

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SENIOR STAFF'S PERCEPTIONS ON COMMUNICATION PRACTICES OF
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST ADMINISTRATORS

BY

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requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Administration in
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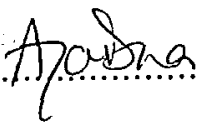
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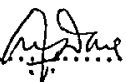
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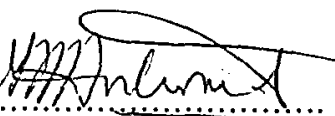
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Supervisors' Declaration

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ABSTRACT

The study set out to investigate into the perceptions of senior staff on communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators, considering such practices as channels of communication used by University administrators, directions of communication and barriers relating to the communication practices of administrators. The study traced the history and development of communication in organizations.

Purposive and simple random sampling methods were used in selecting the respondents. Questionnaires were served to all the selected staff. In all 272 respondents (87.5%) returned their completed questionnaire. The descriptive survey method was adopted for the research. Interview schedules were conducted for some senior staff. Personal observations were also made in ten offices.

The study concluded that the most frequently used channels of communication in the University of Cape Coast are verbal communication and through the grapevine. With regard to observations made, it was seen that whereas some heads of department allow their secretaries to deal with confidential and other routine letters, others do not allow their staff to take such initiatives.

The study, therefore, recommended that heads of department should ensure that confidential letters are kept properly. Heads of departments should, however, allow their secretaries to deal with routine letters in order to avoid unnecessary delays in responding to such letters.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late father and grandmother, King Agyeman-Dua and Mrs. Angela Koomson (Auntie), who encouraged me to pursue higher education.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Ever since human societies emerged, communication has been an indispensable tool for transmitting or receiving information. Everyday, communication plays an essential role in people's lives. Whether it is about giving directions to someone on an errand, whether it involves listening to a child talk about the day's events at school, whether a complaint is being made about a subordinate, whether an explanation is being given about one's absence from somewhere one ought to have been or one's presence at somewhere one should not have been, all fundamentally involve communication. In fact, the world is made up of communication-oriented activities and events. Naturally, it can, therefore, be said that every managerial function and activity involves some form of direct or indirect communication, be it planning, organizing, directing, or leading.

The need to transmit and receive information is vital to all human organizations. For an organization to function effectively, decisions must be made which must be communicated to all its members. Administrators and subordinates are more likely to work together more effectively where the lines of communication are clear. One major way to achieve this is for organizations to have an effective communication structure to formalized systems. These

structures can operate at the localized level of the shop floor or office between supervisor and staff and among staff, or at a distance by means of representatives such as union officials; or messages from a managing director or the chief executive, to various branches or subsidiaries of large and complex organizations. They can be one-way or two-way, top-down or bottom-up or both top-down and bottom-up, as well as across the organization.

What is being increasingly recognized is that messages to and from the workforce have considerable significance. They are important for conveying the organization's mission, business aims and objectives and its general ethics and culture. They are needed to enable the thoughts and feelings of the workforce to be expressed and acted upon.

Curry (2004) indicated that research has estimated that managers spend somewhere between 50% and 80% of their total time communicating in one way or the other. This is not surprising since communication is so critical to everything that goes on in an organization. Without effective communication, an organization's management may find it difficult to get its employees to understand the organization's policies.

Communication systems also carry implicit messages about the mediation of power within organizations. Employee involvement means that the workforce has some say in decision making. In addition, the nature of the communication channel can affect the message, as does the culture(s) existing within and outside the organization (Jablin & Miller, 1990).

An organization is a coordinated unit consisting of at least two people who function to achieve a common goal or set of goals. The effectiveness of any organization is influenced greatly by human behaviour. People are a resource common to all organizations. As individuals, the people in an organization are all different. Each of them has unique perceptions, personality, and life experiences. They have different ethnic backgrounds, different capabilities for learning and for handling responsibility, and different attitudes and beliefs.

The relationships among individuals and groups in organizations create expectation for the individuals' behaviour. These expectations result in certain roles that must be performed. Some people must perform leadership roles, while others must participate in the roles of followers. Middle managers, because they have both superiors and subordinates, must perform both roles. Organizations have systems of authority, status and power, and people in organizations have varying needs from each system. Groups in organizations also have a powerful impact on individual behavior and on organizational performance.

An organization's structure is the formal pattern of how its people and jobs are grouped. An organizational chart often illustrates its structure. Processes are activities that give life to the organizational chart. Communication, decision making and organization development are examples of processes in organizations. Sometimes, understanding process problems such as breakdowns in communication and decision making will result in a more accurate understanding of organizational behavior than by simply examining structural arrangements.

The culture of an organization defines appropriate behavior and bonds, motivates individuals and governs the way the organization processes information, internal relations and values. It functions at all levels from the subconscious to the visible. According to Armstrong (1995), cultures of organizations can be positive or negative. An organization's culture is positive if it helps to improve productivity. A negative culture can hinder behaviour, disrupt group effectiveness, and hamper the impact of a well-designed organization.

All organizations need communication systems to function, whether these are recognized or subconsciously taken for granted. It has been increasingly recognized by employers and managers that creating effective communication is an extremely important aspect of the efficient running of organizations. Indeed, communication consists of a complex series of processes operating at all levels within organizations ranging from the grapevine, heavily laden with rumour receiving feedback. Organizations have always known that success depends on people communicating effectively, contributing not only to the bottom line but also to a positive performance environment. Successful organizations also know that good communication is not just about speaking well. It is about the quality of the connection between the senders and the receivers of the message. The strongest influence on the quality and outcome of all communications is the ability to listen effectively. Only by listening effectively can one respond appropriately.

In an organization, the rules are partly determined by organizational structure. The formal structure of an organization will determine the channels of

communication that are used, who can talk to whom, when and how. In the classical hierarchical organization messages are filtered through the different levels of the organization following the famous military chain model. The more levels a message has to get through, the poorer the informative content of the final message.

Managers have traditionally spent the majority of their time communicating in one form or another (meetings, face-to-face discussions, memos, letters, e-mail, reports). Today, however, more and more employees find that an important part of their work is communications, especially now that service workers outnumber production workers and research as well as production processes emphasize greater collaboration and teamwork among workers in different functional groups. Moreover, a change in communication practices and technologies have become more important in all organizations, but they are perhaps more important in knowledge-intensive organizations and sectors and, as such, are of great significance to science organizations and to public science management.

Individual differences are key to the success of organizations. Yet, these vital differences can also lead to common workplace issues such as stress, conflict, low productivity, inefficiency, ineffective leadership and resistance to change.

The study of organizational communication is not new. However, only recently has it achieved some degree of recognition as a field of academic study. It has largely grown in response to the needs and concerns of business. The first

communication programmes were typically located in speech departments, but more business schools now include organizational communication as a key element of study. The study of organizational communication recognizes that communication in organizations goes far beyond training managers to be effective speakers and to have good interpersonal communication skills. Moreover, it recognizes that all organizations have communication needs and challenges.

In addition, communication is the source of interaction in every aspect of society. Therefore, its role cannot be over-emphasized. For example, communication occurs between lecturers and students. Before one can write and pass an examination, one must first have to have some understanding of what has been taught by the lecturer. McLeod (2004) on her part asserted that were individuals suddenly unable to communicate with one another, human beings would rapidly evolve into a solitary species. This implies that without the capability of speech, body language, listening and reading, life as it is now recognized would cease to exist. McLeod continued by saying that the species would probably die within a few generations, as children would be poorly cared for, since knowledge of this skill cannot be taught and/or passed down. She further stated that none of the technical or industrial systems that form the basis of twenty-first century life could be maintained, impacting everything from electricity distribution to grocery shopping, adding that diseases once rendered virtually eradicated would re-emerge, as the need for preventative treatment could no longer be communicated and executed. She notes that the dynamics of interpersonal relationships would disappear, causing the species extreme mental

anguish, as the natural tendency for group behaviour is no longer possible. McLeod concluded that there would be a large increase in suicide as people failed to come to grips with their suddenly lonely and reclusive lives. A similar example can be seen in hospital management. As Haimann (1991) has noted:

As with all organizations, a healthcare center needs valid information as one of its important resources. Communication provides the key for this. A hospital devotes much of its gathering and processing of information from the moment the client enters the facility until discharged. Serious consequences can arise when communications are minimal, become misunderstood, breakdown or do not exist (p.65).

The foregoing discussion demonstrates the critical role of effective communication. In effect, communication is necessary in all sectors of the economy, be it productivity in agriculture (by way of the introduction of new and scientific and technological methods of farming) or in the industry, through information technology. Within an organization, the mission statement, strategies, policies, procedures, the organization chart and job descriptions are all different manifestations of this activity that holds everything together and makes things happen.

Before 1920, communication in small organizations was largely informal. As organizations increased in size, formal top-down communication became the

main concern of organizational managers. Organizational communication in today's organizations has become far more complex and varied and also more important to overall organizational functioning and success. While research used to focus on understanding how organizational communication varied by organizational type and structure, the emphasis has increasingly turned to understanding how new communication technologies and capabilities can help bring about new and more effective organizational forms and processes (Tucker, 1996).

The word "communication" comes from the Latin word 'communicatus', which means to make common. Communication is fostering understanding, (Bethel, 2000). Since 80% of a manager's time is spent communicating (Pollach, 1999), it is expected that all employees should be able 'to make common' or 'foster understanding' through their written or oral skills. Messmer (1999) concluded that technology innovations would continue to provide the opportunity for workers to communicate more rapidly, more often, and with greater number of people.

The existence and survival of an organization rests on its communication system. Communication is seen as a two-way process, that is, it involves both the giving out of a message from one person and the receiving and understanding of that message by another or others. Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konospaske (2003) emphasize that finding an aspect of a manager's job that does not involve communication would be extremely difficult. Organizations need to collect

messages to help their members decide what to do and how to do it. Once gathered, these messages must either be selected or rejected.

The importance of communication is for the recipient to understand, and so, if for example, Mr. Y. sends a message to Mr. B. but Mr. B. does not receive or understand it, communication has not taken place. One of the major challenges in communication in organizations is how to get information to all parts of an organization as well as how to receive information. According to Torrington and Hall (1995), what is spelt out structurally may not be what happens at all.

Ensuring that communication is understood, especially in a big and complex organization like the University of Cape Coast can be challenging. The design of an organization, as pointed out by Armstrong (1995), should provide communication channels in all its forms: vertical, horizontal and diagonal, and should recognize even the grapevine. This is to ensure effective organizational communication.

The effectiveness of leaders in higher education is, largely a matter of perception (Fincher, 1996). There are few shared norms about appropriate outcome measures for leaders in higher education, unlike the area of business in which leaders' performance may succeed based on profit and growth. In fact, there is no commonly accepted definition of effective leadership in higher education, and even less agreement about which aspects of a definition may be most important to leadership effectiveness (Benson & Newman, 1993).

The workers of an organization are an equally important primary stakeholder. This means that they are the individuals or groups that are directly

affected by the success or failure of the organization. If workers feel the organization's leadership is on their side they are more likely to bond or rally around the organization during a crisis. Organizational leaders establish credibility with workers by fairness in collective bargaining negotiations, providing advancement opportunities such as the granting of study leave to interested staff, organizing workshops, seminars, in-service training, and empowering workers by making them part of major decisions.

Individual perceptions of effectiveness are based on what leaders say and do, that is, perceptions are grounded in the individual's experience with the leader's behaviour, either directly or indirectly. From these experiences, individuals determine whether they believe leaders are effective or ineffective. Perceptions then are crucial to the viability of the leader's position within the institution. Perceptions may even be collected from a defined group of individuals in order to "evaluate" the leader's performance. Effective communication will, thus, enable employers and employees to be seen, heard and known. It promotes the vision of the organization. Without effective communication, organizations will be either stagnant or grind to a halt.

While clear communication within organizations has always been important, it has become increasingly critical in recent years. First, the dissemination of information is more sophisticated than ever and will become increasingly so. Second, as communications media have become more sophisticated, so has the general public, which uses it. People today are both more skeptical and more educated than ever before. Third, organizations are

becoming increasingly more complex. Earlier, smaller companies could thrive with fairly simple communication network. Today, global communications and virtual offices are just two of the complexities involved in corporate communications. The ever-increasing sophistication of corporate cultures, of the general population, of the media, and of communication technologies makes organizational communication an essential part of every work environment.

Communication is said to be dynamic, in the sense that it is ongoing, and ever changing; interactive, because it is between people, and is reciprocal exchange; irreversible; that is, once a message has been decoded it cannot be retrieved. All participants must know the rules in order for the communication to be successful.

It has been said that good leaders are made not born. This means that a person who has the desire and will-power can become an effective leader by developing through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training and experience. To inspire their workers into higher levels of teamwork, there are certain things that leaders must be, know and do. These do not come naturally, but are acquired through continual work and study. Good leaders are expected to be continually working and studying to improve their leadership skills; they are not resting on their laurels.

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills. Although one's

position as a manager or supervisor gives one the authority to accomplish certain tasks and objectives in the organization, this power does not make one a leader. It simply makes one the boss. Bass' (1990) theory of leadership states that there are three basic ways to explain how people become leaders. The first two explain the leadership development for a small number of people. These traits are:

1. Some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles.

This is the Trait Theory.

2. A crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person.

This is the Great Events Theory.

3. People can choose to become leaders. People can learn leadership skills.

This is the Transformational Leadership Theory.

In deciding whether one has to respect another person as a leader, one does not think about that person's attributes, rather, one observes what that person does so that one can know who that person really is. This observation is used to tell if the person observed is a honourable and trusted leader or a self-serving person who misuses authority to look good and get promoted. In the view of Bass (1990), self-serving leaders are not as effective because their employees only obey them, not follow them. Such leaders succeed in many areas because they present a good image to their seniors at the expense of their workers.

Bass (1990) emphasizes that the basis of good leadership is honorable character and selfless service to one's organization. In the employees' eyes a person's leadership is everything he does that affects the organization's objectives

and their well being. To him, respected leaders concentrate on what they are (such as beliefs and character), what they know (such as job tasks and human nature) and what they do (such as implementing, motivating and providing direction). What makes a person want to follow a leader? People want to be guided by those they respect and who have a clear sense of direction. To gain respect, they must be ethical. A sense of direction is achieved by conveying a strong vision of the future.

Statement of the Problem

Communication is practised in a variety of ways in the University of Cape Coast. The positive effects of these practices may promote an open office climate or environment where all staff are encouraged to contribute to the welfare of the various departments and the University as a whole. On the other hand, negative effects of the practices may mean that the office environment is not friendly, with a lot of restrictions. Without doubt, communication practices have a pervasive effect on the climate of an organization, and the University of Cape Coast is no exception. At times, members of the University receive unofficial information about certain issues before the official information comes out. This unofficial information tends to be either true or false. Sometimes the rumour mill is so loud that staff get confused about what to believe and what not to believe. Relevant questions that may be posed are what type of communication climate is dominant in the University of Cape Coast? What types of communication practices do staff perceive to be in vogue in University of Cape Coast? Are staff perceptions

positive or negative? These questions constitute the core of the problem of investigation in the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to look at the perceptions of senior staff on communication practices of administrators in the University of Cape Coast. It was also to identify the directions of communication in University of Cape Coast, and to describe the message transmission channels University of Cape Coast administrators use. Barriers relating to the communication practices of administrators from the perspective of the senior staff were also identified.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the channels of communication most frequently used by UCC administrators?
2. How do senior staff perceive the communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators?
3. How do the communication practices facilitate or impede the performance of senior staff?
4. What are the barriers to effective communication practices of UCC administrators?
5. What are the means used by UCC administrators to (a) provide and (b) to receive communication feedback?
6. Does length of service in the University influence perception of senior staff on:

- a) Channels of communication?
- b) Communication practices?
- c) Effect of communication on job performance?
- d) Barriers to administrators' communication practices?
- e) Administrators' means of providing and receiving feedback?

