and meetings, whereas others acknowledged employees' reluctance to contribute ideas. When asked whether important information is communicated on time, 16 respondents (76.2%) agreed or strongly agreed, while 4 (19%) disagreed. This indicates a generally positive view of timeliness, though managers highlighted instances where technological or approval delays affected prompt information sharing.

A significant majority, 16 respondents (76.2%), also agreed or strongly agreed that the communication channels used at NHIA are effective and reliable, whereas only 3 (14.3%) disagreed. Similarly, 18 respondents (85.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that communication technology, such as emails, memos, and meetings, is effectively utilised. These findings suggest that staff generally trust the communication systems and platforms available to them. However, they contrast with some managerial observations that technological challenges, such as poor internet connectivity and delayed responses, sometimes hinder efficiency.

### **4.3 RQ2. What are the major communication barriers within the NHIA?**

The second objective of this study is to examine the barriers to effective communication within the National Health Insurance Authority. This objective sought to explore the challenges that hinder smooth information flow, collaboration, and understanding among employees and across departments in the organisation. While the first objective of the study revealed that communication at the NHIA is generally structured through both formal and informal systems that promote interaction and feedback, the data also showed that several factors obstruct the efficiency of these communication processes. The interviews with departmental heads and managers highlighted that despite efforts to maintain open and flexible communication systems, inefficiencies still exist due to technological, structural, and behavioural challenges. From the analysis of the data, four major themes emerged as barriers to effective communication within the NHIA. These are: *Technological and Medium-Related Barriers*, *Hierarchical and Structural Constraints*, *Psychological and Behavioural Barriers*, and *Ambiguity and Misinterpretation of Information*. The subsequent sections discuss these themes in detail, presenting the perspectives of managers on how these challenges affect teamwork, employee morale, and organisational efficiency.

#### **4.3.1 Technological and Medium-Related Barriers**

From the analyses of the interview data, it emerged that one of the major barriers to effective communication within the NHIA is related to the use of communication media and technological challenges. The managers revealed that while the organisation increasingly relies on digital tools such as Outlook, WhatsApp, and email for communication, the efficiency of these channels is often limited by connectivity problems, lack of responsiveness, and

inconsistent access to digital platforms among employees. These technological limitations hinder timely message delivery and sometimes result in miscommunication or delayed responses, which affect the smooth flow of work across departments.

Most managers acknowledged that poor network connectivity and technological inefficiencies impede the flow of information within the organisation. One manager explained that:

*“Usually, when the medium I’m using doesn’t get clearly to them... probably I’m using WhatsApp and you don’t have data, or you can’t even reach the person. It’s a barrier”, R1.*

This response illustrates the growing dependence of NHIA’s internal communication on digital media and how technological setbacks can significantly disrupt coordination.

Similarly, another manager highlighted that.

*“Some are delayed responses to messages, maybe either WhatsApp or emails”, R2.*

These delays, he added, not only slow decision-making but also lead to lapses in communication that may cause confusion or operational inefficiencies.

The participants further noted that these technological barriers often affect the timeliness and efficiency of operations. For instance, one respondent observed that such communication lapses,

*“Regress our efficiency... something that we can finish in a minute or two would have to take hours, which is very bad”, R1.*

This statement underscores the direct link between technological barriers and organisational productivity. When communication tools fail or messages are not received promptly, workflow is disrupted and departmental performance declines.

The findings also reveal that these barriers are not only technical but also contextual. Some staff members may lack the resources or readiness to access communication tools consistently. The reliance on internet-based platforms such as Outlook and WhatsApp assumes equal digital capacity among employees, yet differences in connectivity, access, or response behaviour contribute to lapses in message transmission.

#### **4.3.2 Hierarchical and Structural Constraints**

Another theme that emerged from the interviews with NHIA managers indicates that the organisational hierarchy and structural setup significantly influence communication flow and sometimes create barriers to effective information sharing. The data reveal that communication at NHIA is often mediated by a strict chain of command that regulates who speaks, to whom, and about what. This structured approach, while ensuring control and accountability, also leads to communication delays, reduced openness, and a sense of restriction among employees.

From the accounts of participants, it was clear that the authority structure of the NHIA sometimes limits the free exchange of ideas between management and subordinates. One manager noted that,

*“Every level and the kind of information and response mechanism there... hierarchy, there is some information for safety and to safeguard the reputation of the company, they disallow it to go beyond certain levels. So there is control. You are not at liberty to say or even speak with people, except you are authorised”, R1.*

This statement illustrates that communication at NHIA is influenced by formal boundaries that define what information can be shared, thereby restricting spontaneous interaction and feedback.

The restriction created by the hierarchical system was further echoed by another manager, who explained that

*“The hierarchical structure sometimes causes delays, especially when approvals are required at some levels. For instance, when an instruction or request comes in, it has to pass through different officers before it gets to the final approving authority. By the time it moves from one table to another, a lot of time has already been lost. Even simple decisions that could be handled quickly are delayed because you have to wait for a superior’s sign-off”*, R2.

This suggests that the bureaucratic nature of the organisation slows down communication and decision-making, particularly when messages or instructions must pass through multiple administrative stages before reaching staff. While this process promotes order, it often undermines the responsiveness needed for efficient coordination among departments.

Interestingly, one participant justified these hierarchical controls as necessary to preserve institutional reputation. He remarked that,

*“So, there are times you have to communicate in a manner that will not offend your superiors. I would have wished everybody spoke their mind, but here at NHIA, in my experience with them, you are not at liberty to say or even speak with people, except you are authorised.”* R1.

This implies that while the structure can be restrictive, it is also seen as a protective mechanism that maintains professionalism and prevents the mishandling of sensitive information. However, the downside is that it can lead to information hoarding and weaken the culture of transparency within the organisation.

These shared perspectives of the participants reveal that NHIA’s hierarchical and structural systems function as both a control mechanism and a communication barrier. While they ensure

discipline and protect confidentiality, they also slow down the flow of information, discourage open dialogue, and foster a culture of caution rather than collaboration.

### **4.3.3 Psychological and Behavioural Barriers**

Another theme that emerged from the interviews relates to psychological and behavioural barriers, which reflect how individual attitudes, perceptions, and interpersonal dynamics can hinder effective communication at the NHIA. The findings show that while the organisation has structures in place for information flow, personal factors such as unwillingness to engage, selective listening, and lack of openness among staff create invisible barriers that affect collaboration and understanding within departments. These human elements rooted in behaviour and mindset, often prevent communication messages from being properly received, interpreted, or acted upon.

One manager explained that some employees intentionally withdraw from discussions or fail to respond even when communication channels are available. He noted that,

*“if people shut themselves to you, you can’t... you think you have communicated to them, but they shut themselves, they don’t listen, they don’t act as you look forward to them doing. These are a few barriers” R1.*

This statement illustrates a common behavioural challenge where communication breakdown does not occur because of the medium or the message, but rather due to the attitudinal disposition of the receiver.

Another manager observed a similar issue, pointing out that some employees show little initiative or willingness to contribute ideas during discussions. He remarked that

*Some officers are reluctant to provide suggestions in relation to work. You can call for input or ask them to share their opinions on how things can be done better, but most of them prefer to stay quiet. Even when you ask directly, they'll just nod or agree without really saying what they think. It's like they don't want to take responsibility for making a suggestion that might later be questioned",*  
R4.

This lack of engagement, according to R4, slows collaboration and weakens team spirit, as individuals who refrain from participating deprive the organisation of valuable insights and solutions

The data further suggest that such behavioural tendencies have consequences for teamwork and overall performance. When employees are disengaged or nonresponsive, it disrupts the feedback loop necessary for coordination and goal alignment. As one respondent explained,

*"Teamwork and communication go hand in hand... if you don't communicate properly, you might not tie the loose ends. Inefficiency, the goal will not be achieved"* R1.

This reinforces the idea that behavioural barriers not only affect interpersonal relationships but also translate into lower productivity and organisational inefficiency.

This shows that effective communication at NHIA is not only a structural or technological issue but also a human one. The willingness of individuals to listen, respond, and participate meaningfully is as important as the channels used to transmit information. The findings suggest that psychological factors such as apathy, fear of authority, or resistance to change can lead to partial communication, misunderstanding, or non-cooperation.

#### 4.3.4 Ambiguity and Misinterpretation of Information

The analysis also revealed ambiguity and misinterpretation of information within the NHIA among the major barriers to effective communication. Managers noted that unclear instructions, inconsistent messaging, and lack of standard communication policies sometimes lead to confusion and misunderstanding among staff. Although NHIA has formal communication channels, the findings indicate that the way information is framed or transmitted is not always precise, which affects how employees interpret directives and carry out tasks.