Significance of the Study

Senior staff have a distinctive role to play in the day to day the administration of the University of Cape Coast, hence the need to look at their perceptions on communication practices of administrators. It is hoped that the study could provide a ready source of reference by revealing the channels of communication most frequently used by UCC administrators. It is expected that the results of the research could bring to light some communication practices that enhance staff job performance. The study could, therefore, be of great benefit to higher education administrators in general. The results of the study may be useful as resource material for people who may want to study communication practices in organizations. The results are also a contribution to knowledge in the field of organizational communication. It could also serve as a basis for further research. The study would provide insight into perceptions of senior staff on communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators. This could help University of Cape Coast authorities to maintain communication practices that enhance staff job performance as well as to improve on barriers to communication.

Delimitation of the Study

The study covered only the senior staff of the University of Cape Coast. That is, Chief Administrative Assistants, Principal Administrative Assistants, Senior Administrative Assistants and Administrative Assistant positions as well as those staff whose positions are similar to those mentioned. Other staff in the University, that is, senior members and junior staff were not considered. Therefore, the conclusions apply only to senior staff of the University of Cape Coast.

Background information of the University of Cape Coast

The University of Cape Coast was established in October 1962 as a University College and placed in a special affiliation with the University of Ghana. The University College was established as a result of the need to train highly qualified and skilled manpower to take up leadership positions in education. Its original mandate was therefore to train graduate professional teachers for the nation's second cycle institutions and the Ministry of Education so as to meet the manpower needs of the country's accelerated educational program at that time.

Today, with the expansion of some of its faculties and the diversification of programmes, the University of Cape Coast has the capacity to meet the manpower needs of other ministries and industries in the country besides that of the Ministry of Education. From an initial student enrolment of 156 in 1963, the University now has a full time student population of 14,000 with 33% being women, whilst distance learners are about 8000 with 43% being women. All the

faculties offer masters and doctorate programs. The University has a workforce of 2,611 made up of administrative assistants, technicians, nurses, clerks, porters, firemen, security guards, messenger/cleaners, and sanitary labourers.

The University of Cape Coast's hierarchical structure has the University Council as the governing body of the entire University. However, Deans of Faculties communicate directly with the Vice-Chancellor or at times with the Registrar and his assistants, depending on the information to be carried across. Heads of academic department send their request and other information through their Deans. The Public Relations office of the University, however, is responsible for the flow of information to the University's environment. Students of the University pass their grievances through their respective Hall Masters or through the Dean of Students. Workers channel their grievances either through their heads of department or through their union leaders. The junior staff of the University are members of the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU) of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The senior staff are under the umbrella of the Federation of Universities Senior Staff Association of Ghana (FUSSAG). The executives of the TEWU are the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Welfare Officer. The FUSSAG executives are made up of the President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The lecturers belong to the University Teachers' Association of Ghana (UTAG). The Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of Audit, Deputy Registrars, Senior Assistant Registrars and Assistant Registrars are under the umbrella of Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA). UTAG,

TEWU, the Students Representative Council (SRC) and the Graduate Students Association of Ghana (GRASAG) all have representation on the University Council, which is the highest governing body of the University. Thus, they participate in decisions of the University. The executives of TEWU liaise between the University administration and the workforce, thus conveying information from the top executive to the workforce as and when necessary. The TEWU workforce at times send their petitions and grievances to the top executive through their union leaders. This usually happens during salary and conditions of service negotiations when it becomes necessary for the Vice-Chancellor to give feedback from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors' and Principals (CVCP) and the Minister of Education and/or Minister of Finance to the staff. When such decisions are not acceptable, TEWU members sometimes resort to strike action until the impasse was resolved.

Definition of Terms

Communication channel: the ways or means of communicating with people or getting something done in the organization (in this case the University of Cape Coast).

Communication practice: the regular communication activities that are done as a habit, tradition or custom. It includes the extent to which administrators use the channels.

Organization of the Work

This thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter one describes the introduction to the research. It presents the background to the study, the

statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as the significance of the research. The second chapter deals with the review of related literature on the topic such as the importance of communication, the perceptions of communication, process of communication, the channels of communication, and barriers of communication. Chapter three, which is the methodology, concerns the procedure followed in carrying out the research such as the sample, research instruments used and the procedure for data collection. Chapter four contains the presentation and discussions of the results and discussion of findings. The fifth and final chapter consists of a summary of the study and the findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations made for practice and for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews related literature to guide the study. It looks at the definition of organizational communication, the process of communication and the channels of communication, barriers to effective communication and how to overcome these barriers.

Importance of Communication

The importance of effective communication practices within an organization cannot be overemphasized. Lysaught (2000) has observed that more frequently than not, failures in communication lie at the heart of problems in organization, goal setting, productivity and evaluation. For this reason, St. John, (1999) stated that no one could manage a modern organization who is not knowledgeable in communication principles and techniques and skilled in their use. Guarino (2001) considered the ability to communicate the most essential talent in the area of leadership. Thus, communication is important for conveying the organization's mission, business aims and objectives, and its general ethics and culture. It is also needed to enable the thoughts and feelings of the workforce to be expressed, heeded and acted upon.

History and Development of Communication

The discipline of organizational communication, according to Redding (1985), traces its roots through the discipline of rhetoric back to the orators of Ancient Greece and Rome, such as Aristotle, Cicero and Quintillian. Redding observed that the modern field finds its more recent lineage through business information, business communication, and early mass communication studies published in the 1930s through the 1950s. Until then, organizational communication as a discipline existed primarily in speech departments where few professors within those departments had a particular interest in speaking and writing in business settings.

During the World War II and after the war, particularly 1942 to about 1949, studies of effective communication practices in group and organizational settings became particularly important. Great numbers of servicemen (and some service women) underwent communication training, first in the military, and then in colleges and universities. A concern with effectiveness in transmitting messages soon broadened into concern with environmental factors, characteristics of the people involved in the communicative activity, and differences in utility of different transmission media. Hamilton and Parker (1991) stated that Congo tribes used drum beats with high and low pitch frequencies to communicate in the bush. Other tribes used short and long smoke signals to serve the same purpose.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study is based on Taylor's scientific management theory, which establishes a clear division of responsibility between management and workers,

with management doing the goal setting, planning and supervising and workers executing the required tasks, among other things. Taylor's four principles of management were:

1. Develop a science for each element of an individual's work, which will replace the old rule-of-the-thumb.
2. Scientifically select and then train and develop the worker.
3. Heartily cooperate with the workers so as to ensure that all work is done in accordance with the principles of the science that has been developed.
4. Divide work and responsibility almost equally between management and workers.

The rationale of this theory is that Taylor succeeded in getting the level of productivity up by putting the right person on the job with the correct tools and equipment, had the worker follow instructions after communicating to him what it is expected of him.

The assumptions of Taylor's theory is work ethic that assumes that people or employees will work hard and behave rationally to maximize their own income, putting their perceived requirements of the organization before their own personal objectives and goals. The orientations of the theory are for management to develop a concept of work design, work-measurement, production control and other functions are communicated to employees.

According to Hamilton and Parker (1991), whereas Taylor sought to improve organizational efficiency by redesigning employee tasks, the bureaucratic theorists were interested in improving the efficiency of the manager

through structure and control. They noted that organizational structure, the formal patterns of relationships and roles needed to get accomplished (or who works with whom and who reports to whom) was the foundation of bureaucratic theory. In their view, Fayol and Weber believed that organizations must have a clear division of labour with clear lines of authority or chain of command.

Hamilton and Parker (1991) indicated that the bureaucratic theorists discussed the role of communication as it flowed up and down the chain of command and noted the restrictions placed on communication by the organizational structure, adding that Fayol's 'best way' was an innovative suggestion that direct, horizontal communication between persons of different departments be allowed in legitimate crisis situations. For example, if person A needed information from person B that would arrive too late to use if obtained through the formal chain of command, then person A could contact person B directly, thus bypassing the chain of command. .

Owens (2004) indicated that the bureaucratic approach tends to emphasize the mechanisms in dealing with issues of controlling and coordinating the behaviour of people in the organization as :

- (1) Maintaining a firm hierarchical control of authority and close supervision of those in the lower ranks by the administrator.
- (2) Establishing and maintaining adequate vertical communication as this helps to ensure that good information will be transmitted up the hierarchy to the decision makers and orders will be clearly and quickly transmitted down the line for implementation.

(3) Developing clear written rules and procedures to set standards and guide actions, which include instructions, and policy handbooks, rules and regulations.

(4) Adding supervisory and administrative positions to the hierarchy of the organization as necessary to meet problems that arise from changing conditions that confronts the organization.

McLeod (2004) observed that Max Weber's bureaucratic organizational theory seeks to have a fairer and unbiased approach to the people working in an organization. Hamilton and Parker (1991) added that the bureaucratic theorists also believed in a small span of control, saying that each person should have only one supervisor and each supervisor should oversee no more than five or six people. The University of Cape Coast, as depicted by its organizational chart, for instance, adopts this well-defined hierarchy of authority. Weber's division of labour based on functional specialization is also well practiced. For example, Assistant Registrars, Administrative Assistants, Accounting Assistants, Clerks and so on all have their specific duties to perform. Rules and regulations govern employees; selection and promotion are also based on technical competence of staff.

Smeltzer, Leonard and Hynes (2002) indicated that communication is related to organizational structure and to formal and informal interaction, adding that classical management theory stresses hierarchy and scalar chain of command. In his view, vertical lines are the formal lines of communication; most formal communication goes downward at the expense of upward communication. There

are gaps, misinformation, distortions, and omissions. The implication is that there is inadequate communication in some organizations. Smeltzer et al. (2002) concluded that organizational charts define formal communication, but actual communication follows interaction. He stresses that instead of the organizational chart, people must think of managers as embedded in networks that include superiors, subordinates, formal and informal contacts.

Owens (2004) indicated that another central classical principle of organization Taylor gave was unity of command, which established that no one in an organization should receive orders from more than one superordinate. Owens, however, noted that the organization charts of organizations frequently reflect this principle, although in actual operation, it is routinely ignored.

In the view of Owens (2004), when administrators seek to involve people more fully in making decisions that affect them, attend to their motivational needs more adequately or increase collegiality and collaboration through teamwork, administrators are using people approaches to organizational problems.

Definition of Organizational Communication

There are hundreds of possible definitions presented by scholars found in the literature. Most definitions of organizational communications focused on inter communication between individuals, or groups within an organization. Infante (2000) defined organizational communication as communication between and among the individuals and groups, which make up an organization.

Communication must exist in all organizations to enable them to function. It is the administrator's most important tool or means of running his organization.

When it is correctly used, it helps the administrator to achieve his goals and he will be able to coordinate well.

The Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service's (ACAS) definition of organizational communication as stated in Hannagan (1998) is:

The provision and passing of information and instruction which enables a company or any employing organization to function efficiently and employees to be properly informed about development. It gives information of all kinds, which can be provided, the channels along which it passes, and the means of passing it (p.2).

In the view of Ahuja (1988) communication is a process involving the interchange of facts, viewpoints and ideas between people in different positions to achieve understanding so as to meet set targets or goals. Stoner and Freeman (1992) held a similar view when they stated that communication is the process by which people attempt to share meaning through the transmission of symbolic messages. They identified three essential points in their definition of communication as (a) Communication involves people, (b) communication involves shared meaning; and (c) communication is symbolic.

Gibson et al. (2003) explained that communication is the transmission of common understanding through the use of symbols. Haimann (1991) agreed with Donnelly (1987) when he noted that as long as two persons understand each other, they have communicated although they may not agree. To him, the key word in communication is understanding. On the other hand, Armstrong (1995) saw

communication as the creation, transmission, interpretation and the use of information.

From the above definitions, it can be seen that communication is the process of transmitting feelings, attitudes, facts and beliefs between people in an organization in a way that results in meeting organizational goals. In the context of organizational communication the definition is expanded to the process of transmitting feelings, attitudes, facts and beliefs between various levels in an organization. Communication may be one-way, when no reply is wanted or expected. For example, the Registrar of University of Cape Coast circular stating that all lights should be turned off before staffs leave the office is a command or an order, which does not demand a response. However, if people do not like the message, they may respond to it.

Most communications are two-way, with some feedback, or response, required from the receiver. For example, if some official response were required for the message about turning off lights, a different means of communication would have to be used. That is, instead of putting up a notice, a memorandum, or a brief written message on a form, would have to be sent to the heads off all departments asking them to ensure that all lights are turned off when staff are leaving the office. The sender could ask, for example, that the message be acknowledged or request a report on actions that had been taken to put the order into effect.

Perceptions and Communication

Perceptions, according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) results in some predictable outcomes. It is a mental and cognitive process that enables people to interpret and understand their surroundings. Human beings constantly strive to make sense of their surroundings. The resulting knowledge influences their behaviour and helps them find our way through life. For example, one can think of the perceptual process that occurs when meeting someone for the first time. One's attention is drawn to the individual's physical appearance, mannerisms, actions and reactions to what one says and does. Conclusions are then arrived at, based on one's perceptions of this social interaction.

This process of perception, interpretation and behavioural response as noted by Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) also apply to work. They conducted a field study to know whether employees' perceptions of how much an organization valued them affected their behavior and attitude. They found that employees who perceived that their organization valued their contributions and their well-being reciprocated with reduced absenteeism, increased performance, innovation and positive work attitudes. This study illustrates the importance of employees' perception about organizational practices. It shows that employees are more committed to an organization and work harder to support its goals when they perceive the organization cares about them.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) agreed with Blundel (2004) that once some people have been identified as 'warm', they are also likely to be perceived as being sociable, popular, happy, good natured, and humorous. Blundel (2004) cited the blind men and the elephant as a helpful analogy to understand complex and multifaceted phenomena such as human organizations and cultures. In that story, whereas the blind man who grabbed the tail said the elephant was like a rope, the one who touched the side (hide) said it was like a wall, and so on. Each blind man had his own perception about the elephant.

Gibson et al. (2003) stressed the importance of perception by stating that the way people do their jobs depend in part on how they perceive and think of their jobs. They added that even though Taylor proposed that the way to improve work (that is, to make it more efficient) is to determine the "best way" to do a task (motion study) and the standard time for completion of the task (time study), the actual performance of jobs goes beyond its technical description.

Hanson (1996) stated that even when two people look at the same thing (object, person, movie and so on) from nearly the same spot, their interpretation would differ. Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) on their part, defined perception as a person's view of reality. This reality can either be sensory or normative. According to them, sensory perception is physical reality, which refers to how individuals see concrete, visible phenomena. For example, different people with different languages may call a book by a different name but basically they will all

have a similar idea of what they are talking about. To them, when dealing with sensory reality, communication breakdown is not very great.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) observed that normative perception interprets reality; that is, it deals with matters of opinion or personal preference. Mullins (1999) noted that “despite the fact that a group of people may ‘physically see’ the same thing, they each have their own version of what is seen - their perceived view of reality” (p.379). For example, someone may perceive the image shown in Figure 1 as a young, attractive, well-dressed woman whereas another person may perceive her as an older woman.

Old lady–young lady



Figure 1 Old lady – young lady

Source: Gibson and Hodgetts (1990). p. 73.

Peretomode (1992) cited Bobbit (1913) as saying that directors and supervisors must supply workers with detailed instructions as to the work to be done, the standard to be attained, and the methods to be employed. Through this, Bobbit believed standards would be set to ensure efficiency in staff job performance. Mullins (1999) recommended job description, which tells the total requirements of the job, what it is and its purpose, the duties, activities and responsibilities as attached to it and its position within the organization. This implies that the success of every organization depends largely on its workforce.

Armstrong (1995) observed that in the past, the concern of managers of large bureaucratic organizations and, consequently the major focus of the organizational communication literature was formal, top-down communication. Informal communication, generally associated with interpersonal, horizontal communication, was primarily seen as a potential hindrance to effective organizational performance. This is no longer the case. On-going, dynamic, and non-formal, if not informal, communication has become more important to ensuring the effective conduct of work in modern organizations. Torrington and Hall (1995) supported Armstrong by stating that effectiveness in communication usually requires a careful blend of both formal and informal channels, with formal statements of fact and reasons supported by informal explanations and interpretations.

According to Ahuja (1988), paths of communication, which are institutionally determined by the organization, are considered formal communication. It comes in the form of oral/verbal and/or written/nonverbal.

Oral communication is timely and current; it often informs managers about immediate problems or opportunities. Written communication, on the other hand, is often not sufficiently current. Because managers need to communicate quickly and receive information that is currently useful, they heavily favour oral communication. The importance of free-flowing forthright communications, both downward from management to employees and upward from employees to management, can hardly be overemphasized. Whether it is to support morale and productivity among the workforce or to assure that management takes advantage of employee input, good communications are essential. Where upward communication is poor, employee grievances will fester the vacuum. Where upward communication is poor, employee grievance will fester driving down morale and productivity and increasing vulnerability to union organizing (Curry, 2004). Formal communication has two components: upward communication and downward communication.

Purpose of Organizational Communication

The manager occupies a key position in the organizational hierarchy that necessitates communication with a wide variety of people about different situations, problems and issues. Snowden and Gorton (2002) advised that an administrator, as a communicator, needs to be aware of five basic aspects of communication. These basic aspects of communication include:

1. The purpose to be achieved by the message.
2. The person or persons to whom the message is directed.
3. The content of the message.

4. The alternative channels for communicating the message.
5. The need for feedback or a response to the message.

According to Snowden and Gorton (2002), the initial task for the administrator who wishes to communicate a message to a particular individual or group is to think carefully about the objectives that the communication is meant to achieve; that is, whether the message is to inform, to raise questions, to change attitudes, to stimulate action, to inhibit action, to reassure, to solidify support, to clarify or to achieve some other goal.

In the view of Hannagan (1998), communication is pervasive, continually in operation and covers an enormous range of activities. These activities include sending a memo to an employee as a reminder to do a task; telephoning an order for new stock; posting a notice of a forthcoming meeting on the notice board or sending a fax or email message to another town or country. Drucker (1974) stated that the purpose of communication is to appeal to the motivation, aspirations, values and purposes of the recipient. He saw the purposes of communication as bringing about change of personality values, beliefs and aspirations. In the same vein, Ahuja (1988) stated that organizational communication must satisfy the needs of the organization and its members. This, to him, is the purpose of communication in organizations.

Greenbaum (1974) identified four purposes of organizational communication as (1) regulatory, which seeks to ensure that employee behaviour is consistent with the goals of organizations; (2) innovative, which seeks to

change the way things are done by employees; (3) integral, which is to encourage employees to identify with the organization, and (4) information, which involves the passing of factual information which employees will need in order to do their jobs. In the view of Haimann (1991), communication is the third process that serves to link the managerial functions in an organization. Employees look for and expect communication since it is a means of motivating and influencing people to work. Communication is, therefore, vital to managers not only for purposes of social satisfaction but also to carry out their jobs effectively.

As stated by Bennet (1997), what to communicate depends on management's communication objectives; that is, whether management want to persuade employees to accept a technical change, or relate to union leaders in a particular manner or some other issue. He noted that specific managerial objectives regarding communication with employees are likely to include (a) encouraging workers to support the aims of the organization, (b) transmitting instructions clearly and in a manner that maximizes the likelihood of their being properly carried out, (c) receiving prompt and accurate feedback including company handbooks and magazines, newsletter and bulletins posted on notice boards and discover new ways to improve the flow of information, (d) providing managers with training in communicative skills, and (e) developing new systems for canvassing employees' opinions and views.

Bennet (1997), however, pointed out that communication of every piece of information that might be relevant to employees is not feasible, otherwise an

organization would devote all its time and energy and resources transmitting messages, most of which is of little practical use. Choices, thus, have to be made. How and when to communicate will be determined by the amount of information to be communicated and the media available for the process. Bennet (1997) suggested that whichever media selected needs to be suitable for and relate to the people receiving the communication. It should also be clear and precise and should provide information on important events soon after they have occurred.

Directions of Communication

Within an organization, communication flows in certain directions. Gibson et al. (2003) stated that the design of an organization should provide for communication in four distinct directions; that is downward, upward, horizontal and diagonal. Downward communication flows from individuals in higher levels of the hierarchy to those in lower levels. According to Gibson et al. (2003), the most common forms of downward communication are job instructions, official memos, policy statements, procedures, company publications and employee performance feedback. They further observed that in many organizations, downward communication often is both inadequate and inaccurate, as reflected in the often-heard statement among organization members "we have absolutely no idea what's happening" (p.419). Such complaints indicate inadequate downward communication and individuals' need for information relevant to their jobs. Absence of job-related information can create unnecessary stress among organization members. An office clerk, who has not been informed about the use of a photocopier, for example, faces a similar situation.

Lussier (2003) noted that when top-level management makes decisions, policies, procedures and so forth, these are often communicated down the chain of command to instruct employees. Hymowitz (2001), therefore, saw it as the process of higher-level managers telling those below them what to do and how to do it.

Downward communication, as noted by Stoner and Freeman (1992) starts with top management and flows down through management levels to the workers and non-supervisory personnel. As indicated by Ahuja (1988), downward communication is needed to get things done, to prepare for change, to discourage misinformation, and to let people feel the price of being relatively well informed. In the view of Torrington and Hall (1995), the main aim of downward communication is to inform, advice, direct, instruct, evaluate and keep subordinates abreast with institutional goals. It includes channels such as house journals, company newspapers, letters, notices, memos, employee reports and regular briefing sessions.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) stated that perhaps the most tried and true rule of effective downward communication is to communicate orally, and then follow up in writing. From the above, it can be seen that where downward communication is poor, rumours and misinformation will fill the vacuum.

Curry (2004) suggested that general managers should have routine staff meetings with supervisors. In addition to production issues, these staff meetings should also include topics of interest to employees with respect to business development, company affairs, and any other topics that should be communicated

by supervisors to rank and file. In addition, Curry suggested that managers should encourage employees to give suggestions; institute grievance procedure that allows employees to send their complaints upwards and operate an open door policy that permits employees to ask questions. From this practice, an organization could determine whether it is performing well with its internal communication.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) observed that employees who do not receive sufficient information feel alienated from the organization. For them, work can become a series of meaningless tasks to be done in the easiest way possible. They further stated that although some managers rationalize their failing communication systems by saying that employees really are not interested in anything broader than their precise jobs, studies repeatedly have shown that this is not true. They cited, for example, Davidson who found that employees who are kept informed of organizational and departmental objectives would ultimately become more productive. This implies that informed employees are better able to relate their work activities to overall corporate goals. This, in turn, eliminates much of the conflict between competing groups since all now are working towards the same objectives.

Larkin and Larkin (1994) suggested that downward communication is most effective if top managers communicate directly with immediate supervisors and immediate supervisors communicate with their staff. It is believed that increasing the power of immediate supervisors increases both satisfaction and performance among employees.

Upward communication is feedback from the lower personnel to higher authorities. In the view of Haimann (1991), upward communication is a second but equally important direction in which messages flow through the official network, but from subordinates to superiors. He shares the view that subordinates must be made to feel free to convey their opinions and attitudes to their superiors and to report activities and actions regarding their work. Gibson et al. (2003) noted that an effective organization needs upward communication as much as it needs downward communication. Gibson et al. referred to a study by Smither, London, Reilly and Millsap (1998) in which it was found that in organizations where upward communication programmes were effectively implemented, a majority of managers improved their performances. However, Beck and Beck (1996) noted that achieving effective upward communication, which is, getting open and honest messages from employees to management, is an especially difficult task, particularly in large organizations. A study by Frank (1996) also suggested that upper-level managers often do not respond to messages sent from lower-level employees, and lower-level employees are often reluctant to communicate upward, especially if the message contains bad news.

Gibson et al. (2003) identified some of the most common upward communication devices as suggestion boxes, group meetings and appeal or grievance procedures. They noted that in the absence of these devices, people find ways to adapt to nonexistent or inadequate means of communicating such as "the emergence of "underground" employee publications in many large organizations" (p.419).

As Ahuja (1988) stated, the main function of upward communication is to supply information that has been requested to the upper levels about what is happening at the lower levels; or to make requests or appeals. An example is an employee communicating with a manager. This form of communication includes suggestion boxes, group meetings, report to supervisors, appeals or grievance procedures, explanations, request for aid and so on. Ahuja further stated that upward communication is needed to create receptiveness of communication; a feeling of belongingness through participation as well as demonstrate a concern for the ideas of each individual.

According to Beardwell and Holden (1997), one form of communication, which has become popular in organizations in the past decade, is employee involvement. The idea of involving the workforce may seem self-evident, as employees must be involved in order to do their job. It has long been recognized, however, that doing a job does not necessarily mean being interested in it or doing it well. The school of human relations promoted by thinkers in the field such as Mayo, Vroom, Likert and Maslow, amongst others, have drawn conclusions from their various studies as stated in Hamilton and Parker (1991) that positive motivational factors engendered by such methods as employee involvement may develop a more creative, interest and therefore more productive workforce.

Kinard (1988) added that two-way communication with employees on a day-to-day basis would help employees improve their job performance. Kinard also recommended that suggestion boxes for employees should be made available so that employees could inform their bosses of their needs and desires related to

their jobs.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) stated that one consistent finding is that employee satisfaction with upward communication tends to be lower than their satisfaction with downward communication. Larkin and Larkin (1994) found low levels of satisfaction with all the strategies commonly used to enhanced upward communication, including employee surveys, suggestion programs, employee grievance programs, and employee participation programs such as quality circles and team meetings. Gibson and Hodgetts noted several management-based reasons for this lack of satisfaction, particularly that these strategies often do not involve two-way communication, are not packaged well, are poorly timed, and are apt to trigger defensiveness on the part of managers.

In addition, McClelland (1988) found three employee-based reasons why upward communication tends to be poor. First, people are afraid to speak their mind in order to avoid victimization. Secondly, employees feel their ideas/concerns are modified as they get transmitted upward. The third reason is that sometimes managers by their behaviour give the impression that they do not have the time to listen to employees.

Horizontal communication refers to communication that takes place between peers or between employees who are of equal placement on the organizational chart. Gibson et al. (2003) indicated that effective organizations also need horizontal communication although downward and upward communication flows are the primary considerations.

McLeod (2004) stressed the importance of horizontal communication, which is based on the fact that it allows peers to discuss common problems and find solutions to address the problems. McLeod observed that it allows management to confer on issues that affect multiple functional areas, the aim of which is to generate common policies and processes to be used across the information. It also provides a sounding board for colleagues to air frustrations, work through challenges and assist one another (peer support) as well as to provide forum for group decisions regarding the optimal technique in which to bring matters to the attention of senior management.

This view is supported by Ball (2003) who emphasized that horizontal communication is increasingly important and necessary in modern organizations, especially as traditional communication theory assumes only vertical communication. On their part, Hamilton and Parker (1991) stated that horizontal communication is especially important in an organization to coordinate tasks when several employees or departments are each working on part of an important project, to solve problems such as how to reduce waste or how to increase the number of items assembled each hour, to share information such as an easier way to perform a task or the results of a new survey and to resolve conflict such as jealousy or disagreement between co-workers.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) added that horizontal communication is a primary method of information sharing in that it allows peers to share information on a regular basis. They further stated that it prevents interdepartmental conflict

due to misconceptions, communication distortion, and lack of understanding, thus promoting a cooperative spirit across the organization.

Lussier (2003) indicated that horizontal communication is the flow of information between colleagues and peers which even though a formal communication, does not follow the chain of command because it is multidirectional. According to him, horizontal communication is needed to coordinate within a department, among teach members and among different departments, adding that most employees spend more time communicating with peers than with managers.

Bennett (1997) asserted that horizontal communication is less formal than vertical communication. They give typical examples of horizontal communication as telephone conversations, which are indispensable in the day-to-day activities of the office because they are the primary means for coordinating activities with others; written communication, that is memos and notes. Meetings are also held to integrate organizational efforts.

In the view of Gibson and Hodgetts (1990), today's business climate has generated great interest in participatory management, decentralization (to the point of setting up companies within the company), quality circles, and project teams. According to them, horizontal communication is assessed by researchers as more effective than either downward or upward channels. However, Gibson and Hodgetts pointed out that horizontal or lateral communication can weaken the authority of the vertical structure, and an overproliferation of horizontal communication can occur. Horizontal communication is indeed necessary in

organizations because ideas are shared, problems are solved and conflicts are resolved through departmental board meetings.

Diagonal communication cuts across functions and levels in an organization. According to Gibson et al. (2003) diagonal communication is important when organizational members cannot communicate through upward, downward or horizontal directions.

Message Transmitting Channels and Their Effects on Job Performance

The channel for encoding messages in an organization is very important. Lussier (2003) stated that when encoding the message, the sender should give careful consideration to selecting the channels. That is, the sender must select the most appropriate channel for the transmission of the message. The choice of channel may determine how fast an organization's members receive information sent to them. Hanson (1996) indicated that the channel of communication is an important element in the communication process. He observed that in face-to-face communication, many people consider only the voice transmission channel, adding that other channels, such as facial expressions, posture gestures and intonation patterns are often more important. Snowden and Gorton (2002) are of the opinion that messages are seldom transmitted by means of a single medium/channel, since in a speech communication, for example, sound may be the primary channel but there may be others such as the expressions on the speaker's face, his or her gestures, the lighting in the room and so on.

Bennet (1997) gave the media or channels of communication as (a) oral, such as face-to-face or the use of the telephone and meetings, (b) written, such as

memo, letters, notices, and (c) nonverbal communication. According to Lussier (2003), the five most common media for oral/verbal communication are face-to-face, meetings, presentations, and the telephone. Lussier indicated that managers, for example, should communicate one-on-one, face-to-face with employees in order to keep the organization growing. He added that face-to-face communication is the appropriate channel for delegating tasks, coaching, disciplining, sharing information, answering questions, checking progress towards objectives and developing and maintaining human relations. Lussier concluded that face-to-face is the richest channel because it allows full oral and nonverbal communication to be used.

The choice of communication channel, as noted by Torrington and Hall (1995) will depend not only on the direction of the communication but also on the specific nature of the message to be communicated. They indicated as an example, that notifying employees about a reorganization, which directly affects them, would not be best communicated solely via an official memo. Again, Torrington and Hall (1995) stated that company performance, for example, may well be written about in the company newspaper, but may also be displayed diagrammatically on a poster or on the notice board. They concluded that as a general rule, messages are more successfully communicated if more than one channel of communication is used. Armstrong (1995) observed that face-to-face communication is the appropriate channel for delegating tasks, coaching, disciplining, sharing information, answering questions and maintaining human relations. Baker, Gilbreath and Stone (1998) stated that the telephone is the

appropriate channel for quick exchanges of information and checking up of things, adding that it is especially useful for saving travel time. However, Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) noted that although high in richness, the telephone is not as informative as the face-to-face channel because it does not give any body language.

McShane and vonGlinow (2003) indicated that different forms of verbal communication should be used in different situations. For instance, face-to-face interaction is usually better than written methods for transmitting emotions and persuading the receiver because nonverbal cues such as voice intonations and use of silence accompany oral communications. Moreover, in face-to-face settings, the sender receives immediate feedback from the receiver and can adjust the emotional tone of the message accordingly. Baker et al. (1998), however, added that face-to-face is inappropriate for personnel matters such as discipline.

Written communication is another channel of communication. It comes in the form of letters, memos, bulletin board notices, posters and newsletters, among others. Lussier (2003) indicated that memos are commonly used to send intraorganizational messages. According to Lussier, letters and faxes are commonly used to communicate with people outside the organization. Reports are used to convey information to management or colleagues. Baker et al. (1998) noted that written communication is appropriate for sending general information, for saying thank you and for messages that affect several people in a related way. McShane and vonGlinow (2003) stated that written communication is more appropriate for recording and presenting technical details because ideas are easier

to follow when written down than when communicated verbally. Again, McShane and vonGlinow (2003) indicated that electronic mail (e-mail) is revolutionizing the way people communicate in organizational settings.