One of the managers acknowledged that miscommunication occasionally arises because instructions from senior officials are not always clearly defined. He explained that

*So, a few times you would see that there are variances in what the superior is thinking and expecting of you and what you would also be thinking is right. Some of the causes of this is probably lack of clear-cut communication policy or probably no clear instruction. Some of the instructions are very ambiguous, no training to an inadequacy of, let's say, analysing the thoughts of people in the instructions, R1.*

This statement reveals that messages from top management are sometimes vague or open to multiple interpretations, creating uncertainty among employees. The lack of clarity, according to the respondent, can stem from poor message construction or insufficient briefing, leaving subordinates to interpret directives based on assumptions rather than clear guidance.

Respondent one also went further to suggest that ambiguity in communication often results from a disconnect between managerial intent and employee understanding. He remarked that

*“There are situations where, you know, directives are misunderstood. In my experience, particularly at the head office, you would realise that the intention*

*of your superiors differ from the requirements by law and sometimes what, you know, in your own estimation is the right thing to do. R1.*

This indicates a gap between what managers expect and how subordinates interpret those expectations, leading to potential errors in implementation.

While not all respondents reported frequent instances of misinterpretation, those who did acknowledged that it negatively impacts efficiency and decision-making. When employees are unclear about instructions, they often delay action or take decisions that contradict management's intentions. The findings also suggest that ambiguity arises partly because of the absence of a comprehensive communication policy that standardises message delivery and feedback mechanisms. Without structured communication guidelines, each department or manager adopts a different style of conveying information, increasing the risk of misinterpretation. This lack of uniformity weakens accountability and makes it difficult to trace the source of communication breakdowns.

#### **4.3.5 NHIA Staff Members' Perception of Internal Communication Barriers**

This section presents an analysis of the survey respondents of the internal communication barriers at the NHIA. The analysis of the managers' responses highlighted four major challenges to effective internal communication with the NHIA. It's therefore imperative to understand from the staff perspective what the communication challenges are. To understand this, the researcher posed seven statements for the participating 21 respondents to indicate the level of agreement with the statements. The analysis of the survey responses is shown in Table 4.4.5 below. The responses are coded into Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 4.3.5 Distribution of NHIA Staff Members' Perception of Internal Communication Barriers

<i>Statements</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
Hierarchical structure limits the free flow of communication.	0	8	6	6	1
Some messages are distorted or lost as they pass through different levels.	4	3	4	10	0
There is fear among employees about expressing opinions to management.	1	8	4	7	1
Cultural or language differences sometimes cause misunderstanding.	5	7	2	6	1
Poor feedback mechanisms make it difficult to address workplace issues.	3	5	7	2	4
Technological or logistical challenges hinder effective communication.	3	4	6	5	3
Work overload and pressure prevent effective interaction among staff.	5	6	8	2	0

Source: Field Data, 2025

As seen in Table 4.3.5 above, staff members reported several institutional and behavioural factors that constrain the free flow of information across levels. Out of the 21 respondents, seven (33.3%) agreed that the hierarchical structure limits communication, while eight (38.1%) disagreed and six (28.6%) remained neutral. This mixed perception suggests that while hierarchy is necessary for order, it also restricts interaction in certain departments. This supports managers' views that indicating that authority lines can constrain openness and timely feedback.

Similarly, 10 respondents agreed that some messages are distorted or lost as they pass through different levels, while seven disagreed and four remained neutral. This suggests that message clarity and consistency remain key challenges, particularly when communication moves through several administrative layers. This aligns with interview findings where managers attributed miscommunication to ambiguous instructions and inconsistent message delivery.

Regarding fear of expressing opinions, eight respondents (38.1%) disagreed, but another eight (38.1%) agreed or strongly agreed, showing a divided perception.

Regarding feedback mechanisms, nine respondents agreed that poor feedback systems make it difficult to address workplace issues, while eight disagreed. Likewise, eight respondents agreed that technological or logistical challenges hinder communication, showing that resource constraints still affect smooth information flow. This corroborates with managers who similarly reported delays due to poor connectivity and insufficient feedback systems.

Overall, these findings confirm that hierarchical control, message distortion, fear of expression, and technological limitations are the dominant barriers to effective communication within NHIA, echoing managers' concerns that these factors collectively delay responses, reduce efficiency, and hinder teamwork.

#### **4.4 RQ3. In what ways does organisational culture influence communication challenges at the NHIA?**

The third objective of this study sought to examine how organizational culture at the NHIA influences communication and its associated challenges. As Curado et al. (2022) aver that an open and supportive organisational culture enhances communication efficiency and employee satisfaction. Specifically, they highlight how communication at the organisational level, such as transparency in leadership messaging and policy discussions, builds trust and contributes to a healthier, more collaborative culture. Similarly, Men and Bowen (2017) point out that the quality of communication mirrors the ethical climate and interpersonal dynamics of a workplace. It's therefore imperative to understand how the organizational culture at the NHIA promotes or hinders effective communication. To achieve this, the researcher inquired from managers and staff members in a qualitative interview and a quantitative survey, respectively.

The analysis begins with a thematic analysis of the interview responses and concludes with a descriptive analysis of the survey respondents. The findings from the thematic analysis revealed three major themes on how NHIA's communication structure influences its internal communication. The themes are: *Hierarchical Control and Restricted Information Flow*, *Leadership Style and Its Effect on Openness and Feedback*, and *Communication Culture and Employee Expression*. A further analysis of these themes with supporting quotes from the interview data is shown in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### **4.4.1 Hierarchical Control and Restricted Information Flow**

The first major theme that emerged from the analysis is the hierarchical control and restricted information flow within the NHIA. The accounts of managers revealed that communication at NHIA is largely influenced by hierarchy, which determines who communicates what, when, and to whom. Although this structure is designed to maintain control and safeguard the organisation's image, it inadvertently restricts openness and limits the free exchange of ideas across departments. Managers noted that communication is often top-down, with little room for lower-level staff to share feedback or opinions without prior authorisation. One of the managers admitted that hierarchy shapes how information is shared and even how employees express themselves. He remarked that,

*"I mean, every level and the kind of information and response mechanism there. Hierarchy, there is some information for safety and for to safeguard the reputation of the company. They disallow it to go beyond certain levels. So, there is control. I may have said suppression, but there is control", R1.*

This suggests that information flow is tightly regulated, creating an environment where communication depends more on positional authority than collaborative dialogue. The

participant added that staff often feel constrained by the need to communicate in a way not to offend their superiors.

*As for the communication culture, I don't find it impressive. It's not impressive because of hierarchy control and influence. So, everybody doesn't want to offend. Even people with good intentions and good ideas don't want to offend their superiors. So, it's as if everybody is playing to the gallery, wanting to be safe", R1.*

Similarly, another respondent confirmed that hierarchy often leads to communication delays, especially when approvals are needed from higher authorities.

*"The hierarchical structure sometimes causes delays, especially when approvals are required at some levels", R2.*

This underscores how bureaucracy slows decision-making and reduces efficiency, as information must pass through multiple layers before reaching its intended recipients. Such delays affect coordination, reduce responsiveness, and can hinder the organisation's ability to act swiftly on pressing matters.

Furthermore, hierarchical control has shaped a communication culture where employees are hesitant to speak freely or challenge decisions. As one participant observed,

*"Even people with good intentions and good ideas don't want to offend their superiors... assertiveness is kept, which is very negative to unnerving the talents and thoughts of people", R1.*

This comment reveals that staff often withhold their opinions for fear of being seen as insubordinate, which suppresses innovation and limits the institution's ability to harness diverse ideas.

#### 4.4.2 Leadership Style and Its Effect on Openness and Feedback

Another significant theme that emerged from the thematic analysis is Leadership Style and Its Effect on Openness and Feedback within the NHIA. The findings reveal that the leadership approach adopted by managers and senior officials plays a crucial role in shaping the communication climate of the institution. Leadership style determines whether employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas, how feedback is managed, and the overall level of transparency within the organisation. While some managers adopt participatory and inclusive leadership approaches that encourage dialogue, others maintain a more authoritarian style that restricts openness and limits two-way communication.