Hopkins (2006) indicated that nonverbal communication is anything other than words that communicates or affect (negatively or positively) the message contained in the words. Lussier (2003) observed that every time people use oral, face-to-face communication, they also use nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication includes messages sent without words. Lussier noted that psychologists claim that 56% of the impact of any piece of communication is dependent on body language which includes facial expressions (eye contact or a wink or a smile or a frown); vocal quality (not the words used, but how they are said); gestures, that is, the use of body motion, such as moving the hands, pointing and signaling and the nodding of the head and posture (sitting up straight or leaning backward or forward, or crossing arms and/or legs).

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) noted that face-to-face is the richest form of communication as it provides immediate feedback and allows for the observation of multiple language cues such as body language and tone of voice. In the view of Cunningham (1997) a lot of Japanese is either unspoken or communicated through body language. To avoid offending or embarrassing the receiver, particularly outsiders, March (1996) noted that Japanese people will often say what the other person wants to hear but send more subtle nonverbal cues indicating the sender's true feelings. McShane and vonGlinow (2003) confirmed these statements by stating that people in Japan, for example, interpret much of a

message's meaning from nonverbal cues. They added that nonverbal communication is more important in some cultures than in others.

In the view of Snowden and Gorton (2002), administrators communicate to people nonverbally whether they realize it or not, through facial expressions, gestures, dress, tone of voice and the physical environment in which they communicate. To support this assertion, Tracy (2006) noted that there are some messages that are transmitted entirely in a nonverbal manner through gestures and facial expressions.

According to McShane and vonGlinow (2003) most nonverbal cues are specific to a particular culture and may have a complete different meaning to people raised in other cultures. As an example, they indicated that most people shake their head from side to side to say "no", but a variation of head shaking means "I understand" to some people from India; that Filipinos raise their eyebrows to give an affirmative answer, yet Arabs interpret this expression as a negative response.

Even the commonness handshake communicates different meaning across cultures. Yamada (1997) noted that Westerners tend to appreciate a firm handshake as a sign of strength and warmth in a friendship or business relationship but in contrast, many Asian and Middle Easterners favour a loose grip and regard a firm clench as aggressive. Even though communication includes the silence between the communicators' words and gestures, the meaning of silence, varies from one culture to another. Yamada indicated that in Japan, people tend to show respect for the speaker by remaining silent for a few seconds

after the person has spoken to contemplate what has just been said. To them, silence is an important part of communication because it preserves harmony and is more reliable than talk. This view on silence is shared by Tracy (2006), who noted that it is an important communication tool which can get the decoder to reveal certain feelings and attitudes that may be hindering effective communication. In contrast, Goleman (1998) noted that most people in the United States and Canada view silence as a lack of communication and often interpret long breaks as a sign of disagreement.

Blundel (2004) observed that the use of the human eye could have a powerful influence on inter-personal communication. For example, in most contemporary western culture there is an automatic expectation that people engaged in a conversation will maintain a fairly constant degree of eye contact. Blundel also noted that while staring fixedly into the eye of a person might be regarded as aggressive, looking away from his or her face during a conversation, even for a brief period will generally be interpreted negatively. It signals either a lack of interest in the conversation or that the person averting their gaze is untrustworthy. This practice is, however, in contrast to some cultures where withholding eye contact signals respect for the status of the person speaking. For viewers accustomed to the Western practices, the lack of eye contact will give negative meaning to the other person.

In the view of Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) eye contact is a strong nonverbal cue that serves four functions in communication. First, eye contact regulates the flow of communication by signaling the beginning and end of

conversation; that is, there is the tendency for a speaker to look away from others when beginning to speak and to look at them when the speech is over. Second, gazing (as opposed to glaring) facilitates and monitors feedback because it reflects interest and attention. Third, eye contact conveys emotion: People tend to avoid eye contact when discussing bad news or providing negative feedback. Fourth, gazing relates to the type of relationship between communicators.

Engholm (1991) indicated that as it is also true for body movements, gestures, and facial expressions, norms for eye contact vary across cultures. They observed that Westerners are taught at an early age to look at their parents when spoken to but in contrast, Asians are taught to avoid eye contact with a parent or superior in order to show obedience and subservience. Managers are, therefore, expected to be sensitive to different orientations toward maintaining eye contact with diverse employees.

As McLeod (2004) noted, facial expressions are relatively easy to interpret. For example, raised eyebrows can indicate uncertainty or hesitation. McLeod added that the rolling of the eyeballs is generally accepted to mean that the person or the information they are communicating is not to be taken seriously. According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), facial expressions convey a wealth of information; smiling for instance typically represents warmth, happiness, or friendship, whereas frowning conveys dissatisfaction or anger. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), however, added that a smile, for example, does not convey the same emotion in different countries. Gesture and posture, like facial expression, can have different meaning. For example, Blundel (1996) noted that putting an

arm around the shoulders of another person could indicate personal affection or solidarity. However, in some organizational contexts it suggests a power relationship (for example, a senior officer may be permitted to make this gesture to a subordinate, but it would be considered inappropriate if it were carried out the other way round). A lively speaking style captures the listener's attention, makes the conversation more interesting, and facilitates understanding.

Armstrong (1995) observed that people communicate numerous messages by the way they talk and move. He indicated, for example that standing erect and leaning forward communicates to listeners that the person is approachable, receptive and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when the speaker and the listener face each other. Speaking with one's back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest.

In the view of Snowden and Gorton (2002) people who are not close enough according to the receiver's normal expectation will be perceived as cold and hostile. To make communication effective, Lussier (2003) pointed out that people should be aware of their nonverbal communication and make sure it is consistent with their oral communication.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) indicated that it is important for managers to have good nonverbal communication skills in light of the fact that they are related to the development of positive interpersonal relationships in an organization. St. John (1999) indicated that maintaining eye contact, occasionally nodding the head in agreement, smiling and showing animation, leaning toward the speaker and speaking at a moderate rate in a quiet assuring tone are all ways to improve

nonverbal communication skills in an organization. In the view of St. John actions to avoid include looking away or turning away from the speaker, closing your eyes, using an unpleasant voice tone, speaking too quickly or too slowly and yawning excessively.

In a study conducted in a workplace, Freeman, Kleiner and Ostroff (2000) found that effective communication is associated with high job performance. This positive effect is predominantly induced by increased autonomy of employees over how to perform the tasks, the opportunity to participate in decision making as well as increase communication with co-workers.

Irvine's (2006) employee opinion survey on organizational communication addressed issues such as employees' perceptions about communication with their supervisors. The study revealed that 86% of respondents were of the view that sharing information within the departments and the timeliness of receiving necessary information improved their job performance.

Communicating Through The Grapevine

Even though organizations have their official channels through which information is disseminated to its members, there is also an unofficial channel of communication. Lussier (2003) stated that the grapevine is the flow of information in any direction throughout organization. It is informal communication because according to Kurland and Pelled (2000) it is not official or sanctioned by management. The grapevine, or rumour, and gossip mill, can begin with anyone in the organization and can flow in any direction. Lussier indicated that many employees hear of layoffs through the grapevine long before

the official announcement is made. McShane and vonGlinow (2003) emphasized that whether or not executives get out of their offices, employees will always rely on the oldest communication channel, which is the grapevine.

Hamilton and Parker (1991) indicated that all organizations have informal networks, but the type of information the grapevine carries depends on the 'health' of the organization. They emphasized that if an organization's managers are fairly open with the employees and send all necessary information through formal channels, the grapevine usually carries only personal interest items, such as "whom the company Romeo is chasing now or who just got divorced" (p.30).

However, when the formal communication channels fail to do the job, the grapevine begins to carry information about the organization. In other words, the grapevine busies itself with official matters only when the formal channels of communication fail to deliver, or are not understood or "are not accepted by the people for whom the messages are intended" (Walton 1961 as cited in Hamilton & Parker 1991, p.30). To support their point, Hamilton and Parker gave an instance where a middle manager of a medium-size manufacturing company was surprised when a fellow employee congratulated her on her promotion when she had received no formal announcement. This is further confirmed by McShane and vonGlinow (2003) who indicated that 75% of employees typically receive news from the grapevine before they hear about it through formal channels.

Gibson et al. (2003) observed that the formal network, made up of memos, reports, staff meetings, department meetings, conferences, company newsletters and official notices is highly documented and as such has little chance for change.

However, nearly all of the information within the grapevine is undocumented and is thereby open to change and interpretation as it moves through the network.

The grapevine is a powerful means of communication that cuts across formal channels of communication. It is fast-paced and generally moves free of organizational restraints, by word of mouth. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2004), to hear something from the grapevine is to hear news from someone who heard the news from someone else. Dealing effectively with the grapevine is a challenge that will always be a part of the manager's job. Davis (1973) discovered in his study that organizational grapevine is an expression of healthy human motivation to communicate.

Since it is unstructured and not under complete control of management, it moves through the organization in every direction. Davis (1973) has observed that the grapevine moves upwards, downwards, and diagonally within and without chains of command, between workers and managers, and even within and without a company. Gibson et al. (2003) indicated that despite the efforts of many organizations to limit or disapprove of the grapevine's use, it is still extremely prevalent. They state further that though the nature of its impact on organizational effectiveness is debatable, there is no denying that its impact is real. It often travels faster than formal channels. Many, if not most of an organization's employees listen to the assortment of facts, opinions, suspicions, and rumors the grapevine provides. This is information that normally does not travel through the organization's formal channels.

related matters. In view of this, Levy recommends that organizations conduct training programs for employees on the disruptive nature of damaging rumors.

Mishra (2003) noted that people are more active on the grapevine when their friends and colleagues are actively involved. Delaney (2000) indicated that the grapevine exists, always has and always will exist and cannot be stopped. Managers should, therefore, accept the fact and decide how they could use it to their own benefit. Arnold (2001) contended that managers interested in creating effective organizational communication would use information from the grapevine to improve communication throughout the firm.

Davis (1973) observed that the grapevine is hard to kill as the mythical glass snake, which, when struck, broke itself into fragments and grew a new snake out of each piece. This means that if management suppresses the grapevine in one place, it would pop up in another. In a sense, the grapevine is a human birthright, because whenever people congregate into groups, the grapevine is sure to develop. It may use ordinary conversation or some other method, but it will always be there. Hanson (1996) noted that organizations cannot "fire" the grapevine because they did not hire it. The grapevine cannot, therefore, be held responsible for errors.

Even though management does not always view it favorable, the grapevine has several positive aspects. One major advantage of the grapevine, according to Davis (1973) is that it is a release mechanism for stress. Bottled-up feelings have been proven to have negative side effects for individuals and the grapevine helps to ease this type of situation. It is known that individuals like and

need to talk about their work. Because of the speedy transfer of information, the grapevine enables individuals to prepare for and think through management's goal changes and goal adjustment in advance of any formal statements. This increases the contributions of employees.

Hamilton and Parker (1991) stated that managers who listen carefully to the informal communication network find it a useful source of information about employee concerns and problems. They revealed that some managers actually 'leak' new ideas or proposals to the grapevine to test worker response, adding that if the idea is greeted with hostility, they drop it or revise it; if it is received positively, they introduce it into the official channel. According to Hunter (1985) some organizations create a rumour hotline or rumour control office where employees can call to check about a rumour. Hunter indicated that by providing this service, bad rumors could be replaced with good ones.

On whether the grapevine should be encouraged, tolerated or quashed, Foy (1983) as stated in Torrington and Hall (1995) argued that in order to improve corporate communication the grapevine should not be eliminated, but an effort should be made to ensure that official communication channels match the informal ones. Torrington and Hall added that within organizations, the existence of such informal channels of communication often encourages managers to communicate officially, as the information will in any case be passed on. McShane and vonGlinow (2003) stated that it is difficult to tell whether the grapevine should be encouraged or quashed because it has both advantages and disadvantages. According to Krackhardt and Hanson (1993) one benefit of the

grapevine is that it helps employees make sense of their workplace when the information is not available through the formal channels. McShane and Glinow noted that the grapevine is also the main conduit through which organizational stories and other symbols of the organization's culture are communicated. A third advantage of the grapevine, in the view of Noon and Delbridge (1993) is that this social interaction relieves anxiety and fulfils the need for affiliation. This point explains why rumor mills are most active during times of uncertainty.

In the view of McShane and vonGlinow (2003), because the grapevine is most active when employees are anxious, it is a valuable signal for corporate leaders to take appropriate action as resolving the problems behind the rumours or communicating more fully through formal networks. The grapevine is not always beneficial. McShane and vonGlinow indicated that morale tumbles when management is slower than the grapevine in communicating information, because the lag suggests a lack of sincerity and concern for employees. Moreover, grapevine information may become sufficiently distorted that it escalates rather than reduces employee anxieties. This result, according to them, is most likely when the original information is transmitted through several people rather than by one or two people.

In sum, Davis (1973) stated that dealing effectively with the grapevine is a challenge that will always be a part of a manager's job. He added that those who are able to understand the power of the grapevine will be better prepared to utilize it to provide stability and credibility in the work environment that is needed in order to achieve organizational goals.

Why Communication Fails

In organizations, problems in communication do occur as a result of people failing to communicate the way they should. Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) identified the elements of communication, as the communicator, the encoding, the message, the medium, the decoding, the receiver and the feedback. The problems occur when all the information required are not known to the receiver. McLeod (2004) noted that it is vital to organize and communicate all types of information to the persons concerned. She cited the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the US as an extreme example of the failure to communicate, stating that media reports indicated that potential leaks in the weeks and months prior to the event were not acted upon. McLeod stated that despite the billions of dollars spent on defence and military intelligence, the skill, training and experience of the FBI and various immigration and law enforcement agencies, and the sheer mass of information assembled by these organizations over many years, nobody foresaw the events of that day. According to her, intelligence gathered from one organization was not shared with others, preventing what may have proved to be vital linkages of information that may have stopped the terrorists prior to the act.

Clearly there are many valuable lessons that can be learned from this event, as McLeod observed. People have seen the results of this mishap in terms of heightened security awareness, increased immigration regulations, and numerous new precautions in the United States of America. This event should teach a lesson that as a society, people must share information amongst themselves for their good.

Guarino (2001) identified poorly designed organizations, ineffective processes, bureaucratic systems, unaligned rewards, unclear customer/partner focus, fuzzy visions, values and purpose, unskilled team leaders and members, cluttered goals and priorities, low trust levels, and weak measurements and feedback loops as communication problems.

Since communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another it involves a process in which a sender transmits an idea to a receiver. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) indicated that anything that prevents understanding of a message is a barrier to communication. A manager has no greater responsibility than to develop effective communications. On the surface, the answer is relatively easy. Elements of communication have been identified as the communicator, the encoding, the message, the medium, the decoding, the receiver, and the feedback. If noise exists in these elements in any way, complete clarity of meaning and understanding do not occur.

Lussier (2003) noted that as messages are transmitted, receivers use their perception to translate the message so that it makes sense to them. He indicated that semantics and jargon could be communication barriers, because the same word often means different things to different people. For example, the term "wicked good" can be confusing to people not familiar with the term and who do not realize it means good. Gibson et al. (2003) shared similar opinion that because different people use words differently, communication can often be

impeded especially when abstract or technical terms or phrases are used. Thus, because words mean different things to different people, a communicator may speak the same language as a receiver but still not transmit understanding.

Farace and Monge (1977) noted that communication overload occurs when the individual cannot process incoming communication as rapidly as it arrives or as the person would like it to be processed. Again, Farace and Monge indicated that research done on the effects of communication overload indicate that if an individual who has been processing a certain amount of communication suddenly finds that far more communication is being presented for processing than is customary, stress symptoms may emerge.

Lussier (2003) indicated that people have a limit on the amount of information they can understand at any given time. When, therefore, people in organizations are loaded with information, they are unable to make use of them all. To support this, Gibson et al. (2003) stated that because managers often are loaded with information and cannot adequately respond to them all, they screen out majority of the messages, which in effect means that these messages are never decoded. Thus in the area of organizational communication, "more is not always "better" (p.430).