One of the managers described his leadership style as democratic and authentic, emphasising flexibility and trust. He explained that,

*“I believe in authentic leadership. Leadership that allows people, to an extent, to make errors so that we can learn from our experiences. I believe in patching up from our errors to building or moulding a strong institution. So, I allow people’s opinions. Much as my leadership style is dependent on the task I’m given, I’m generally democratic, but I want people to be authentic and be who they are. Now, I think if you are so, you make it flexible, open for people to freely speak their mind and talents are hidden in people”, R1.*

This approach fosters mutual respect and helps subordinates feel valued and heard. According to the same participant, leaders who encourage dialogue are better able to uncover hidden talents and motivate their teams toward collective goals. He added that when employees are

given the freedom to contribute ideas, they “carry [decisions] as their own,” which enhances ownership and commitment to organisational objectives.

Conversely, the same manager acknowledged that not all leaders within NHIA follow such inclusive approaches. He recounted that

*“Some want to be controlling... they make sure to tell you, you don’t cross this line, you can’t say this, you can’t do this. This style of leadership suppresses talent, suppresses the will and the commitment to work,” R1.*

Other participants also highlighted the importance of leadership behaviour in promoting open communication. One respondent noted that,

*“From my experience, decisions that promote transparency and inclusiveness tend to increase trust and motivation amongst staff. When management takes time to explain the reasons behind certain policies or operational changes, it helps staff feel that they are part of the process, not just recipients of instructions”, R2.*

Similarly, another participant emphasised that leadership style affects not only how employees share feedback but also how they perceive management intentions.

*“When leaders demonstrate openness, staff are more likely to engage constructively and feel that their contributions matter to the organisation’s success”, R4.*

This finding underscores the need for NHIA leaders to adopt more open and interactive communication practices that encourage transparency, feedback, and employee participation in decision-making processes. Such an approach will not only improve internal communication but also strengthen organisational cohesion and morale.

#### 4.4.3 Communication Culture and Employee Expression

Lastly, the analysis revealed the relationship between the communication culture and employee expression within the National Health Insurance Authority. The findings reveal that while some departments promote openness and encourage staff participation, others are characterised by a culture of restraint and cautious communication due to hierarchical control. This mixed communication culture affects how freely employees express their opinions, share innovative ideas, or provide feedback on management decisions.

From the analysis, it became apparent that in certain offices, especially at the managerial level, communication is influenced by fear of offending superiors or breaching hierarchical boundaries. One of the managers explained that,

*“Even people with good intentions and good ideas don’t want to offend their superiors. So, it’s as if everybody is playing to the gallery, wanting to be safe. You can’t be assertive... people are not made to be assertive, and so they cannot communicate their ideas properly to build the institution”, R1.*

This statement underscores how the existing communication culture, shaped by rigid hierarchy, suppresses open dialogue and creativity. Employees often choose silence over expression to avoid conflict or being perceived as challenging authority, which ultimately limits organizational learning and innovation.

However, not all departments experience this restrictive environment. Some managers described their communication culture as more open and semi-formal, allowing staff to freely express opinions and contribute to discussions. One respondent explained,

*“For here, it is generally open and semi-formal... staff are always encouraged to share their ideas. They are very free to share their opinions, concerns, and suggestions, which I always take in good faith. We work on it together, and then we move forward together”, R2.*

Another manager adds that,

*“There’s this communication openness, actually, that every staff member can walk to me as the district manager, and then they’ll give their feedback. And I suppose the same thing happens to the line officers who have staff working and then those they directly supervise. There’s this openness, and feedback is always welcome. Employees are generally free to express their opinions, their concerns and their suggestions. They are not stopped from doing that”, R3.*

This suggests that the communication culture at NHIA varies across offices, largely depending on leadership style and the interpersonal dynamics within departments. Where leaders adopt participatory and democratic approaches, communication tends to be more fluid and interactive. Conversely, where control and hierarchy dominate, communication becomes one-sided and cautious.

Overall, the analysis shows that NHIA’s communication culture is not uniform; it oscillates between openness and restriction. While efforts exist in some units to promote participatory communication, the broader institutional culture still reflects bureaucratic tendencies that limit expression. This uneven communication climate impacts employee engagement, innovation, and satisfaction.

#### 4.4.4 NHIA Staff Members' Perception of the Organizational Culture Influence on Communication

This section presents an analysis of NHIA staff members' perceptions of how the organizational culture influences communication within the institution. Earlier analyses of managers' responses revealed that leadership style, hierarchy, and the overall communication culture significantly shape how information is shared and received within the NHIA. It is therefore essential to examine the perspectives of staff to understand how these cultural and structural factors affect communication in practice. To achieve this, the researcher designed five statements for the 21 respondents to indicate their level of agreement with, focusing on issues of openness, managerial encouragement, mutual respect, and the influence of cultural values on communication. The responses were categorized using a five-point Likert scale coded as Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). The analysis of these responses is presented in Table 4.5.4 below.

Table 4.4.4 Distribution of NHIA Staff Members' Perception of the Organizational Culture Influence on Communication

<i>Statements</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
The organizational culture supports openness and transparency.	1	3	8	5	4
Management encourages employees to express diverse opinions.	1	0	6	10	4
The leadership style at NHIA promotes effective communication.	2	2	7	7	3
There is mutual respect between management and staff in communication.	0	2	5	9	5
Cultural values influence how communication occurs in this organization.	1	3	7	7	3

Source: Field Data, 2025

As shown in Table 4.4.4, the data reflect NHIA staff members' perceptions of how organizational culture influences communication within the institution. The responses indicate that while a generally positive communication culture exists, there are still areas requiring improvement, particularly regarding openness and managerial inclusiveness.

A total of nine respondents (43%) agreed or strongly agreed that the organizational culture supports openness and transparency, while four respondents (19%) disagreed, and eight (38%) remained neutral. This suggests that although a good number of employees perceive NHIA's culture as open, a considerable portion remain uncertain or unconvinced. This aligns with the managers' earlier comments that communication within the NHIA is sometimes constrained by hierarchical structures, where employees are cautious about expressing themselves freely to avoid offending superiors.

In terms of managerial encouragement of diverse opinions, fourteen respondents (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that management promotes employee expression, while only one disagreed. This result supports the qualitative findings where some managers described their leadership as participatory and open to feedback, yet it also contrasts slightly with others who indicated that hierarchical control sometimes stifles initiative and assertiveness.

When asked whether leadership style promotes effective communication, ten respondents (48%) agreed or strongly agreed, while four (19%) disagreed, and seven (33%) were neutral. This reflects a moderate level of confidence in leadership communication, consistent with interview responses indicating variability in communication efficiency depending on the leader's style, with some adopting democratic approaches and others maintaining tight control.

Similarly, fourteen respondents (67%) agreed or strongly agreed that there is mutual respect between management and staff in communication, a positive indication of interpersonal relations. However, this does not necessarily translate to open dialogue, as some participants

in the interviews mentioned that fear of hierarchy often discourages open criticism or disagreement.

Finally, ten respondents (48%) agreed that cultural values influence how communication occurs, confirming that organizational norms, attitudes, and informal codes shape how messages are conveyed and interpreted. Overall, the quantitative findings reinforce the qualitative data: while NHIA's organizational culture shows elements of openness and mutual respect, communication remains influenced by hierarchical and cultural constraints that limit full employee expression and feedback.

#### **4.5. RQ4. How do communication barriers affect organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction at the NHIA?**

The last objective of the study was to examine how communication barriers at the NHIA influences the staff satisfaction and the efficiency of the organization. As already espoused in the literature review, research highlights that when internal communication is open, timely, and reciprocal, it fosters stronger engagement and job contentment among employees (Anchor, 2009; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Curado et al (2022) also opined that the most conscientious of employers recognise that bidirectional communication provides for avenues to recognise employee contribution and build organisational commitment. Moreover, effective communication also promote efficiency within organizations. Borcaa and Baesu (2014) suggests that strong employee communication is linked to improved organisational outcomes like commitment and satisfaction. Internal communication can serve as a motivator, enhancing customer engagement and individual fulfilment (Vercic et al., 2012). Communication also influences strategic alignment, decision-making, innovation, and overall operational performance, making it a critical determinant of organisational efficiency (Tourish & Robson, 2006; Verčič et al., 2012).

Having recognized this, the researcher texted whether the internal communication challenges encountered at the NHIA, has a direct influence on employee satisfaction and the overall efficiency of the organization. To achieve this, the researcher administered a five-point Likert scale each on employee satisfaction and organizational efficiency to 21 staff members of the NHIA. The findings are presented subsequent paragraphs. The responses are coded as Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree.