In an organization, a message is transmitted through any of these channels, oral, nonverbal or written. Lussier (2003) noted that the use of inappropriate channels could result in missed communication. Armstrong (1995) stated that noise that occurs during the transmission of a message could disturb or confuse the receiver. In the view of Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), communication noise is a

barrier to effective communication, because it interferes with the accurate transmission and reception of a message.

During communication, receivers take into account the trust they have in the senders as well as their credibility. Moss and Martinko (1998) noted that when receivers do not trust senders, and when they do not believe senders know what they are talking about, receivers are reluctant to accept the message. Gibson et al. (2003) had similar opinion. They stated that the level of credibility that the receiver assigns to the communicator affects how the receiver views and reacts to the communicator's words, ideas and actions. Thus subordinates' evaluation of their superior affects how they view communication from him or her.

Lussier (2003) noted that people usually hear what the sender is saying but often they do not listen to the message or understand what is being transmitted. Lussier, therefore, attributes poor listening to not paying attention. Filtering is the process of altering or distorting information to project a more favourable image. Gibson et al. (2003) indicated that filtering is a common occurrence in upward communication in organizations where information is manipulated so that the receiver perceives it as positive. They gave an example that subordinates "cover up" unfavourable information in messages to their superiors. McShane and vonGlinow (2003) indicated filtering might involve deleting or delaying negative information or using less harsh words so that events sound more favourable. They note that employees and supervisors usually filter communication to create good impression of themselves to superiors, adding that

filtering is most common where the organization rewards employees who communicate mainly positive information.

Armstrong (1995) noted that status differences that are shown through titles, offices, carpets and so on in some organizations could be perceived as threats by employees in the lower hierarchy and this can prevent or distort communication. For example, the Chief Executive Officer and some other officers may be accessible only by appointment. This could widen the communication between superiors and subordinates. In order to have effective communication, organizations should find means of improving their communication practices that would enable them achieve their goals and objectives.

Improving Communication in Organizations

Communication in an organization needs to be improved in order to ensure the smooth running of the organization. Hamilton and Parker (1991) observed that research indicates that managers spend somewhere between 50% and 80% of their total time communicating in one way or the other. This is not surprising, since communication is so critical to everything that goes on in an organization. Torrington and Hall (1995) noted that without effective communication there could be little or no performance management innovation feedback loop.

To overcome perception problems, Lussier (2003) stated that the communicator need to consider how the other person will most likely perceive the message and try to encode and transmit it appropriately. Messmer (1999)

indicated that the choice of words is important in this case, adding that the jargons should not be used for people who are not familiar with the terminology, especially people from countries with different cultures. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) noted that the easiest way to reduce semantic barriers is for managers to choose their words more carefully. For example, instead of stating that "crime is ubiquitous", people should state that "crime is all around us". To ensure clarity in messages that travel within an organization, McLeod (2004) stated that managers should avoid making the communication harder to understand than it has to be. She added that even when the communicator may have an extensive vocabulary, he or she must use simple words and relate them to concepts that most people can easily understand because if communicators are unable to explain themselves clearly and concisely, they do more harm than good to their subordinates.

Lussier (2003) indicated that to overcome communication overload, messages should be sent in a quantity that the receiver could understand. According to him, managers striving to become better communicators must accomplish two separate tasks. First, they must improve their messages – the information they wish to transmit. Second, they must seek to improve their own understanding of what other people try to communicate to them. This means that they must become better encoders and decoders.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) noted that feedback is an important element in effective two-way communication because it provides a channel for receiver response that enable the communicator to determine whether the message has

been received and has produced the intended response. This means that upward communication would be encouraged, thus making downward communication effective. Armstrong (1995) stated that while a well-considered annual formal performance evaluation is a valuable communication tool, managers should not limit feedback to a once-a-year event because employees want an opportunity to develop and improve throughout the year. The provision of continuing, constructive on-the-job evaluations focusing on situations as they arise will, therefore, help. In addition to giving assessment, Hamilton and Parker (1991) stated that managers should solicit feedback from employees in order to determine their needs as far as their work is concerned.

According to Lussier (2003) some organizations are de-emphasizing status differences to encourage more open supervisor-subordinate communication. Others are actively encouraging employees to ask questions not only about objective facts but also about the reasons and motives behind those facts. To ensure that communication is improved in organizations, Smeltzer et al. (2002) stated that managers should not continue to use the same channels of communication that are comfortable for them but inappropriate.

Summary of the Chapter

As can be seen from the reviewed literature, communication in organizations takes into account all the means, that is, both formal and informal. This information is passed up, down and across the network of administrators and employees in a business. These various modes of communication may be used to disseminate official information between employees and management, to

exchange hearsay and rumours, or anything in between. From the literature, it has been noted that formal communication must be supported by informal communication; that management should encourage employees to contribute to the success of their organization through suggestions, opinion sharing and so on. Again, from the reviewed literature, it is noted that the grapevine can be both useful and harmful in an organization.

Literature reviewed also indicated that organizational size could be a barrier to communication. Also the literature reviewed revealed that feedback is very important in the communication process. It also revealed that the success of communication in an organization often depends on how well administrators and employees can 'read' the silent messages from others.

The study of the perceptions of senior staff on the communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators, therefore, dealt with factors that enhance communication practices in a complex organization such as the University of Cape Coast. The study looked at the directions of communication in the University of Cape Coast, that is, whether communication was perceived as downward only, or whether upward communication was encouraged, according to the perceptions of the senior staff used in the study. The media of communication was also considered. The study looked at the most frequently used media for communicating within the University as perceived by the senior staff.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the method followed to conduct the research. It describes the research design, the population and sample, the instruments used and the procedures followed in the data collection. It also highlights the process followed in analyzing the data.

Research Design

Since the study was directed toward assessment of current ideas, opinions and perceptions of senior staff about the practice of organizational communication in the University of Cape Coast, the descriptive survey design was considered appropriate for use. As Anderson (1990) recommended, a descriptive survey is conducted where the researcher attempts to reach a sample of the desired group and collect detailed data from respondents. In descriptive survey, events are simply described. According to Gay (1987), descriptive design deals with questions about things as they stand currently. It is used when the objective is to provide a systematic description that is as factual and accurate as possible. It provides the number of times or the frequency at which something occurs. It also lends itself to statistical calculations such as determining the average number of occurrences or central tendencies.

Information gathered from descriptive research is useful in finding answers to questions through the analysis since it involves describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting situations, as they exist. Babbie (1992) supported the use of descriptive design when he stated that descriptive design is an excellent means of measuring attitudes and orientation in a large population and allows the researcher the opportunity to ask many questions on a given topic, thus giving enough flexibility in the analysis. Descriptive research data are usually collected through the administration of questionnaire, interviews or observation. Peil (1995) indicated that with descriptive surveys, questions can be asked personally through interviews, or impersonally through questionnaire at phenomena which cannot be easily observed as well as attitude and behaviour. Descriptive research survey has some characteristics that are strengths of the design.

As a method of research, Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1979) indicated that the design simply looks at the phenomena under consideration with intense accuracy and describes precisely what is observed and seen. In the view of Best and Kahn (2003) descriptive research uses the logical methods of inductive-deductive reasoning to arrive at generalizations; it often employs methods of randomization so that error may be estimated when population characteristics are inferred from observations of samples. The variables and procedures are described as accurately and completely as possible so that other researchers can replicate the study.

Since descriptive survey deals with facts, opinions, attitudes or perceptions, it has been chosen for this study because the researcher is

investigating, among other things, the perception of senior staff on the nature of communication structure and its effectiveness on their job performance. The use of the descriptive survey, therefore, enabled the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions from the study about communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators. Both primary and secondary information were required in the study. Primary information was gathered from the staff concerned to know their ideas, opinions and perceptions on the topic through interviews and self-administered questionnaire. Secondary information was obtained from selected related literature as well as files and documents of the University.

The descriptive research design however has some weaknesses. For instance, it is non-experimental because it deals with the relationship among non-manipulated variables when events or conditions have already occurred. Another limitation of the descriptive research is that it cannot help determine what causes a specific behaviour or occurrence. In other words, it cannot establish a causal relationship between variables.

Despite the limitations of the descriptive survey design stated in the preceding paragraph, it was considered the best design to adopt for the present study because it uses the logical methods of inductive-deductive reasoning to arrive at generalizations. Also, descriptive survey design often employs methods of randomization so that error may be estimated when population characteristics are inferred from observations of samples. The variables and procedures in descriptive survey design are described accurately and completely as possible so

that other researchers can replicate the study. Finally, descriptive survey deals with facts, opinions, attitudes or perceptions.

Population

The target population consisted of all 443 senior staff in the University of Cape Coast, namely, Chief Administrative Assistants (CAA), Principal Administrative Assistants (PAA), Senior Administrative Assistants (SAA) and Administrative Assistants (AA) deployed at the Central Administration and in the Faculties, Schools and Units as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Population by Rank and Faculty/School/Unit

Faculty/School	Rank				Total
	CAA	PAA	SAA	AA	
Education	2	5	42	15	64
Arts	3	2	39	4	48
Social Sciences	-	7	23	4	34
Science	-	6	57	7	70
Business	-	2	10	1	13
Agriculture	1	2	11	6	20
Central Administration	14	53	85	41	194
Total	20	78	267	72	443

Source: Official staff list from the Division of Human Resource, UCC.

Sample

The sample consisted of 310 respondents, constituting 70% of the population distributed as in Table 2. The 70% of the population which was used as the sample size was based on the statement by Nwana (1992) that if the population is in hundreds, 40% and above could be used as the sample. The sample of the various ranks was done according to proportion. A sampling fraction was used in selecting samples from each of the ranks. For example, in the case of the Chief Administrative Assistants (CAAs), the total population of 20 was divided by the total number of senior staff and multiplied by the total number of the sample size. This gave the researcher a total of 14 CAAs. In order to get the 14 CAAs, the researcher purposively selected the two CAAs in the Faculty of Education, all the three from the Faculty of Arts, and the one from the School of Agriculture because they were few. The remaining 14 CAAs were randomly selected from the Central Administration.

Sampling Procedure

The researcher contacted the Division of Human Resource for the staff list. The selection of staff was done through simple random sampling. Names of staff for each Faculty/School/Unit were typed, cut into pieces and folded and put in a box, which was shaken to mix up the papers, after which the required number was picked.

Names of all the fourteen Chief Administrative Assistants in the Central Administration were typed and cut into pieces and folded and put in a box and shaken to mix up the papers, after which the required number of 14 was picked.

This was done because the researcher considered the fact that majority of the CAAs could be found in the Central Administration, which included the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Registrar's Office, Division of Human Resource, Division of Public Affairs, Directorate of Finance, and the Directorate of Audit.

The selection of the Principal Administrative Assistants (PAAs) followed a similar pattern. The selection was done proportionally. A sampling fraction was used to obtain 55 out of the total number of 78 PAAs. Thus, 78 was divided by the total number of senior staff, which is 443 and multiplied by the sample size of 310, which gave 55 as the answer. In order not to lose them in the sample due to their small size, all the PAAs in the Faculties of Education, Arts, Social Sciences, Science and the Schools of Business and Agriculture were purposively included in the sample. The remaining 31 were randomly selected from the Central Administration. Names of Principal Administrative Assistants in the Central Administration were typed and cut into pieces and folded and put in a box and shaken to mix up the papers, after which the required number of 31 was picked.

With regard to the selection of the Senior Administrative Assistants (SAAs), only SAAs in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Schools of Business and Agriculture making up a total of 44 were purposively selected because they were few as compared to the size in the other faculties. A total of 22 SAAs were randomly selected from the Faculty of Education, 20 from the Faculty of Arts, 25 from the Faculty of Science and 76 from the Central Administration. This gave a

total of 143. In each case, names of the SAAs in the Faculty or Unit were typed and cut into pieces and folded. This was put in a box and shaken before the required number was picked.

In a similar way, senior staff in the Administrative Assistant (AA) category were selected and included in the sample. All the AAs in the Faculties of Arts, Social Science, Science as well as the Schools of Business and Agriculture were purposively included in the sample. Again, this was done because the staff in those Faculties and Schools were few as compared to those in other Faculties and Unit. Ten AAs were randomly selected from the Faculty of Education and 18 AAs were selected from the Central Administration. To select the AAs from the Faculty of Education, the names of the staff were taken and typed and cut into pieces and folded. After the names had been typed and cut into pieces and folded, they were put in a small box, shaken and picked until all the ten were got. Similarly, names of AAs in the Central Administration were typed and cut into pieces and folded. They were then picked until the required number of eighteen was obtained. Table 2 shows the distribution of samples and respondents by Faculty, School, Unit and Rank.

Table 2**Distribution of Sample by Faculty/School/Unit and Rank**

Faculty/School	Rank				Total
	CAA	PAA	SAA	AA	
Education	2	5	22	10	39
Arts	3	2	20	4	29
Social Sciences	-	7	23	4	34
Science	-	6	25	7	38
Business	-	2	10	1	13
Agriculture	1	2	11	6	20
Central Administration	8	31	77	18	133
Total	14	55	187	50	306

Source: Official staff list from the Human Resource Division, UCC.

Research Instruments

Three instruments were used for the research. These are questionnaire, interview schedule and personal observation checklist. The choice of items of the questionnaire was guided by literature and the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was used because the researcher considered it to be more convenient as respondents could take it home and answer at their convenience. The questionnaire (Appendix A) began with an introductory statement, which specified the purpose of the research as purely academic. Respondents were encouraged to give frank responses by assuring them of confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). In Section

A, respondents were asked to give personal information such as gender, rank and length of service in the University. Section B sought answers on issues such as the channels of communication most frequently used by UCC administrators and how the communication practices facilitate or impede their job performance. The questionnaire was structured in the form of closed-ended questions and respondents were required to respond to them appropriately. Altogether, there were 37 questionnaire items.

The closed-ended items consisted of statements from which the respondents were expected to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement. This was done on a 4-point Likert type scale. The scores were coded 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The respondents were free to respond to the questions to the best of their ability. The development of the closed-ended questions as well as open-ended questions helped in answering the research questions. Majority of the items were closed-ended. Some few open-ended items were included in the interview guide to enable the respondents express their opinions. The closed-ended questions were easy to use and scored for the purpose of analysis. It ensured standardization because respondents answered the same statement. The open-ended questions, however, allowed more individualized responses (Frankel & Wallen, 2000).

The questionnaire items were designed to answer the research questions enumerated in chapter one. Questionnaire item 1 took care of the gender of respondents. Item 2 on the questionnaire provided the number of years

respondents have worked in the University. Responses to this item were used to construct a frequency distribution of length of service of respondents. It also enabled the researcher to compare the responses of staff that have been in the service of the University for fifteen years and above with staff who have worked for fourteen years or less. The rank of respondents was taken care of by questionnaire item 3.

Responses to questionnaire items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 provided the necessary data to answer Research Question which dealt with the channels of communication used by University of Cape Coast administrators. Questionnaire items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 provided data, which was used to answer Research Question 2. This was on senior staff perception of the communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators. The data gathered from questionnaire items 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 was used to answer Research Question 3. Responses to questionnaire items 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 provided the necessary data to answer research question 4 which was on barriers associated with communication practices of UCC administrators. The data gathered from questionnaire items 36, 37, 38 and 39 was used to answer research question 5 which dealt with the means used by UCC administrators to (a) provide and (b) receive communication feedback.

Pre-testing of Instruments

The instruments were pre-tested to ascertain their validity and reliability at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), where the researcher thought that the sample would mimic the actual sample that was chosen for the study. The

questionnaire was administered to a total of 50 staff from the Central Administration, which included the Development Office, Finance Section, Internal Audit Section and the Registrar's Office. Other staff that answered the questionnaire were from the Faculty of Science Education, College of Agriculture Education and the Faculty of General Culture and Social Studies Education. The distribution of the questionnaire was done with the help of the Chief Administrative Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant at the Registrar's Office. Forty-five copies of the questionnaire were retrieved after all the necessary briefing and procedure had been followed. The pre-test enabled the researcher gain insight into how the selected staff would respond to the questionnaire (that is, talking about the validity of the data – the type of answers the researcher was looking for), as well its reliability - the extent to which the respondents consistently gave certain answers.