Table 4.5.1 NHIA Staff Members’ Perception on the Influence of Communication Barriers on Employee Satisfaction

<i>Statements</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
Clear communication enhances productivity within the organization.	0	2	2	3	14
Poor communication contributes to delays and inefficiency.	1	1	2	5	12
Effective communication improves decision-making processes.	0	1	3	5	12
Communication between departments enhances service delivery.	0	1	1	6	13
Miscommunication has led to conflicts or misunderstandings at work.	1	1	6	9	4

Source: Field Data, 2025

As shown in Table 4.5.1, a majority of respondents (17 out of 21, representing 81%) agreed or strongly agreed that clear communication enhances productivity within the organization, while only four respondents (19%) disagreed or remained neutral. This finding reinforces the managerial perspectives from the interviews, where effective information flow and clarity were identified as critical for smooth operations and timely task execution. It also suggests that employees who receive clear instructions and feedback tend to be more satisfied and productive in their roles. Similarly, 17 respondents (81%) agreed or strongly agreed that poor communication contributes to delays and inefficiency, suggesting that breakdowns in communication directly affect work output and operational smoothness. A very small

proportion (10%) disagreed with this statement, indicating that employees widely recognize the negative consequences of unclear or inconsistent communication. When asked whether effective communication improves decision-making processes, 17 respondents (81%) again agreed or strongly agreed, highlighting that open and accurate communication supports better understanding and sound decision-making across departments. Only four participants were neutral or disagreed, showing limited dissent on this issue.

Communication between departments was also rated highly, with 19 respondents (90%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that effective interdepartmental communication enhances service delivery. This emphasizes the importance employees place on coordination and information sharing across the NHIA’s various units to achieve smooth operations and improved service outcomes. Finally, responses to whether miscommunication has led to conflicts or misunderstandings at work were more varied. Thirteen respondents (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that miscommunication has caused workplace conflicts, while eight respondents (38%) were neutral or disagreed. This suggests that while communication breakdowns are not pervasive, they do occur and can occasionally affect workplace relationships and performance. The findings emphasize that clear and efficient communication is strongly associated with employee satisfaction, operational efficiency, and service quality at the NHIA. Poor or unclear communication, on the other hand, undermines collaboration, decision-making, and workplace harmony.

Table 4.5.2 NHIA Staff Members’ Perception of the Influence of Communication Barriers on Organizational Efficiency

<i>Statements</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
I feel valued when management communicates clearly and frequently.	0	1	1	9	10
Open communication improves my level of job satisfaction.	0	1	0	9	11

Poor communication from management affects my morale.	0	1	1	12	7
I am satisfied with how information is shared within my department.	1	4	3	10	3
Effective communication contributes to teamwork and collaboration.	0	1	0	6	14

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 4.6.2 presents the findings on NHIA staff members’ perceptions of how communication barriers influence organizational efficiency. From the analysis, a total of 19 respondents (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that they feel valued when management communicates clearly and frequently, while only two were neutral or disagreed. Similarly, 20 respondents (95%) agreed that open communication improves their level of job satisfaction, showing a strong belief that open dialogue enhances engagement and motivation. In addition, 19 respondents (90%) agreed that poor communication from management negatively affects morale, suggesting that ineffective information flow has a direct impact on employee enthusiasm and productivity. When asked about satisfaction with how information is shared within departments, responses were more mixed: 13 respondents (62%) agreed or strongly agreed, while five (24%) disagreed and three (14%) remained neutral. This indicates that while communication within departments is generally effective, some inconsistencies or gaps still exist. Finally, nearly all respondents (20 out of 21) agreed that effective communication contributes to teamwork and collaboration. This underscores the crucial role that clear and consistent communication plays in enhancing cooperation and fostering unity among NHIA staff. These results demonstrate that clear, open, and consistent communication is strongly associated with employee satisfaction, teamwork, and overall organizational efficiency, while communication gaps tend to lower morale and hinder collaboration.

**Table 4.5.3 Correlation between Communication-led Employee Satisfaction and Organizational Efficiency at NHIA**

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Correlation</i> <i>efficient</i>	<i>Co-</i> <i>Sig.</i>
Employee Satisfaction	4.2000	0.6164	21	0.562	0.008
Organizational Efficiency	4.2190	0.8436	21		

Source: Field Data, 2025

As shown in Table 4.5.3, a moderately strong positive correlation ( $r=0.562$ ) between communication-led employee satisfaction and organisational i at NHIA, with a significance level of 0.008, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This indicates a statistically significant relationship, meaning that improvements in communication practices are positively associated with increases in both employee satisfaction and organizational efficiency. This suggests that a rise in improved communication stimulates a rise in employee satisfaction and, consequently, organizational efficiency and vice versa. The mean score for employee satisfaction ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) suggests that, on average, respondents agreed that effective communication enhances their job satisfaction. Similarly, the mean for organizational efficiency ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) shows that staff generally perceive the NHIA as effective when internal communication systems function well. The close similarity between the two means implies that employees link their satisfaction directly to how well the organization communicates. The positive and significant correlation further suggests that when communication is open, clear, and consistent, employees are more motivated, cooperative, and productive, leading to greater overall efficiency within the institution. Conversely, poor communication can diminish morale and hinder operational performance, as seen from earlier survey findings.

## **4.6 Discussion of Findings**

### **4.6.1 Communication Practice at NHIA**

The findings of the study revealed that communication practices at the NHIA exhibit a hybrid pattern, combining both formal and informal communication flows. While formal communication is predominantly conducted through official channels such as memos, emails, staff meetings, and notice boards, informal platforms such as WhatsApp, phone calls, and direct verbal exchanges play an equally significant role in facilitating day-to-day interactions. This combination aligns with Jacobs et al. (2015), who posit that both structured and informal communication channels are essential for promoting collaboration, particularly in service-oriented organisations where operational interdependence is high. The data further revealed that communication at NHIA is largely top-down, though some departments have adopted two-way or participatory communication patterns. This duality mirrors Welch and Jackson's (2007) assertion that internal communication systems in bureaucratic organisations often oscillate between hierarchical and relational modes, depending on leadership orientation and institutional culture.

Managers at NHIA described the communication environment as “flexible” and “open-minded” in some departments, yet “controlled” and “restricted” in others, reflecting a coexistence of democratic and hierarchical tendencies. This observation corresponds with Organisational Communication Theory (Keyton, 2011), which suggests that communication within organisations is shaped by structure, culture, and power relations. The study found that where leadership promotes openness and inclusivity, employees are more likely to share ideas and provide feedback freely. Conversely, departments with rigid hierarchical controls exhibit limited feedback and slower information flow. This aligns with Deetz's (1992) critical

perspective that communication in organisations often mirrors underlying power structures, where managerial authority can either enable or suppress dialogue.

Additionally, feedback mechanisms at NHIA were found to be inconsistent, effective in some units but weak in others. This inconsistency weakens coordination and decision-making, a finding consistent with Creswell's (2014) view that participatory communication enhances learning and efficiency by ensuring clarity and mutual understanding. The use of digital tools such as Outlook and WhatsApp supports faster communication but also introduces challenges such as message overload and uneven access, which echo Waty's (2024) identification of technological disparities as modern communication barriers. From the theoretical lens of the Transactional Model of Communication (Barnlund, 1970), NHIA's communication practices demonstrate that meaning is continuously co-constructed between senders and receivers. However, the presence of hierarchical "noise", in the form of bureaucratic delays, selective openness, and inconsistent feedback, often distorts message interpretation. This dynamic underscores the model's emphasis on contextual and relational factors that influence organisational communication. As Kalla (2005) and Men and Bowen (2017) contend, communication is not merely a managerial function but the foundation of organisational life. Hence, improving communication at NHIA requires deliberate alignment between communication systems, leadership styles, and organisational culture to foster transparency, trust, and operational efficiency.

#### **4.6.2 Barriers to Effective Internal Communication at NHIA**

The study identified several barriers that impede effective internal communication at the National Health Insurance Authority, notably technological limitations, hierarchical control,

psychological and behavioural constraints, and ambiguity in messaging. These findings reveal that communication breakdowns within the organisation stem not only from infrastructural challenges but also from deeply embedded organisational and cultural factors. This aligns with Yusof and Rahmat's (2020) classification of communication barriers into environmental and personal dimensions, where institutional structures and individual attitudes jointly hinder message transmission and feedback.

One major barrier identified is technological inefficiency, delays in email responses, poor internet connectivity, and overreliance on digital tools such as WhatsApp for official communication. Such challenges disrupt information flow and reduce efficiency, echoing Cohen et al. (2024) and Waty (2024), who highlight how digital disparities in workplace communication can undermine coordination and decision-making. Additionally, hierarchical barriers emerged as the most dominant impediment. The bureaucratic nature of NHIA enforces strict lines of authority, often leading to delays in message approval and limited feedback upward. As one manager observed, "every level and the kind of information and response mechanism there... there is control" (Interview 1). This reflects Hofstede's (1980) notion of high power distance cultures, where employees tend to withhold opinions and defer to authority, resulting in information distortion and slowed communication processes.

Psychological and behavioural barriers also featured prominently. Fear of authority, reluctance to share opinions, and lack of confidence among subordinates contribute to selective communication. This confirms Jiang and Chen's (2024) assertion that personal insecurities and perceived organisational constraints can silence employees, reducing engagement and morale. Furthermore, ambiguity and misinterpretation of information, arising from unclear directives and inconsistent policies, often result in confusion. This resonates with Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication, which emphasises that unclear encoding and decoding of messages create "noise" that distorts understanding.

The findings corroborate the literature's consensus that communication barriers are multifaceted, rooted in both structure and behaviour. Consistent with Ofori et al. (2023), the hierarchical and bureaucratic setup of Ghanaian public institutions like NHIA tends to constrain open communication. Addressing these barriers thus requires not only improved technological systems but also cultural and leadership reforms that promote transparency, participatory dialogue, and regular feedback mechanisms.

#### **4.6.3 Influence of Organisational Culture on Communication Challenges at the NHIA**

The findings of the study revealed that organisational culture at the NHIA plays a crucial role in shaping communication behaviours among staff. The culture of the organisation was found to be largely hierarchical, with elements of control and authority determining how information is shared and who has access to it. This hierarchical orientation often restricts open dialogue and limits upward communication, a characteristic common in many bureaucratic public institutions. The findings are consistent with Hofstede's (1980) concept of high power distance cultures, where authority and decision-making are centralised, and employees are less likely to question or challenge superiors. At NHIA, this cultural pattern manifests in employees' reluctance to freely express opinions for fear of offending higher management. The hierarchical culture has also created a sense of caution and self-censorship, which suppresses creativity and innovation. Tourish and Robson (2006) describe this phenomenon as the distortion of upward communication, where messages flowing from lower to higher levels are filtered, sanitised, or withheld entirely. Such patterns weaken feedback systems and contribute to communication breakdowns. This aligns with Schein's (2010) perspective that organisational culture shapes and constrains communication norms by establishing what is acceptable or discouraged in workplace interactions. In NHIA's case, the prevailing culture fosters compliance rather than

collaboration, which diminishes employee engagement and reduces the quality of decision-making.

However, the study also found variations across departments, with some adopting semi-open communication practices where managers encourage idea sharing and feedback. These instances demonstrate that leadership behaviour can influence subcultural differences within the larger organisation. Curado et al. (2022) and Men and Bowen (2017) both argue that leaders play a pivotal role in fostering communicative openness through transparency and inclusiveness. Departments with democratic or participatory leadership styles exhibited stronger trust and higher morale, validating the Organisational Communication Theory view that communication both reflects and reproduces organisational culture (Keyton, 2011). Furthermore, Cameron and Quinn (2011) assert that communication is a tool for cultural change. Where NHIA managers model open communication and create platforms for dialogue, such as staff meetings and WhatsApp groups, employees are more likely to internalise values of transparency and collaboration. Conversely, when leaders adopt authoritarian communication styles, silence and disengagement become part of the institutional norm.

Consistent with Schein (2010) and Keyton (2011), the findings underscore that for communication to be effective, NHIA must cultivate a culture that values trust, inclusivity, and shared participation. Transforming communication culture requires leadership commitment to transparency, participatory decision-making, and the establishment of feedback mechanisms that empower employees to speak without fear of reprisal.

#### **4.6.4 Effect of Communication Barriers on Organisational Efficiency and Employee Satisfaction at the NHIA**

The study found that communication barriers at the National Health Insurance Authority have a direct and significant impact on both organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction. The

quantitative findings indicated that most respondents agreed that clear and effective communication enhances productivity, decision-making, and teamwork, while poor communication leads to delays, inefficiencies, and workplace misunderstandings. This outcome reinforces the theoretical propositions of Organisational Communication Theory (Keyton, 2011), which posits that communication functions as the lifeblood of organisational systems, coordinating processes, aligning goals, and fostering understanding among members. When communication channels are disrupted or unclear, the entire operational mechanism of the organisation becomes fragmented, leading to inefficiencies and decreased morale.

The results align with Jacobs et al. (2015), who found that internal communication enhances employee satisfaction, which in turn improves organisational performance and integration. Similarly, Gautama So et al. (2018) observed that open communication systems promote motivation and performance by helping employees understand their roles, expectations, and contributions. In the case of NHIA, ineffective communication, characterised by delayed feedback, unclear directives, and limited inter-departmental coordination, was shown to affect employee engagement negatively. Employees reported that poor communication not only slows decision-making but also generates confusion and duplicative efforts, reducing overall institutional responsiveness.

The correlation analysis confirmed a moderately strong positive relationship ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) between communication-led employee satisfaction and organisational effectiveness. This statistically significant result suggests that when communication is timely, transparent, and reciprocal, both satisfaction and efficiency increase concurrently. This finding resonates with Curado et al. (2022), who assert that employee satisfaction arises from multidimensional communication, spanning organisational, leadership, and peer levels. NHIA staff who perceived management communication as open and inclusive were more likely to report higher satisfaction and better teamwork outcomes.

From a theoretical perspective, the Transactional Model of Communication (Barnlund, 1970) helps explain these findings by viewing communication as a continuous process influenced by context, feedback, and mutual interpretation. At NHIA, communication barriers such as hierarchical control, unclear feedback loops, and technological limitations function as “noise,” distorting messages and hindering shared understanding. This breakdown undermines collaboration and decision-making, thereby reducing operational efficiency. Moreover, consistent with Men and Bowen (2017), the study found that when employees feel excluded from communication or when managerial messages lack clarity, their sense of value and motivation diminishes. Conversely, transparent communication from management fosters trust, psychological safety, and engagement, key precursors to organisational effectiveness.

This shows that communication barriers at NHIA impede both individual and institutional performance. Poorly structured communication processes reduce operational speed and accuracy, while also eroding employee satisfaction and morale. Addressing these barriers would not only enhance efficiency but also cultivate a more motivated, cohesive, and responsive workforce.

#### **4.7 Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented data that was gathered. The data was analysed, and the findings were presented and supported with relevant literature underpinning the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings, draws conclusions, and presents recommendations based on the analysis of data from both qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. The study examined barriers to effective internal communication at the National Health Insurance Authority and explored how organisational culture, leadership style, and structure influence communication practices. It also assessed how communication barriers affect employee satisfaction and organisational efficiency.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

The study aimed to investigate barriers to effective communication within the NHIA, focusing on how organisational structure, leadership style, and culture influence communication flow and effectiveness. The specific objectives were to:

1. To examine how communication is practiced within NHIA.
2. To identify the major communication barriers at NHIA.
3. To examine the influence of organisational culture on communication challenges within the NHIA.
4. To examine the impact of these barriers on organisational efficiency and employee satisfaction.

A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining qualitative interviews with management and quantitative survey data from NHIA staff. The study was underpinned by Organisational Communication Theory and the Transactional Model of Communication, both of which

emphasise that communication is a dynamic, context-dependent process shaped by feedback, hierarchy, and culture.

The findings revealed that communication at NHIA is largely formal and hierarchical, characterised by a top-down approach. While structured, this system restricts openness and feedback. The study also found several barriers to communication, including hierarchical control, technological constraint, ambiguity in messages, psychological and behavioural barriers, and limited opportunities for employee input. Organisational culture was shown to reinforce these barriers, creating an environment of cautious communication where employees avoid challenging authority. Quantitative analysis further revealed that although most staff recognised the importance of communication for productivity and collaboration, poor communication negatively impacted morale and satisfaction. Correlation analysis confirmed a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between employee satisfaction and organisational effectiveness, underscoring communication's strategic role in organisational performance.

## **5.2 Major Findings**

The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data revealed several key findings that describe the state of internal communication at the NHIA. The findings are organised under four broad areas corresponding to the study objectives: communication practices, barriers to internal communication, the influence of organisational culture, and the effects of communication barriers on employee satisfaction and organisational efficiency.