The pre-test also provided the researcher with ideas about anticipated difficulties such as length of time people would use to answer the questions. Based on the pre-test, some of the items were reframed and modified and others were deleted. For example, the word 'grapevine' was replaced with 'rumours' because most of the respondents did not understand it. There was also a question on how often administrators communicate with staff that was deleted. The pre-test helped in making needed alterations in the data collecting methods and provided an opportunity to redesign parts of the study to overcome difficulties that the pretest revealed. The pre-test also provided data for the researcher to determine the reliability of the instrument. In the case of the questionnaire, an

overall Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained, suggesting that the instrument was reliable.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher visited the selected faculties and departments and administered the instruments. In each faculty/department/section visited, the researcher presented the letter of introduction from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) to either the Faculty Officer or an accredited administrative staff. The officer then introduced the researcher. This usually took place during break time or getting to closing time. The researcher then went through the entire questionnaire with the staff after which they were given to them to complete. The questionnaire was preceded by an introduction explaining the purpose of the study to the respondents as well as assurance of confidentiality and anonymity to the respondents. The researcher retrieved the answered questionnaires herself. She visited the faculties, and departments to collect the filled questionnaires. In some cases, the researcher had to give out fresh copies of the questionnaire to staff that had misplaced theirs. Out of the 306 questionnaires administered, 272 (85%) were retrieved from the staff. In all, the researcher took three weeks to collect all the completed questionnaires.

Structured interview were conducted for some selected senior staff who were either Chief Administrative Assistants or Principal Administrative Assistants. This was done with the aid of an interview guide (Appendix B). The interview was structured because the researcher used a standard set of questions

for all staff that were interviewed. This made it easier for the interviewer to evaluate the perception of the individual staff.

Prior notification was given to those the researcher wanted to interview. Arrangements were made with the staff who were interviewed at times that were convenient to them. After the dates had been fixed, the researcher met and asked each of the interviewees the same questions. To ensure reliability of the interview data, the researcher went back or contacted the interviewees and read to them the answers they provided. This was to check on the accuracy of the interview.

The researcher also made personal observations in ten departments using an observation checklist in order to compare opinions of some senior staff on the communication practices. A checklist was prepared from which comparisons were made with what was observed. Items on the checklist included the channel of communication heads of departments use with their staff, means through which heads receive and provide feedback, how long files stay in the head's office, among others (See Appendix C).

With regard to the observation, the researcher sought permission from Deans of Faculties and Heads of Department and undertook a non-participatory observation of the communication practices in the Faculties and Departments. The researcher observed, for example, heads of department's means of communicating with their staff; how incoming letters were received; what happened after receiving them, how long letters stayed in the Head of Department's office, as well as how often Heads give their staff written and verbal instructions (personally or through the intercom). The observation was

both structured and non-structured. With the structured observation, the researcher prepared a checklist, which she used to check whether the offices followed her list of items to be observed. Notes were taken of them.

Data Analysis

Data gathered for the study was analysed statistically in most cases. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 10.0 was used in the analysis. The items on the questionnaire were first coded and scored. The questionnaire items were then fed into the computer, using the SPSS 10.0. The responses to the questionnaire items were also fed into the computer. Since the questionnaire items had been coded and scored, the responses that corresponded to the scores given were put under the respective codes given to the questionnaire items.

With the open-ended items, the responses were grouped and coded appropriately. With questionnaire item 3 for example, where respondents had to state their rank, the ranks were grouped into 4 categories. Those who were Administrative Assistants were coded 1; those who were in the Senior Administrative Assistant categories were coded 2. Those who fell under the Principal Administrative Assistant group were coded 3. The Chief Administrative Assistants were coded under 4. Since the questionnaire items had been coded and scored, the responses that corresponded to the scores given were put under the respective codes given to the questionnaire items. The data were then analysed using the SPSS 10.0 computer package in response to the research questions. To

make issues clearer, tables and quantitative analysis involving frequencies and percentages were used in the analysis of the data.

The interview data that was recorded was transcribed and grouped into patterns or themes to check the frequencies of occurrences of each item or pattern. The patterns were re-organized to tally with the research questions after which analysis were made to see whether there were differences in the answers given by the CAAs/PAAAs and those of the other categories of senior staff as provided in the questionnaire. The same pattern was followed for the observation. The researcher tallied the frequencies of occurrences with the answers from the questionnaire and the structured interview to see whether the result of the observation confirmed or denied the answers that had been provided. To answer Research Question 6, the data from questionnaire item 2 were cross-tabulated with data from questionnaire items 4-36. The results of the data analysis are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to examine the perception of University of Cape Coast senior staff on the communication practices of administrators. A structured questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the sampled senior staff. In addition, some of the most senior officers in the senior staff category were interviewed. Observation was also made in selected offices on the communication practices of administrators. This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the study. The presentation of the findings is based on the research questions that covered such issues as the channels of communication most frequently used by University of Cape Coast administrators and communication practices which facilitate or impede the performance of the senior staff.

Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents who provided data for the study comprised 68% males and 31.4% females. The representation of the sexes in the first instance was to get the views of both male and female senior staff of the University. Table 3 shows the length of service of staff who participated in the study.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents by Length of Service

Length of Service	%
15 years or more	50
14 year or less	50

Table 3 indicates that 50% of respondents are staff that have worked in the University for 15 years or more. The remaining 50% of respondents have been in the service of the University for between three and fourteen years. The distribution, which involved all the Faculties and Schools in the University, as well as all the categories of senior staff, that is, Administrative Assistants, Senior Administrative Assistants, Principal Administrative Assistants and Chief Administrative Assistants and their analogous grades, was to give each group the opportunity to express their opinions on the administrators' communication practices.

Senior Staff's Perception on Channels of Communication

Most Frequently Used by Administrators

Research Question 1: What are the channels of communication most frequently used by University of Cape Coast administrators?

There are several channels for organizational communication. In many cases, administrators tend to use more than one channel. The research question sought to find out what senior staff of the University of Cape Coast perceived as the most frequently used channels or media of communication heads of

department use when communicating with them. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Views of Senior Staff Regarding Channels of Communication Most Frequently used by Administrators (in percentage)

Statement	Response in Percentages				
	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Authorities send info. thro' Union reps.	5.8	56.6	30.4	7.2	100
Communication is mainly downward	8.1	52.0	37.6	2.3	100
Authorities or administrators encourage upward communication.	11.6	67.5	19.2	1.7	100
Heads give staff verbal instructions.	30.0	46.7	11.7	11.6	100
Heads give written instructions.	11.6	67.5	19.2	1.7	100
Heads give both written and verbal instructions.	5.8	69.8	20.9	3.5	100
Staff get information through rumours.	8.2	57.0	32.5	2.3	100
Horizontal communication is used.	43.9	35.8	15.6	4.1	100

Note: The attention of the researcher has been drawn to the use of such responses options as: usually, sometimes; and often, as perceptions. While the suggestion is appreciated, it is preferred that the responses in the table remain as they are since any change may not reflect the meanings that the respondents might have had.

As shown in Table 4, the most frequently used channel of communication in the University of Cape Coast as perceived by the senior staff is written communication. The table shows that 79.1 % of respondents agreed that heads of department give staff verbal instructions to perform their duties. Only 23.3 % of

respondents disagreed to the statement. The result gives an indication that staff can ask for clarifications regarding instructions for the performance of their duties because they are able to meet and talk with their heads of department. The finding harmonises with the views of Ahuja (1988) that oral communication is timely and current as it often informs managers about immediate problems or opportunities, adding that because managers need to communicate quickly and receive information that is currently useful, they heavily favour oral communication. This view also supports Gibson et al. (2003) who indicated that instructions, guidelines and policies must be communicated verbally to subordinates in most work situations.

The finding is also consistent with the view of Fowler (2006) that in the workplace, verbal and non-verbal communications are continually exchanged, oftentimes without much planning or even the thought that such communications are taking place. This suggests that oral communication can take place even when administrators do not intend to use that medium.

The second most frequently used channel of communication is through writing. As much as 75.6 % of the respondents agreed to the statement that heads give staff written instructions. The table reveals that majority of the respondents have similar perceptions on the use of written communication in the University of Cape Coast. This written communication can be in the form of letters, notices, circulars and memos.

A total of 65.2 % respondents agreed to the statement that staff get some information through rumours. Out of this percentage, 8.2% strongly agreed and

57.0 % agreed to the statement. Bennet (1997) has indicated that although the grapevine can sometimes be suppressed through management providing clear, accurate and comprehensive information to employees, certain management consciously decides to allow a grapevine to survive because it provides fast and effective means of distributing news. Also, views which management might not want to be made known officially can be made known through the grapevine. It might be that because certain information cannot be got from the authorities, staff are compelled to use other means in getting such information. This is in line with the view of Delaney (2000) that the grapevine exists, always has, and always will and cannot be stopped.

McLeod's (2004) work is also supported by this finding. She stated that gossip and rumour are prevalent in information communication, and that the employer has an obligation to negate this type of communication as it can quickly lead to apprehension and anxiety and so on. She concluded that the best way to nip gossip in the bud is through formal, planned, periodic company communications between management and staff. Administrators should accept the fact that the grapevine cannot be eradicated. They should, therefore, decide how they could use it to their benefits.

Bennet (1997), however, added that the obvious disadvantages of the grapevine system are its tendency to distort reality. It could also be used maliciously to initiate unsavoury rumours because there is no mechanism for checking the validity of the information transmitted or for refusing falsehood.

Senior Staff's Perception on Communication Practices of UCC Administrators

Research Question 2: How do senior staff perceive the communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators?

To answer Research Question 2, views of respondents were solicited regarding the communication practices that are prevalent in the UCC administration. The results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5
Opinions of Senior Staff Regarding Administrators' Communication Practices (in percentage)

Statement Practices	Responses in Percentages				
	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Staff communicate with heads by expressing their opinions verbally.	8.7	62.8	26.7	1.8	100
Staff contribute their ideas through verbal communication.	14.5	63.4	20.9	1.2	100
Authorities give verbal information to staff through Union leaders.	4.6	34.9	54.7	5.8	100
Administrators communicate to staff through meetings.	7.0	39.5	40.7	12.8	100
Heads give verbal instructions to staff.	38.3	31.7	26.7	3.4	100
Administrators use more than one medium when communicating.	13.4	65.0	18.3	3.3	100
The rumour mill is a regular source of information to staff.	26.7	61.0	10.8	1.5	100
Administrators regularly use memos when communicating with staff.	19.0	59.0	17.1	4.9	100

Table 5 shows that 71.5 % of the respondents agreed to the statement that administrators encourage opinions from staff. Whereas 8.7 % strongly agreed to

the statement, 62.8 % agreed. This gives the indication that the views of the majority of staff are heard. As reported by Gibson et al (2003) many have argued that companies that offer and encourage participation in such family-friendly work arrangements will reap such benefits as higher recruitment and retention rates, improved morale, lower absenteeism and tardiness, and higher levels of employee productivity.

The finding supports the views shared by Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) that upward channels allow for information flow from subordinates to superior and this two-way system greatly aids the manager in learning what is going on in the organization. The finding, however, contradicts that of Foehrenbach and Campbell (2000). In their studies, employees placed upward communication programmes near the bottom of the list of current sources of information.

Table 5 also indicates that 53.5 % of the respondents disagreed to the statement that administrators hold formal meetings with their staff. The implication is that upward communication cannot be said to be very effective in the University. This is as a result of majority of workers' inability to come out with suggestions and opinions through official staff meetings. Official meetings are mostly held with academic staff only. Kinard (1988) stressed that managers who isolate themselves from what is happening below them are asking for trouble, adding that besides touch with reality, they fail to maintain close rapport with their subordinates.

This assertion is supported by Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) that improvement in upward communication system can be useful in tapping the full human resources potential of many creative employees, who until now have been

reluctant to express their ideas or recommend unique solutions to problems because they felt that management would not be appreciative.

Senior Staff's Perception on Effects of Administrators'

Communication Practices

Research Question 3: How do the communication practices of administrators facilitate or impede the performance of senior staff?

The study examined respondents' perceptions about the effects of the communication practices of administrators on the job performance of the senior staff. Table 6 provides a summary response in the identified area.

Table 6

Opinions of Senior Staff Regarding the Effects of Communication Practices

Statement Effects	Responses in Percentages				
	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Staff understand job instructions administrators communicate.	4.7	68.0	20.3	6.4	100
Heads communicate with staff to work with little supervision.	23.6	52.7	14.5	9.1	100
Heads use gestures to encourage staff to make suggestions.	1.8	34.5	50.9	12.7	100
Written communications are timely.	2.9	34.3	59.9	2.3	100
Written communications delay.	37.8	45.9	11.6	4.7	100
Heads delegate to staff through verbal and written communication.	12.8	55.8	26.7	4.1	100

As can be seen from Table 6, a majority of respondents (83.7 %) agreed to the statement that replies to some letters delay. This finding suggest that certain actions are either taken rather late or not taken at all due to the delays in getting

certain notices. For example, if the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, the Dean or the Head of department delays in signing a letter that needs prompt action, it will mean that the intended action will be delayed.

It is observed from Table 6 that 72.7 % of the respondents agreed to the statement that staff understand job instructions administrators communicate to them. This implies that the job performance of staff is made easier through the communication practices of administrators. This suggests that they are familiar with their work environment and they are able to make use of the various resources needed for their work. The finding confirms the views of Gibson et al. (2003) that "the employee-centered leader focuses on the people doing the work ...and spells out ways of getting the job done" (p.304). The findings of this study confirms the studies by Freeman et al. (2000) that effective communication is associated with high performance of work. It was also noted from Table 6 that 70.1 % of respondents agreed that staff perform their duties with little supervision. Undoubtedly, staff with clear job instructions will work with little supervision.

However, from Table 6, majority of respondents (64.6%) disagreed that staff are encouraged to make suggestions. The data gathered suggest that downward communication is prevalent in the University of Cape Coast. The finding is in contrast to Curry's (2004) suggestions that managers should encourage employees to send their complaints upwards and should operate an open door policy that permits employees to ask questions.

Opinions of Respondents on Barriers to Administrators'

Communication Practices

Research Question 4: What are the barriers to effective communication practices of UCC administrators?

The question of whether senior staff were of the opinion that there were barriers associated with communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators was also examined. The responses from the senior staff are provided in Table 7.

Table 7

Views of Respondents on Barriers to Communication Practices

Statement	Responses in Percentage				
Barriers	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Some staff do not understand job instructions.	4.8	24.8	56.2	14.2	100
Staff receive too many instructions from their heads.	15.2	49.4	22.1	8.4	100
Heads do not listen to staff complaints.	13.3	26.7	53.3	6.7	100
Letters from administrators are received late.	22.6	54.5	15.5	7.4	100
The large size of the University affects its dissemination of information.	20.2	49.4	28.1	7.3	100
Heads frown their faces when giving verbal instructions.	11.7	36.2	48.0	4.1	100
Staff cannot approach heads because of their positions.	41.7	11.3	39.6	7.4	100

Table 7 acknowledges the presence of barriers in the communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators. Even though respondents indicated the presence of barriers, some of the barriers were seen as greater barriers to communication than others. For example, looking at the extent of seriousness of these barriers, it can be seen that the most serious barrier of communication in the University is the delay of letters and notices that are received late. The Table 7 reveals that 77.1% of respondents agreed to the statement that notices are at times received late.

The second most serious barrier, as it can be seen from Table 7 is the size of the University, which tends to affect its information distribution. The table shows that 69.6% of respondents agreed that the size of the University is a barrier to communication. This may be attributed to the fact that some staff work on shift bases. Staff on night duty, for example, may not see letters that came in during the day. Hanson (1996) confirmed this by stating that large complex educational organizations have huge volumes of paper flowing through them at any given moment, adding that in a large volume of paper flow, there is always the chance that a message will get lost. They concluded that the more hierarchical levels and separate units involved, the more difficult it is to compete for someone's attention.