Under the first objective, the study found that communication within NHIA is largely formal, centralised, and hierarchical. Most messages flow from top management downward, with limited opportunity for feedback or upward communication. This pattern aligns with the

organisational communication theory, which posits that communication practices mirror the structure and power relations within an organisation (Keyton, 2011). In NHIA's bureaucratic setting, where decision-making is centralised, this communication pattern reflects a classical communication model that prioritises control over collaboration. As Schein (2010) explains, such rigid communication systems often perpetuate organisational silence and discourage creativity. Although some respondents acknowledged that formal channels such as emails and meetings exist, they described these as procedural rather than participatory.

The study also identified several barriers undermining internal communication effectiveness at NHIA. These included hierarchical control, psychological factors, ambiguous instructions, and a general fear of offending superiors. Some respondents reported that superiors' directives were often unclear or inconsistent, resulting in confusion and misinterpretation among employees. The lack of a standard communication policy exacerbates these issues, as each department or manager adopts a different communication approach. This finding resonates with Yusof and Rahmat's (2020) classification of workplace communication barriers into environmental and personal categories. At NHIA, environmental barriers such as bureaucratic processes and limited feedback mechanisms combine with personal barriers like fear and hesitation to express opinions. The outcome is a workplace culture where employees are cautious and messages lose accuracy as they travel down the hierarchy.

Organisational culture was found to have a strong influence on communication behaviour at NHIA. The findings indicate that the institution's culture is shaped by deference to authority and a preference for conformity over open dialogue. Employees expressed reluctance to challenge superiors or share dissenting views, fearing it may be perceived as insubordination. This observation supports Hofstede's (1980) concept of high power distance, where individuals in lower positions accept unequal power distribution and refrain from questioning authority. It also aligns with Ofori et al. (2023), who found that hierarchical cultures in Ghana's public

institutions tend to limit upward communication and discourage feedback. Moreover, quantitative data from staff surveys indicated mixed perceptions of the organisation's culture. While some employees agreed that the culture supports openness and transparency, others disagreed, suggesting inconsistencies between policy rhetoric and daily communication practices. This confirms Keyton's (2011) assertion that culture and communication are interdependent, one cannot be reformed without influencing the other.

The study's final major finding was that communication barriers directly affect employee satisfaction and organisational efficiency. Quantitative data revealed that most respondents agreed that clear communication enhances productivity and teamwork, while poor communication leads to inefficiencies and delays. Miscommunication was also found to contribute to workplace conflicts and reduce morale. Correlation analysis established a moderate positive relationship ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) between employee satisfaction and organisational effectiveness, indicating that when communication improves, both morale and productivity increase. This empirical evidence supports the social exchange theory principle embedded in Curado et al. (2022) and Eisenberger & Stinglhamber (2011), which suggests that employees reciprocate fair and transparent communication with higher commitment and performance. The findings are consistent with prior research by Karanges et al. (2015) and Gautama So et al. (2018), who established that internal communication is a critical predictor of engagement and motivation. In NHIA's case, employees who perceive communication as transparent and inclusive feel more valued and satisfied, while those who experience poor communication report demotivation and disengagement.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

This study examined the barriers to effective internal communication at the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) and how these barriers affect employee satisfaction and organisational efficiency. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, the research explored how organisational structure, leadership style, and culture influence communication practices within the Authority. The findings revealed that although NHIA has established formal communication channels, these systems are predominantly hierarchical and top-down, limiting the free flow of information and feedback among staff.

A major conclusion from the study is that hierarchical control remains the most significant barrier to effective internal communication at NHIA. Information flow is often filtered through bureaucratic layers, which delays decision-making and discourages initiative from lower-level employees. The rigid hierarchy has created an environment where employees hesitate to express dissenting opinions or propose new ideas, for fear of offending superiors. This has led to what Tourish and Robson (2006) describe as a “distortion of upward communication,” where messages are sanitised before reaching top management.

The study also concludes that ambiguity and lack of clarity in messaging contribute significantly to communication breakdowns within the institution. Instructions from senior officials are sometimes vague or inconsistently framed, leading to confusion among subordinates. The absence of a comprehensive communication policy or training on message delivery further exacerbates this challenge. This aligns with Barnlund’s (1970) Transactional Model of Communication, which emphasises the importance of feedback loops and contextual understanding in reducing “noise” in the communication process.

Furthermore, the research established that organisational culture plays a decisive role in shaping communication behaviour. NHIA’s culture is characterised by deference to authority,

limited assertiveness, and a preference for conformity. Employees often “play it safe,” choosing silence over open dialogue. This reflects Hofstede’s (1980) notion of high power distance cultures, where subordinates are reluctant to challenge authority. The result is a culture of compliance rather than collaboration, which stifles innovation and problem-solving.

Another important conclusion is that communication quality has a direct impact on employee satisfaction and organisational efficiency. The correlation analysis ( $r = 0.562$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between employee satisfaction and organisational effectiveness, confirming that transparent and inclusive communication enhances motivation, trust, and productivity. This finding supports the Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011) assertion that when employees perceive fair and open communication, they reciprocate with commitment and higher performance.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are made to strengthen internal communication, enhance employee satisfaction, and improve overall organisational efficiency at NHIA.

Firstly, the NHIA should establish a well-defined internal communication framework that outlines clear guidelines for information dissemination, feedback, and reporting. This policy should specify channels of communication, responsibilities at each hierarchical level, and procedures for clarifying ambiguous instructions to reduce inconsistencies and ensure uniform message interpretation across departments.

To overcome hierarchical barriers, management should institutionalise mechanisms that encourage bottom-up communication. Feedback loops, suggestion boxes, regular staff meetings, and internal digital forums can give employees a voice in decision-making.

Given the influence of leadership style on communication effectiveness, NHIA should provide leadership and communication training for managers at all levels. Emphasis should be placed on empathy, clarity, and feedback responsiveness. Authentic and participatory leadership, as emphasised can foster an environment of openness and collaboration.

To break the cycle of organisational silence, NHIA must consciously build a culture that values dialogue, respect, and inclusivity. Management should reward openness and constructive feedback rather than penalise dissent. This cultural shift will reduce fear, promote assertiveness, and enhance collective problem-solving.

Finally, Communication should not be treated as a support activity but as a strategic management function. NHIA should link communication objectives with organisational goals, particularly in policy dissemination, employee engagement, and service coordination.

### **5.5 Recommendation for Further Studies**

While this study has provided valuable insights into the barriers to effective internal communication at the NHIA and their influence on employee satisfaction and organisational efficiency, it also opens new avenues for further scholarly investigation. The findings highlight the complex interplay between structure, culture, and leadership in shaping communication practices within bureaucratic public institutions. However, several areas remain underexplored and present opportunities for future research.

First, future studies could expand the scope of this research to include multiple public sector organisations to allow for comparative analysis. Examining how communication barriers manifest across different agencies would help establish whether the communication challenges observed at NHIA are systemic within Ghana's public sector or unique to its institutional setup.

Such cross-organisational comparisons could provide broader policy recommendations for public sector reform.

Second, future studies may consider exploring the role of digital transformation and ICT tools in reshaping communication dynamics within the NHIA and similar institutions. As remote and hybrid work models become more common, investigating how digital communication platforms influence feedback, participation, and message clarity in public organisations could provide actionable insights for modernising communication systems.

Finally, future research could employ mixed methods with a larger and more diverse sample size, including top management, middle-level officers, and frontline staff, to provide a more holistic view of communication dynamics across hierarchical levels. Incorporating perspectives from external stakeholders, such as healthcare providers and the general public, would also help to understand how internal communication at NHIA affects external service delivery and public trust.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter summarized the study's key findings, conclusions, and recommendations on communication barriers at the NHIA. The findings revealed that hierarchical structures, leadership styles, and organisational culture significantly influence communication effectiveness, leading to delays, misunderstandings, and reduced employee morale. The study concluded that improving openness, feedback mechanisms, and leadership communication is essential to enhancing efficiency and satisfaction. Recommendations are also made for stronger communication policies, leadership training, and cultural change initiatives. The chapter also suggested areas for future research to explore communication improvement strategies within Ghana's public institutions.