The third barrier as shown in Table 7 indicated that 64.6 % of respondents agreed to the statement that some staff receive too much communication. Farace and Monge (1977) indicated that overload occurs when the individual or higher system cannot process incoming communication as rapidly as it arrives, or as

rapidly as the person would like it to be processed (that is, when input exceed capacity). For this reason, it can be said that majority of respondents were over utilized.

It is shown in Table 7, however, that majority of respondents (70.4 %) disagreed to the statement that staff do not understand instructions given them. Gibson and Hodgetts (1990) indicated that the most important lesson to be learned in semantics is that meaning is not in words; meaning is in people since communication is the transfer of meaning, not in words. The implication is that staff are able to work as expected of them since they understand their job instructions.

Table 7 also indicates that heads of departments listen to their staff complaints. This view is supported by Lussier (2004) who indicated that listening is one of the most important skills in business. Managers need to practice in order to develop active listening skills that encourage others to be more communicative (Moss & Martinko, 1998).

Senior Staff's Perception on Administrators' Means of Providing and Receiving Feedback

Research Question 5: What are the means used by UCC administrators to
(a) provide and (b) receive communication feedback?

The research question sought to find out the perceptions of senior staff on the means administrators use in providing and receiving feedback in the University of Cape Coast. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8**Opinions of Staff on Means of Providing and Receiving Feedback (in percentage)**

Statement Means	Responses in Percentage				
	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Administrators respond to staff's suggestions through letters.	1.2	62.2	32.0	4.0	100
Administrators give feedback by means of the telephone.	2.9	34.3	59.9	2.3	100
Administrators get feedback through face-to-face interactions.	7.0	77.8	14.0	.6	100
Administrators get feedback through letters.	5.8	69.8	20.9	2.9	100

Table 8 reveals that respondents perceive that administrators major means of getting feedback is through face-to-face interaction. A majority of respondents (84.8%) agreed to that statement.

With regard to the statement that administrators respond to staff through letters, 62.4 % of respondents agreed. It could be seen that 62.2 % of respondents disagreed to the statement that administrators give feedback through the use of the telephone, indicating that only 37.2 % of respondents agreed to the statement. This could be attributed to the fact that there are not many telephone facilities in the faculties and departments. It could also be inferred from the study that administrators do not make use of the telephones available in communicating with the staff of the University. Table 8 also indicates that 84.8% of respondents agreed to the statement that administrators receive face-to-face feedback from

staff. It can be deduced from the result that administrators make good use of verbal communication when giving feedback in the University.

It thus becomes easy for staff to show whether they understand the communication through their facial expressions. The result corroborates the observation made by Gibson et al. (2003) that in face-to-face situations, direct feedback through verbal exchanges ensures facial expressions, which are particularly important communicators of a person's feelings.

Again, from Table 8, it can be seen that a total of 75.6 % of the respondents agreed to the statement that administrators get feedback through written replies. However, 23.8% of respondents disagreed with the statement.

Senior Staff's Perception on their Length of Service in the University and Its Influence on Channels of Communication used by Administrators

Research Question 6: Does the length of service in the University influence perception of senior staff on:

- a) Channels of communication?
- b) Communication practices?
- c) Effect of communication on job performance?
- d) Barriers to administrators' communication practices?
- e) Administrators' means of providing and receiving feedback?

In order to answer the Research Question, the data from questionnaire item 2 were cross tabulated with data from questionnaire items 4-36. The researcher wishes to state here that no literature was found on the length of service

of employees and its influence of organizational communication. The results are presented in Tables 9-13.

Table 9

Opinions of Senior Staff Regarding their Length of Service and its Influence on their Perceptions of Channels of Communication most Frequently used.

Statement	Years							
	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+
Channels	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Authorities send info. Through Union reps.	4.6	7.0	72.0	60.8	21.0	28.0	2.4	4.2
Communication is mainly downward.	17.6	16.2	40.6	38.2	34.4	43.2	6.4	2.4
Authorities encourage upward communication.	7.0	9.2	59.4	54.8	25.2	33.6	8.4	2.4
Heads give staff verbal instructions.	10.4	12.6	76.4	68.4	10.8	17.4	2.4	1.6
Heads give staff written instructions.	16.4	11.6	60.0	66.6	14.2	14.6	9.4	7.2
Heads give both written and verbal instructions.	23.6	22.0	67.4	70.8	8.0	5.4	1.2	1.8
Staff get information through rumours.	10.8	13.6	52.8	56.0	26.2	24.4	10.2	6.0
Horizontal communication is used.	41.6	54.0	41.2	31.2	11.2	8.6	6.2	6.2

0-14 = respondents who have worked up to 14 years

15+ = respondents who have worked for 15 or more years

Table 9 shows that 76.6 % of respondents with less than 15 years service agreed that University authorities sometimes send information through the Union representatives. The table also shows that 67.8 % of respondents who have worked in the University for fifteen or more years also agreed to the statement that University authorities sometimes send information to staff through the union representatives. No literature has been found that has taken the dimension on communication practices regarding the length of service of staff in organizations to either support or contradict the finding from this research. It can, however, be inferred from the table that even though respondents from both categories of staff share the same opinion on the statement, more respondents from the less than 15 years of service agreed to the statement than those from the 15 or more years of service.

Again, Table 9 shows that a majority (86.8%) of respondents with fourteen or less years of service in the University agreed to the statement that administrators give staff verbal instructions. A total of 81.0% of respondents with fifteen years or more service also agreed to that statement. It can be seen from that table, however, that the younger staff tended to agree more on the statement than the older staff.

Table 9 further shows that 63.6% of the respondents in less than 15 years category were of the view that administrators and staff get some information through rumours. A total of 69.3% of respondents with 15 or more years of

service also agreed to the statement. The percentage of respondents with 15 or more years of service was, however, higher than that of respondents in the fourteen or less category. It can be deduced from this finding that staff in the University irrespective of their length of service make use of the rumour mill. This gives an indication that both old and new members of staff engage themselves in the 'little gossips' that go around from time to time. Both categories of staff are, therefore, likely to get some useful news from the grapevine such as dates for the payment of the monthly salaries or when the next salary arrears would be paid or even staff who are to be dismissed after appearing before the disciplinary committee.

Length of Service of Senior Staff and its Influence on Administrators' Communication Practices

Opinions of respondents were solicited regarding the communication practices that are in vogue in the University of Cape Coast administration. The views of respondents were related to their length of service. The results are indicated in Table 10.

Table 10

Opinions of Respondents on Length of Service and its Influence on Administrators' Communication Practices (in percentage)

Statement	Years							
	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+
Practices	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Staff communicate with heads by expressing their opinions	7.2	10.4	72.2	53.6	19.4	33.6	1.2	2.4
Staff communicate by contributing their ideas verbally	13.8	15.2	63.8	65.0	20.8	18.6	1.6	1.2
Info. Is passed through Union leaders.	4.8	4.6	33.6	36.8	52.8	55.8	8.8	2.8
Administrators communicate through meetings with staff.	5.8	8.8	38.4	33.2	39.4	49.6	16.4	8.4
Heads give staff verbal instructions.	19.2	11.8	52.2	74.0	22.8	10.2	5.8	4.0
Administrators use more than one medium of communication.	39.4	37.4	41.8	48.6	14.8	8.2	4.0	5.8

It is seen from Table 10 that 79.4 % of respondents with less than 15 years of service agreed to the statement that University administrators encourage

suggestions and opinions from staff. Majority (64.0%) of respondents with 15 or more years of service also shared the same view. It can be seen from Table 10 that even though both categories of respondents share the similar views, more respondents in the less than 15 years agreed to the statement than those with 15 years or more length of service. Table 10 also shows that the percentage of respondents agreeing to the statement that staff are allowed to contribute to the growth of their department and the University in both categories are the same. This implies that both new and old staff are encouraged to make with their suggestions and opinions.

On the statement that administrators hold formal meetings with their staff, the results show that 55.8% of respondents who have worked for less than 15 years disagreed that administrators hold formal meetings with staff. Table 10 also reveals that 58.0% of respondents with 15 years or more also disagreed to the statement that administrators hold formal meetings with staff. It can be deduced from this finding that majority of supporting staff do not get the chance to let their voices be heard. Ideas that they may wish to bring out through such meetings are left to die out.

Length of Service of Senior Staff and its Influence on the Effect of Communication on Job Performance

The study looked at the effects of the communication practices of administrators as perceived by senior staff of the University on the basis of their length of service. A summary response is provided in Table 11.

Table 11**Opinions of Respondents Regarding their Length of Service and its Effects on Communication and Job Performance (in percentage)**

Statement	Years							
	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+
Effects	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Staff understand job instructions.	9.2	8.8	68.2	66.6	16.0	18.8	6.4	5.8
Staff work with little supervision.	17.2	10.6	68.6	72.8	12.2	13.8	2.2	2.8
Staff are encouraged to make suggestions.	10.6	16.2	31.4	33.4	50.0	44.6	8.0	5.8
Written communications are timely.	3.6	4.6	31.2	18.2	63.4	67.0	2.8	5.8
Written communications delay.	12.2	16.8	54.6	56.8	32.0	19.6	1.2	6.8
Heads delegate through verbal communication.	5.4	6.8	71.4	70.8	22.0	15.6	1.2	6.8

From Table 11, it can be seen that 77.4 % of respondents with less than 15 years of service agreed to the statement that staff job performance is made easier, revealing that only 22.4 % of respondents disagreed to the statement. Again, Table 11 shows that 75.4 % of respondents with less than 15 years of service also agreed to the statement. The result indicated that majority of respondents in both categories shared the same view on the statement. Table 11 also shows that 85.8%

of respondents with less than 15 years of service agreed to the statement that staff perform their duties with little supervision because heads give clear instructions. Table 11 shows that 83.4 % of respondents with 15 or more years of service also agreed to the statement. The result reveals that both respondents in the two categories agree that they work with little supervision. It is therefore not surprising that their job performance is easier.

Again from Table 11, it can be seen that 75.2 % of respondents with less than 15 years of service disagreed that circulars and notices are always received on time. A total of 72.8% of respondents with fifteen years or more service also disagreed to the statement. The results indicate that the perceptions of both categories of staff on the statement are not too different. It can be inferred from the finding that certain actions delayed as a result of the delay in receiving certain information in the University. Table 11 also reveals that 76.8 % of respondents with less than 15 years of service agreed that staff are encouraged to take certain initiatives. The results imply that there is delegation of authority in the University of Cape Coast. This degree of authority could, however, be relatively high or low (Alexander, 1991).

Length of Service of Senior Staff and its Influence on Barriers to

Administrators' Communication Practices

The barriers to communication practices of University administrators were examined in accordance with the length of service of respondents. The results are provided in Table 12.

Table 12

Opinions of Respondents on Length of Service and its Influence on Barriers to Administrators' Communication Practices (in percentage)

Statement	Years							
	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+
Barriers	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Some staff do not understand job instructions.	8.6	4.6	26.6	25.4	61.4	65.2	3.4	4.8
Staff receive too many instructions.	7.4	20.8	39.0	34.8	50.2	39.6	3.4	4.8
Heads do not listen to staff complaints.	5.0	8.0	27.8	40.8	61.4	47.6	5.8	3.6
Notices for meetings are received late.	15.2	17.6	54.8	40.8	27.6	36.4	2.4	5.2
The large size of the University affects it dissemination of information.	15.0	27.2	47.2	41.2	27.4	24.6	10.4	7.2
Heads frown their faces when giving verbal instructions.	6.4	2.4	34.4	43.2	17.6	16.2	41.6	38.2
Staff cannot approach heads because of their job positions.	12.2	16.8	44.6	40.8	42.0	34.6	1.2	7.8

Table 12 indicates that 64.8% % of respondents who have worked in the University for less than 15 years disagreed to the statement that staff do not understand some instructions given them. Again, a majority of 70.0 % of respondents with 15 or more years of service also disagreed to the statement. The results show that both categories of staff do not have problem with their job performance instructions.

Table 12 also shows that 53.6 % of respondents with less than 15 years of service disagreed to the statement that staff receive too many instructions from their heads and other senior members. However, 55.6% of respondents who have worked in the University for 15 or more years agreed to the statement that staff receive too many instructions from their heads and other senior members. The table reveals a difference in opinion about the statement. While majority of respondents who have served for 15 or more years agreed that staff receive too much communication, majority of respondents who have worked for less than 15 years disagreed to the statement. The difference may mean that because those who have worked for fifteen years or more are in the principal or chief administrative assistant position, they will be entrusted with many responsibilities than those who are either in administrative or senior administrative assistant positions.

On the statement that the size of the University makes it difficult for all staff to get information, a total of 62.2 % respondents with less than 15 years agreed to the statement. Table 12 also reveals that 68.4 % of respondents who have worked for fifteen or more years agreed to the statement. The study reveals

a similarity of opinions in both categories of respondents. However, more respondents from the category of staff who have worked for 15 years or more agreed to the statement.

Length of Service of Senior Staff and its Influence on Administrators'

Means of Providing and Receiving Feedback

The views of respondents were solicited on the means of providing and receiving communication feedback. Table 13 shows the responses.

Table 13

Views of Respondents on Length of Service and its Means of Providing and Receiving Feedback in the University (in percentage)

Statement	Years							
	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+	0-14	15+
Means	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Administrators respond to staff's suggestions through letters.	10.2	7.8	56.2	52.8	29.2	34.8	3.4	4.6
Administrators give feedback thro' meetings or the telephone.	8.4	10.4	30.8	34.4	56.4	50.4	4.4	4.8
Administrators get Feedback verbally.	5.8	5.4	67.6	72.8	20.8	20.2	5.8	1.6
Administrators get feedback through written replies.	8.2	6.4	70.1	65.6	10.5	16.4	11.2	11.6

Table 13 indicates that majority (66.4 %) respondents with less than 15 years service agreed to the statement that administrators respond to staff suggestions and petitions through memos and letters. A total of 60.6 % of respondents with 15 or more years also agreed to the statement. Again, Table 13 reveals that 60.8% of respondents with less than 15 years of service disagreed to the statement that administrators provide feedback through meetings or the telephone. A total of 52.2% of respondents with 15 years or more also disagreed to the statement that administrators provide feedback through meetings or the telephone. It can be seen from the table that both categories of staff had negative response or disagreed to the statement even though respondents with 15 or more years of service in the University disagreed more on the statement. It can be inferred from the study that either University administrators do not make use of the telephone facilities in their offices or there are no adequate telephones or intercom in all the Faculties, Schools, departments and the units.

Table 13 further shows that 73.4 % of respondents who have worked for less than 15 years agreed that administrators receive feedback verbally. A total of 78.2% of respondents with 15 or more years working experience also agreed that administrators receive feedback verbally. Again, 78.3% of respondents with less than 15 years of service also agreed to the statement, that administrators receive feedback from staff through written replies.. The results reveal that majority of both respondents are of the view that administrators make themselves clear to staff. They also allow staff to explain certain actions they take.

Other Findings

Apart from the use of the questionnaire in collecting data, some interviews were conducted for some eight selected senior staff, who were either Chief Administrative Assistants or Principal Administrative Assistants. Personal observations were also made in some selected departments within the University. Some findings emerged which were not anticipated by the Research Questions but which the researcher feels are worth reporting. These findings are reported in the paragraphs that follow.

Interviewees Perceptions on Administrators' use of Verbal Communication

This interview item sought the opinion of interviewees on the frequent use of verbal communication by administrators. The result is presented in Table 14.

Table 14

How Often Administrators use Verbal Communication

Statement	Frequency	%
Very often	8	80
Often	2	20
Not often	-	-
Total	10	100

As shown in Table 14, majority (80%) of senior staff interviewed indicated that administrators very often use verbal communication, while 20% also stated that administrators often use verbal communication. Interestingly, none of the interviewees stated that administrators do not communicate verbally. This use of verbal communication could be in oral form, such as face-to-face or the use

of the telephone and meetings as observed by Bennet (1997). The finding substantiates the view of Armstrong (1995) that face-to-face communication is the appropriate channel for delegating tasks, coaching, disciplining, sharing information, answering questions and maintaining human relations.