## REFERENCES

- Abolade, D. A. (2020). Impact of selected factors on employees' satisfaction and organisational performance. *Trends Economics and Management*, 14(35), 9-24.
- Abugre, J. B. (2011). Appraising the impact of organizational communication on worker satisfaction in organizational workplace. *Problems of Management in the 21st Century*, 1(1), 7-15.
- Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Proctor II, R. F. (2018). *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication* (14th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Adu-Oppong, A. A., & Agyin-Birikorang, E. (2014). Communication in the workplace: Guidelines for improving effectiveness. *Global Journal of Commerce & Management Perspective*, 3(5), 208-213.
- Agyemang-Duah, W., Adei, D., Oduro Appiah, J., Peprah, P., Fordjour, A. A., Peprah, V., & Peprah, C. (2021). Communication barriers to formal healthcare utilisation and associated factors among poor older people in Ghana. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 14(3), 216-224.
- Alhojailan, M. I., & Ibrahim, M. (2012). Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West east journal of social sciences*, 1(1), 39-47.
- Aliaga, M., & Gunderson, B. (2000). Introduction to Quantitative research. *Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1-11.
- Amadu, M. F., & Anyarayer, B. K. (2022). Understanding the influence of communication on employee work satisfaction: perspectives from decentralised Government institutions in the Oti Region, Ghana. *Education Research International*, 2022(1), 5024703.
- Bahrain, N. K., Sakrani, S. R., & Maidin, A. (2023). Communication barriers in work environment: understanding impact and challenges. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(11), 1489-1503.
- Barnlund, D. C. (1970). A transactional model of communication. In K. K. Sereno & C. D. Mortensen (Eds.), *Foundations of Communication Theory* (pp. 83–102). Harper & Row.
- Barnlund, D. C. (2017). A transactional model of communication. In *Communication theory* (pp. 47-57). Routledge.
- Benarkuu, G. G., Katere, E., Ifenkwe, A., Sutinga, P. C., & Adjei, J. S. (2024). The Impact of Workplace Environment, Internal Communication, and Remuneration on Job Satisfaction among Lecturers in Private Universities in Ghana. *Convergence Chronicles*, 5(3), 40-50.
- Beqiri, G. (2018, September 5). Barriers to Effective Communication in the Workplace. VirtualSpeech.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association.
- Brown, B. J., Crawford, P., & Majomi, P. (2008). Professional identity in community mental health nursing: A thematic analysis.
- Brown, C. S., & Sweeting, K. D. (2025). The Power of Organizational Values: Communication, Conflict, and Alignment in Shaping Employee Behavior and Decision-Making. In *Public Sector Ethics* (pp. 127-145).
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). Research methods in education, 6. *Baski, Oxon: Routledge*.

- Cohen, T. N., Berdahl, C. T., Coleman, B. L., Seferian, E. G., Henreid, A. J., Leang, D. W., & Nuckols, T. K. (2024). Medication safety event reporting: factors that contribute to safety events during times of organizational stress. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality*, 39(1), 51-57.
- Creswell, J. W., Klassen, A. C., Plano Clark, V. L., & Smith, K. C. (2011). Best practices for mixed methods research in the health sciences. *Bethesda (Maryland): National Institutes of Health*, 2013, 541-545.
- Creswell, W. J. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed). California, United States of America.: Sage Publications Inc.
- Demir, S. B., & Pismek, N. (2018). A Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Study of Controversial Issues in Social Studies Classes: A Clash of Ideologies. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 18(1), 119-149.
- Duarte, R. M. (2023). The contributions of Clóvis Moura's interpretation of slavery in Brazil and the possible dialogues with organization studies. *Cadernos EBAPE. BR*, 21, e2022-0052.
- Dwivedi, S. K., & Patel, R. (2024). Exploring linguistic-cultural zones: A comprehensive literature Review. *Voice of Intellectual Man-An International Journal*, 14(1and2), 43-54.
- Evans, A., & Suklun, H. (2017). Workplace diversity and intercultural communication: A phenomenological study. *Cogent Business & Management*,4(1).
- Fayard, G. (2025). Toward a Sociology of Transportation. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 1-24.
- Forte, D. N., Stoltenberg, M., Ribeiro, S. C. D. C., de Almeida, I. M. M. O., Jackson, V., & Daubman, B. R. (2024). The hierarchy of communication needs: A novel communication strategy for high mistrust settings developed in a Brazilian COVID-ICU. *Palliative Medicine Reports*, 5(1), 86–93.
- Gallup. (2023). *State of the Global Workplace 2023 Report: The Voice of the World's Employees*.
- Ganle, J. K., Fitzpatrick, R., Otupiri, E., & Parker, M. (2016). Addressing health system barriers to access to and use of skilled delivery services: perspectives from Ghana. *The International journal of health planning and management*, 31(4), e235-e253.
- Gibson, C. B. (2022). Investing in communities: Forging new ground in corporate community co-development through relational and psychological pathways. *Academy of Management Journal*, 65(3), 930-957.
- Hall, J. A., Dominguez, J., & Mihailova, T. (2023). Interpersonal media and face-to-face communication: Relationship with life satisfaction and loneliness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 24(1), 331-350.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture and organizations. *International studies of management & organization*, 10(4), 15-41
- Hussain, Z. (2013). Effective communication brings successful organizational change. *The Business & Management Review*. 3(2). pp43-49.
- Huynh, T. N., Nguyen, P. V., Doan, N. P., Tran, K. T., & Nguyen, T. C. (2024). Navigating challenges in Vietnamese enterprises: An examination of the interplay between environmental regulations, organizational innovation, resilience, learning support, and performance. *PloS one*, 19(12), e0313075.

- Icten, E. (2010). Communication barriers at work. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies*, 211-214.
- Jelani, F., & Nordin, N. S. (2019). Communication Issues at the Workplace. *International Journal of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 32-46.
- Jiang, S., & Chen, K. (2024). Multidirectional analysis for sustainable development: An examination of sustainable policies, corporate social responsibility, and organizational performance. *Sustainable Development*, 32(5), 4385-4396.
- Kapur, R. (2018). Barriers to effective communication. *Delhi University*.
- Keyton, J. (2011). *Communication and organizational culture: A key to understanding work experience*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lopez, M. O., & Malabanan, M. R. L. (2019). *Communication Barriers in the Workplace*.
- Luthans, F., Luthans, K., Luthans, B., & Peterson, S. (2024). Psychological, physical, and social capitals: A balanced approach for more effective human capital in today's organizations and life. *Organizational Dynamics*, 53(4), 101080.
- Martic, K. (2023, January 18). Top 13 Communication Barriers and How to Tackle Them. Haiilo.
- Miller, K. (2012). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes*. Cengage Learning.
- Monge, P. R., & Contractor, N. S. (2003). *Theories of communication networks*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Ofori, D., Appiah-Nimo, C., & Boachie-Mensah, F. O. (2023). Social media adoption in public sector communication: practices, opportunities and challenges in public sector organisations. *Public Sector Marketing Communications, Volume II: Traditional and Digital Perspectives*, 185-211.
- Ofori, D., Appiah-Nimo, C., & Boachie-Mensah, F. O. (2023). Social media adoption in public sector communication: practices, opportunities and challenges in public sector organisations. *Public Sector Marketing Communications, Volume II: Traditional and Digital Perspectives*, 185-211.
- Palys, T. (2008). Purposive sampling. *The Sage Encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, 2(1), 697-8.
- Pauley, J. A. (2010). *Communication: The key to effective leadership*. Milwaukee, WI: ASQ Quality Press.
- Putnam, L. L., & Nicotera, A. M. (2009). *Building theories of organization: The constitutive role of communication*. Routledge.
- Rahmat, N. H. (2019). An Investigation of the Influence of Communication the Operational and Individual Level at the Workplace. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*. Vol 495), pp 102-112.
- Rani, D. K. U. (2016). Communication Barriers. *Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL)*, 3(2).
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, A. T. A. (2019). *Organizational Behavior*. 18th Editi. New York City, NY.
- Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership (Vol. 2)*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sharma, D. (2025). Optimizing Research Techniques and Learning Strategies With Digital Technologies: The Digital Renaissance at the Workplace. In *Optimizing Research Techniques*