Interviewees' Perceptions on the Accuracy of the Grapevine as a Source of Communication

Perceptions of interviewees on the accuracy of the grapevine or the rumour mill as a source of communication in the University was also examined. The responses from the senior staff interviewed are provided in Table 15.

Table 15

Views of Interviewees on the Accuracy of the Grapevine

Statement	Frequency	%
Very accurate	5	50
Accurate	3	30
Inaccurate	2	20
Totals	10	100

Table 15 shows that majority (80%) of interviewees were of the view that the grapevine was very accurate in the University. This may imply that the grapevine or rumour mill is active in the University and may contain both official and private news. Interviewees also revealed that the grapevine was useful because it provides staff with needed information such as the payment of salaries and arrears, as well as the outcome of promotion interviews. The grapevine

sometimes alleviates fears and prepares workers minds about expected results of issues such as interviews or even disciplinary committee meetings.

To support this point, Hamilton and Parker (1991) gave an instance where a middle manager of a medium-size manufacturing company was surprised when a fellow employee congratulated her on her promotion when she had received no formal announcement. This is further confirmed by McShane and vonGlinow (2003) who indicated that 75% of employees typically receive news from the grapevine before they hear about it through formal channels.

Observation Data

In all, a one-week observation was made of eight offices, which were selected at random. The following observations were made:

In department 'X', letters that were received were all opened by the clerk who recorded them in a book marked 'in-coming letters'. The letters which were all in one file cover were sent to the secretary who went through them one by one before sending them to the head of department's office.

After some time, a bell rang and the messenger went to the head's office. The messenger stayed there for a while and came back with some papers. The Secretary went in after a while and came back with some of the letters received earlier on. Appropriate files were brought out and the letters were put on them. On the letters were written instructions for the secretary to follow.

The head of department either came out of his office to ask for some information or he called the Messenger, the Clerk or the Secretary or Administrator, depending on what he wanted. Sometimes he shared a joke. On

one occasion, he showed his displeasure by shaking his head when he came out of his office to say that his desk was not properly dusted.

In department 'Y', the observation made was somewhat different from that of department 'X'. It was observed that letters received were all opened and registered by the messenger. All the letters were put on their corresponding files before handing them over to the secretary. The secretary acted on the routine ones without waiting for the head of department to come. All the files were then sent to the head's office. The head of department did not show up the whole day. The following day, around mid-day, the secretary signed for the head and dispatched the routine letters that needed immediate attention.

In another department, the secretary received applications from staff for either promotion or salary advance. The applications were sent to the head's office together with other letters. It was observed that the head acted on some of the letters and left the others. It became apparent that he did not act on staff application because the next day the staff came to enquire from the Secretary whether their applications had been endorsed. The secretary replied no.

The researcher's overall impression was that heads of department do not have any standard operating practice and procedure that are laid down for staff to following in their day-to-day office work. For example, in one of the offices, it was observed that letters that were marked 'confidential' were opened by the secretary who handled them herself and put them under lock and key after reading them until the head came and she took them to him personally. In another office, however, it was observed that letters marked 'confidential' were not

opened; rather they were placed in the file where the opened letters were kept for the head.

In offices where there is intercom, it was observed that the head used it in calling the secretary or any of the staff. Heads who do not have such facilities either came out and called or sat in their office and called the staff by their names as it was observed in some offices.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study. The major findings and conclusions are also presented. Recommendations and conclusions, suggestions for further studies are given in this chapter.

Summary of Research Process

The importance of workers as an input in an organization cannot be overemphasized; in fact it is often said that the success of every organization depends largely on its workforce. The study therefore set to investigate the perception of University of Cape Coast senior staff on communication practices of administrators. It aimed at finding out the most frequently used channel of communication adopted by the administrators. It also looked at how respondents view the effect of the communication practices on the job performance of staff. In addition, it examined the means of providing and receiving feedback in the University.

The descriptive survey method was used to execute the study. The population of the study comprised of all the Faculties and Schools, Departments as well as Units of the University. The method employed to get the sample for the study was purposive and simple random sampling technique. Purposive random sample was used to select the Schools of Agriculture and Business, and in

some cases, the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences. This was to ensure that the staff in those Schools and Faculties were included in the sample as they were few in numbers. The simple random sample was used for the selection of staff from the Faculties of Education and Sciences, as well as the Central Administration where the number of senior staff were many. There was a total sample of 306, out of which 272 representing 87.7% respondents completed and returned the questionnaire. This was made up of 68.6% males, and 31.4% females. Chief and Principal Administrative Assistants were selected for interview. Observations were made in eight selected offices where the communication practices of heads of department such as the media of communication, among other things were observed.

The major data instrument used for the collection of data was structured questionnaire. It consisted of two parts. The first part dealt with the bio-data of respondents while the second part addressed the research questions, which are as follows:

1. What are the channels of communication most frequently used by UCC administrators?
2. How do senior staff perceive the communication practices of UCC administrators?
3. How do the communication practices facilitate or impede the performance of senior staff?
4. What are the barriers to effective communication practices of UCC administrators?

5. What are the means used by UCC administrators to (a) provide and (b) receive communication feedback?
6. Does length of service in the University influence perception of senior staff on:
 - a) Channels of communication?
 - b) Communication practices?
 - c) Effect of communication on job performance?
 - d) Barriers to administrators' communication practices?
 - e) Administrators' means of providing and receiving feedback?

Other data collection techniques used were interview and observation. The researcher administered the questionnaire personally. The questions in the interview schedules were open-ended items. A four point likert type scale was used to collect information on channels of communication, communication practices, directions of communication, effects of communication practices on staff job performance, barriers associated with the communication practices and administrators' means of providing and receiving communication feedback. Interviews were scheduled for some Chief and Principal. Administrative Assistants. Observations were made in three faculties and seven departments on the communication practices of administrators. Out of the 306 questionnaires that were distributed, 272 were returned.

The data collected were coded and fed into the computer. The SPSS 10.0 computer package was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as

frequencies, percentages on the SPSS Version 10.0 was used for the analysis of data collected through the administration of questionnaire.

Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of the study are discussed in line with the research questions. They are presented as follows:

Senior staff's perceptions of channel of communication most frequently used by UCC administrators.

1. Majority of respondents were of the view that the two most frequently used channels of communication by administrators are through verbal instructions and the Union representatives. This shows that at the faculties, departments, and sections, heads of department engage in oral communication (face-to-face) in dealing with their staff. The Union representatives at the various departments also provide information to the staff from their meetings.
2. The study revealed that both written and verbal communications are used. The written communication took such forms as responses, to application for casual leave, and promotion.
3. The study also revealed that downward communication dominates the channel of communication in the University.
4. The grapevine, as a means of communication is active and useful in the University.

Senior staff's perceptions on communication practices of administrators

1. It was noted from the study that staff were encouraged to make suggestions.
2. Majority of staff enjoyed good working relations with their heads because the heads are approachable.
3. The University used more than one medium or channel of communication in sending information to its staff.
4. Administrators did not hold formal meetings with their staff.

Senior staff's perception on communication practice of administrators

Respondents indicated their view on the effects of administrators' communication practices. They include the following:

1. Because heads of department gave clear written and verbal communication staff perform their duties with little supervision.
2. Heads of department had, either through verbal or written communication, delegated some duties to staff. This allowed the staff concerned to take certain actions when their bosses are not in the office.
3. Because written communication is in vogue in the University of Cape Coast, some letters were sent to the post room. Some of these letters get to their destinations very late. Certain actions were therefore either delayed or not taken at all due to the delays in receiving letters.

Senior staff perception of barriers to communication practices of administrators.

Respondents disclosed some barriers to the communication practices of UCC administrators as follows:

1. The workload on some administrators and senior staff was too much.
2. The size of the University makes it difficult for information to reach everybody.
3. Staff understood the language used by administrators in communicating with them.

Senior staff's perception of administrators' means of providing and receiving feedback

Respondents indicated the following as means of providing and receiving information:

1. Administrators responded to staff suggestions and petition through memos and circulars.
2. Administrators provided feedback through the telephone.
3. Administrators received feedback on job-related issues through face-to-face interactions.
4. Administrators received feedback through letters (correspondences)

Senior staff's perception based on length of service

The study did not show sharp difference in the perceptions of respondents with fifteen or more years of service in the University and respondents who have worked in the University for less than fifteen years. The researcher did not find

any literature that has taken the dimension on communication practices regarding the length of service of staffing organizations to either support or contradict the finding from this research

Conclusions

The following conclusions could be drawn from the findings of the study.

1. The communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators have some positive effects. These include the frequent use of verbal communication, which enables senior staff to have the opportunity to ask their heads of department for clarification of job instructions. It is also evident that senior staff are allowed to take initiatives in responding to routine letters.
2. The grapevine is active and sometimes useful in the University because both administrators and staff use it. Evidence from the study indicates that senior staff are encouraged to contribute to the growth of their department. It is, therefore, concluded that senior staff enjoy good working relations with administrators.
3. The communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators have some negative effects, as evidenced from the study. Some senior staff are overworked due to their being loaded with too much job instructions from senior personnel in their departments. It can also be concluded that the size of the University affects the dissemination of information to its entire staff. Heads of department do not hold formal

meetings with staff. Some letters delay in the University as a result of their late release.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

1. The study revealed that heads do not hold formal meetings with their staff. It is therefore, recommended that heads schedule their time to hold at least two meetings with staff in each semester. Such exposures will create an environment of trust and sense of belonging. It will also enable staff do bring out problems and help find solutions to them.
2. The study also revealed that some staff are overloaded with job instructions. It is recommended that to ensure equity in job performance, heads should share work equally to staff so that the problem of overburdening some staffs are lessened.
3. It was also observed from the study that administrators do not use telephone or intercoms when communicating with staff. It is recommended that the University authorities provide all Faculties/Schools/Departments/Units with intercom in order to facilitate easy verbal communication.
4. From the study, it was also revealed that downward communication was predominant in the channel of communication of the University of Cape Coast. It is therefore recommended to the authorities to bridge

the gap of communication by improving on downward communication.

5. The study also revealed that the size of the University affects its communication procedures. It is recommended that the authorities provide notice boards, which will be solely meant for staff use only in order to ensure that letters meant for staff are displayed for a long time.
6. It was revealed that administrators and staff get some information through rumours. It is recommended that the authorities do well to control distortions that usually come with rumours, by providing substantial and accurate information to staff. This could be done through regular staff durbars and bulletins like 'This Week'.
7. The study revealed that there was no standard way of treating confidential letters in the departments. Whereas some heads of department asked that their secretaries kept such letters in the head of department's office, others allowed their secretaries to open them. It is therefore recommended that confidential letters be treated confidentially. This could be done by keeping all confidential letters in the head of department's office.

Suggestions for Further Research

Since the study only looked at perceptions of senior staff on communication practices of the University of Cape Coast administrators, it is

suggested that studies be conducted into the perceptions of junior staff on the communication practices in the University of Cape Coast.

Another study could also be conducted into the perceptions of lecturers on the communication practices of Deans and Heads of department.

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APPENDIX A

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON SENIOR STAFF PERCEPTIONS ON
COMMUNICATION PRACTICES OF UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
ADMINISTRATORS**

This questionnaire is being used to gather data on senior staff perceptions on communication practices of University of Cape Coast Administrators. Please feel free to answer the questions as objectively and truthfully as you can. Your response will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and it is for academic purposes only. Thank you.

Please tick the response that is appropriate to your situation.

1. Sex: Male [] Female []
2. How many years have you worked in this University?
15 years or more []
14 years or less []

Please tick your rank

- Chief Administrative Assistant []
Principal Administrative Assistant []
Senior Administrative Assistant []
Administrative Assistant []

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION USED BY ADMINISTRATORS

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements given.

Perceptions about channels of communication	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
4 Authorities send information through Union representatives.				
5 Communication in the University is mainly downward.				
6. Authorities or administrators encourage upward communication.				
7. Heads give staff verbal instructions.				

8. Heads give staff written instructions.				
9. Heads of dept. give staff both verbal and written instructions.				
10. Horizontal communication is used.				

SENIOR STAFF PERCEPTION OF THE ADMINISTRATORS' COMM. PRACTICES

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements given.

Perception about communication Practices	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
10 Staff communicate with heads by expressing their opinions verbally. 11. Staff contribute their ideas thro' verbal and written communication. 12. Authorities give verbal information to staff through Union leaders. 13. Administrators communicate to staff through meetings. 14. Heads give verbal instructions to staff. 15. Administrators use more than one medium of communication. 16. The rumour mill is a regular source of information to staff. 17. Administrators regularly use memos when communicating with staff.				

EFFECT OF THE COMMUNICATION PRACTICES ON SENIOR STAFF JOB PERFORMANCE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements given.

Perception about effects of communication practices	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
18. Staff understand job instructions administrators communicate.				

19. Heads communicate with staff to work with little supervision..				
20. Heads use gestures to encourage staff to make suggestions..				
21. Written communication are always timely.				
22. Written communications delay.				
23. Heads delegate to staff through verbal and written communication.				

BARRIERS ASSOCIATED WITH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN THE UNIVERSITY

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements given.

Perception about barriers to the administrators' communication practices.	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
24. Some staff do not understand job instructions they receive from their head.				
25. Staff receive too much verbal communication from their Heads and other senior members in the dept. that they are unable to respond to them all.				
26. Heads at times do not listen to their staff complaints about the difficulties they face in the job because they are busy.				
27. Certain directives and notices for meetings and interviews from administrators are received late.				
28. The large size of the University makes it difficult for the authorities to disseminate information about decisions and their implementations to all staff.				
29. Heads frown their faces when giving instructions to staff.				
30. Staff cannot approach heads because of the positions they occupy.				

SENIOR STAFF PERCEPTION OF ADMINISTRATORS MEANS OF PROVIDING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements given.

Perception about administrators' means of providing and receiving feedback.	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
31. Administrators respond to staff suggestions and petitions through memos and circulars (i.e. letters).				
32. Administrators provide feedback through the means of the telephone.				
33. Administrators receive feedback on job-related problems verbally (face-to-face interactions).				
34. Administrators receive feedback through replies (letters)				

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SELECTED RESPONDENTS

1. What are the channels of communication in the University of Cape Coast?
2. How does administrators respond to staff suggestions and petitions?
3. How does administrators receive information from staff?
4. Does administrators communicate through meetings with staff?
5. How accurate is the grapevine as a source of communication in the University?
6. How often does heads of department give written instructions?
7. How often does heads of department give verbal instructions?
8. What are the barriers to communication in the University?
9. What is your opinion about circulation of letters in the University?
10. What is your opinion about the communication practices of University administrators?

APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION DATA

Observations were made in some selected offices using the information provided below as a checklist on the communication practices of University of Cape Coast administrators:

1. In-coming letters are put on appropriate files before taking them to the head of department's office.
2. All in-coming letters are put on a common file cover and are sent to the head of department's office.
3. Heads of department communicate with staff orally/face-to-face..
4. Heads of department communicate with staff through the telephone.
5. Heads of department give job instructions verbally.
6. Heads of department give job instructions through writing.
7. Heads of department show friendly non-verbal communication when dealing with staff.
8. Heads of department's body language portrays unfriendliness.
9. Heads of department body language portrays friendliness
10. Communication in the departments is mainly downward.
11. Upward communication is encouraged in the departments.
12. Staff perform their duties with little supervision.
13. Staff are encouraged to take certain initiatives.
14. Letters stay too long in the head of department's office.
15. Letters do not delay in the head of department's office.

16. Staff understand job-related instructions heads of department give.
17. Staff do not understand instructions heads of department give.
18. Heads of department give feedback verbally.
19. Heads of department provide feedback through writing.
20. Heads of department receive feedback through face-to-face.
21. Heads of department get feedback in written form.