- and Learning Strategies With Digital Technologies* (pp. 123-156). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Shaw, G. B. (2011). *The wit and wisdom of George Bernard Shaw*. Mineola, NY; Dover Publications.
- Sim, B. (2018). *Harmony through diversity in the Malaysian workforce*.
- Smith, C. M., Allan, B. A., & Blustein, D. L. (2024). Decent work and self-determination needs: Exploring relational workplace civility as a moderator. *Journal of Career Assessment, 32*(2), 226-242.
- Smith, S., & Johnson, G. (2023). A systematic review of the barriers, enablers and strategies to embedding translational research within the public hospital system focusing on nursing and allied health professions. *PLoS One, 18*(2), e0281819.
- Taylor, F. W. (2004). *Scientific management*. Routledge.
- Thomas, D. C., Liao, Y., Aycan, Z., Cerdin, J. L., Pekerti, A. A., Ravlin, E. C., ... & Van De Vijver, F. (2015). Cultural intelligence: A theory-based, short form measure. *Journal of international business studies, 46*, 1099-1118.
- Ting-Toomey, S., & Dorjee, T. (2018). *Communicating across cultures*. Guilford Publications.
- Vaughan, T. (2022, December 1). *The Importance of Communication in Organizations* | Poppulo.
- Wang, C., Zhang, S., Gao, Y., Guo, Q., & Zhang, L. (2023). Effect of contractual complexity on conflict in construction subcontracting: Moderating roles of contractual enforcement and organizational culture distance. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management, 149*(5), 04023019
- Waty, L. (2024). Navigating digital transformation: The impact of leadership, digital literacy, And organizational culture. *Jurnal Terapan Ilmu Manajemen dan Bisnis, 7*(2).
- Wimmer, D. R., & Dominic, R. J. (2011). *Mass media research: An introduction*. Belmont California.
- Yeboah-Assiamah, E., Asamoah, K., Buabeng, T., Bawole, J. N., & Otchere-Ankrah, B. (2018). 'Corruption in public administration: stabbing the African state in the back'. *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance, Springer, New Delhi*. Emmanuel Yeboah-Assiamah served as a TRECCAFRICA Fellow at the School of Public.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). sage.
- Yusof, A. N. A. M., & Rahmat, N. H. (2020). Communication barriers at the workplace: A case study. *European Journal of Education Studies, 7*(10).
- Zainal, Z. (2007). Case study as a research method. *Jurnal kemanusiaan 5.1*

## APPENDIX A

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

**Study Title:** *Barriers to Effective Communication at the Workplace: A Study of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), Ghana*

**Researcher:** *Joana Mintah, Graduate Student, University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC) – Institute of Journalism*

#### **1. Invitation to Participate**

You are invited to take part in a research study exploring communication practices and challenges within the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA). Before you decide whether to participate, please read the following information carefully. You may ask questions at any time. Participation is entirely voluntary.

#### **2. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the barriers to effective internal communication within NHIA and assess how these challenges influence organisational efficiency, employee performance, and satisfaction. The findings will be used for academic research and may help inform recommendations to improve workplace communication practices.

#### **3. What Your Participation Involves**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a confidential questionnaire and/or participate in a semi-structured interview depending on your role.

##### **Survey Participation**

- You will respond to a questionnaire about your communication experiences at NHIA.
- **Estimated time:** 15–20 minutes.

##### **Interview Participation (if selected/volunteered)**

- You will take part in a semi-structured interview focusing on communication dynamics, challenges, and organisational culture.
- **Estimated duration:** 30–45 minutes.

You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer and may stop participation at any point without penalty.

#### **4. Potential Risks and Benefits**

##### **Risks**

- No physical risks are anticipated.
- Some questions may cause mild discomfort as you reflect on workplace challenges.
- You may decline to answer any question or discontinue at any time.

##### **Benefits**

- Your input will help generate valuable insights into communication issues within NHIA.
- The findings may guide future communication improvements and contribute to academic knowledge.

## 5. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your privacy is extremely important.

- No identifying information (e.g., name, staff ID) will be collected in the survey.
- Interview participants will be assigned pseudonyms (e.g., “Participant 1”).
- All audio recordings (if permitted), transcripts, and digital files will be stored securely on a password-protected device.
- Only the researcher and academic supervisor will have access to raw data.
- All data will be used strictly for academic purposes and reported only in aggregated or anonymous form.
- Data will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

## 6. Voluntary Participation

Your participation is voluntary. Choosing not to participate—or deciding to withdraw—will involve no penalty, loss of benefits, or consequences of any kind. You may withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

## 7. Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns about the study, please contact:

- **Researcher:** Joana Mintah  
Email: [mintahjoana@gmail.com](mailto:mintahjoana@gmail.com)
- **Academic Supervisor:** Dr. Rhodalene Amartey

If you have concerns about your rights as a participant, please contact your institution’s research ethics office.

## 8. Statement of Consent

By signing below, you confirm that:

- You have read and understood the information provided.
- Your questions have been answered satisfactorily.
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
- You are at least 18 years of age.

**Participant’s Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher’s Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** *Joana Mintah*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

#### **Purpose of the Interview**

The purpose of this interview is to gather in-depth information on communication practices, barriers, and managerial experiences within NHIA. Your responses will help the researcher understand how communication affects employee satisfaction and organisational effectiveness. All information provided will be treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

#### **Section A: Background Information**

1. Can you please describe your current role and responsibilities within NHIA?
2. How long have you been working with the NHIA, and in what capacities have you served over the years?
3. How many subordinates or departments do you directly supervise or communicate with?

#### **Section B: Communication Practices within NHIA**

4. How would you describe the general communication flow within your department?
5. What formal communication channels are commonly used at NHIA for disseminating information?
6. In your view, how effective are these communication channels in ensuring understanding and cooperation among staff?
7. How do you ensure that important information is clearly communicated to your subordinates?
8. Can you describe how feedback is managed or encouraged within your team or department?

#### **Section C: Barriers to Effective Communication**

9. What are the main challenges or barriers you encounter when communicating with employees or other departments?
10. How do these factors affect communication within NHIA?
11. In your experience, do organizational structure or hierarchy influence how information flows across levels?
12. Are there situations where messages or directives are misunderstood or misinterpreted? Follow up: What do you think causes this?

13. How do communication barriers affect teamwork, employee morale, or overall performance in your department?

#### **Section D: Organisational Culture and Leadership Influence**

14. How would you describe the communication culture at NHIA?
15. In your opinion, how does leadership style, either yours or that of senior management, affect communication openness and feedback?
16. Are employees generally free to express their opinions, concerns, or suggestions?
17. How do management decisions regarding communication impact employee satisfaction and motivation?

#### **Section E: Strategies and Recommendations**

18. What measures or strategies has NHIA implemented to improve internal communication?
19. In your opinion, which communication improvement initiatives have worked well, and which have not?
20. What recommendations would you make to enhance effective communication across all levels of the organization?

#### **Interviewer's Note:**

The interviewer may probe further for clarification or elaboration when responses are brief or when specific examples are needed. Duration of each interview: approximately 30–45 minutes.

APPENDIX C

**Barriers to Effective Communication at the Workplace: A Case Study of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), Ghana**

This questionnaire seeks to gather employees’ views on communication practices, barriers, and their effects on job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will be kept confidential. Please tick [✓] where appropriate and provide honest responses.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender:  Male  Female  Prefer not to say
2. Age Range:  20–29  30–39  40–49  50 and above
3. Highest Educational Qualification:  Diploma  Bachelor’s  Master’s  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Department/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Position/Designation: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Years of Service:  <2 years  2–5 years  6–10 years  >10 years

Section B: Communication Practices at NHIA

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Information within NHIA flows freely across all levels.					
Communication between management and staff is open and transparent.					
I clearly understand directives and messages from my supervisors.					
Feedback from employees is encouraged and valued by management.					
Important information is communicated on time to all staff.					
The communication channels used in NHIA are effective and reliable.					

Communication technology (emails, meetings, memos, etc.) is effectively utilized.					
---	--	--	--	--	--

Section C: Communication Barriers

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Hierarchical structure limits free flow of communication.					
Some messages are distorted or lost as they pass through different levels.					
There is fear among employees about expressing opinions to management.					
Cultural or language differences sometimes cause misunderstanding.					
Poor feedback mechanisms make it difficult to address workplace issues.					
Technological or logistical challenges hinder effective communication.					
Work overload and pressure prevent effective interaction among staff.					

Section D: Communication and Employee Satisfaction

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel valued when management communicates clearly and frequently.					

Open communication improves my level of job satisfaction.					
Poor communication from management affects my morale.					
I am satisfied with how information is shared within my department.					
Effective communication contributes to teamwork and collaboration.					

### Section E: Communication and Organisational Effectiveness

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Clear communication enhances productivity within the organization.					
Poor communication contributes to delays and inefficiency.					
Effective communication improves decision-making processes.					
Communication between departments enhances service delivery.					
Miscommunication has led to conflicts or misunderstandings at work.					

### Section F: Organisational Culture and Communication

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The organizational culture supports openness and transparency.					

Management encourages employees to express diverse opinions.					
The leadership style at NHIA promotes effective communication.					
There is mutual respect between management and staff in communication.					
Cultural values influence how communication occurs in this organization.					

Section G: Open-Ended Questions

30. What do you think are the main barriers to effective communication within NHIA?

---



---



---

31. How do this communication challenges affect your work performance and satisfaction?

---



---



---

32. What suggestions would you make to improve communication within the organization?

---



---



---

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Signature of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_