



Administrators and Tutors' Perceived Transitional Communication Challenges in Colleges of Education in Ashanti Region of Ghana

Joseph Nkyi- Asamoah¹, Ebenezer Appah Bonney² and Diana Asare Diabene²

¹Wesley College of Education, Kumasi.

²Holy Child College of Education, Takoradi.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 15 March 2016;

Received in revised form:

8 May 2016;

Accepted: 13 May 2016;

Keywords

Communication Practices,
Administrator,
Communication Challenges.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated challenges of communication practices in the seven Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. The population comprised College administrators and tutors and the sample included 21 administrators 178 tutors. The instrument was pre-tested and a reliability coefficient of 0.89 was realized and it was deemed to be good for the final data administration. Consequently, data collected were analysed descriptively using frequencies and percentages. The results of the study showed that the College had communication practices that use three traditional channels of communication, namely: downward, upward and horizontal. Also, media of communication like face to face, telephone, text messages, staff meetings as well as notice boards were used to convey the needed information on regular basis.

© 2016 Elixir all rights reserved.

Introduction

Colleges of Education in Ghana are established to train teachers for basic schools. Until the 2007/2008 academic year, the Colleges were known as Teacher Training Colleges and based on the Educational reforms that were introduced in 2007 they were established to train teachers to earn a Diploma in Basic Education. This meant they are being nurtured to the status of tertiary institutions. As tertiary institutions, where there are various units which function as semi-autonomous units effective communication is essential to their existence: it is through communication that all the various units in the college will be abreast of events as they unfold in the college. This paradigm shift has not so much changed the way the Colleges of Education are administered in terms of the headship and teaching faculty. There is still a challenge of ensuring that there is effective communication among the Principals, heads of department and tutors who together ensure that initial teacher education becomes effective. In order to ensure the smooth administration of the Colleges of Education, there should be effective communication in the Colleges, particularly, among administrators and tutors.

Communication may be explained as the process by which information is exchanged in order to initiate action or solve a problem. In a College, this involves giving notices about activities, events, decisions and tasks which affect individuals or groups - students, tutors, parents, non-teaching staff, visitors to the school and others. Communication suggests the sharing of opinions and ideas openly and freely, being mindful of other's views and encouraging individuals to seek for information and advice. Also, communication may be defined as the ability to express oneself through writing, through the spoken language and through body expressions in order to pass on a message and ensure it is well understood (Preston, 2005).

According to Lunenburg (2010), the study of communication is important, because every administrative function and activity involves some form of direct or indirect communication. Whether planning and organising or leading and monitoring, college administrators communicate with and through other people. This implies that every person's communication skills affect both personal and organisational effectiveness (Johanson, 2007). It seems reasonable to conclude that one of the most inhibiting forces to organisational effectiveness is a lack of effective communication. Moreover, good communication skills are very important to one's success as a school administrator.

It has also been emphasised that schools depend upon effective communication as much as any other skill in order to build a solid schools foundation. Communication in schools is important for the administrator, the teachers, the students as well as other staff of the school. Much of the administrator and the teacher's job involve interaction with many people such as students, parents, people from other organisations as well as members of the staff. People in such position need to have strong interpersonal skills and be effective communicators and motivators in order to create a positive schools environment (Rayburn, 2010).

Greenberg and Baron(2010) emphasise that even though, the basic process of communication is similar in many different contexts, however, one unique feature of organisations has a profound impact on the communication process – namely, its structure. The reality is that schools like other organisations are often structured in ways that dictate the communication patterns that exist.

Statement of the Problem

College of Education administrators have the challenge of running their institutions, dealing with student-related issues and maintaining a satisfied staff. Effective communication is essential for a college administrator to be

successful in his/her job of creating and maintaining a healthy learning environment. Putting verbal and nonverbal communication skills into practice can greatly improve a college's organisational flow, which in turn provides secure boundaries for students and positive reinforcement for staff.

With their elevation to tertiary status and in the process of being given full accreditation, it has become urgent for college administrators to examine all practices that are key success factors in the attainment of the goals of the college. As the Colleges are upgraded, it implies there are changes in almost all practices so as to be related to the new status. This study therefore attempts to find the communication challenges faced by Colleges of Education in Ashanti region as they adapt to their new status as tertiary institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study sought to find the various challenges faced by Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. Specifically, the study was intended to provide information on:

1. The nature of communication practices in the Colleges of Education,
2. Challenges faced by the Colleges of Education in practicing effective communication, and
3. The measures that have been adopted to improve communication within the Colleges of Education.

Research Questions

The following research questions are relevant guides for the study:

1. What is the nature of communication practices in the Colleges of Education?
2. What are the challenges faced by Colleges of Education in practising effective communication?
3. What strategies have been put in place to overcome the challenges?

Research Design

Non-Experimental descriptive survey design was used for this study. The design is appropriate for the study as the study reports on the situation as it is. It is also considered useful for this study because in the view of Osuala (1993), it is oriented towards the administration of the status of a given phenomenon and not isolating factors and dealing with them as separate entities. What Osuala indicates is in tandem with the purpose of this study. This study is intended to assess the communication challenges that exist among College Administrators and staff, particularly tutors. The factors for poor communication and/or ineffective communication, and measures to deal the phenomenon was dealt with in this study in so far as they are interrelated.

Also, the descriptive survey design is being used because Kerlinger (1979) indicates "surveys sample populations in order to discover the incidence and distribution of and the interrelationships among sociological, psychological and educational variables" (p.151). In deed this is a typical educational research which assesses the interrelationship among sociological, psychological and educational factors that underpin effective communication in a College of Education.

In addition, a descriptive survey describes and reports the way things are, in their natural state. The descriptive sample survey is appropriate when a researcher attempts to describe some aspects of a population by selecting unbiased samples of individuals who are asked to complete questionnaire or give answers to interviews or respond orally to interviews. With this design, the researcher used self-administered

questionnaire to elicit the responses he intended using to answer the research questions formulated to guide the study.

In spite of the good sides that have been pointed out, surveys are limited in scope and cannot be over generalised because views of a few people cannot represent a larger population unless due diligence is done. Besides, descriptive studies are not detailed enough to make any meaningful inferences about such important issue like communication among teaching and administration staff of a College of Education which is tasked to trained teachers for basic education in Ghana.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population for this study comprised Principals, Vice Principals, and Tutors of the Colleges of Education in Ashanti Region. Two sampling methods were used to select the study respondents. First, the census technique was used to select the principals and vice-principals for the study. The total number selected was 21 (i.e., 7 principals and 14 vice-principals). Second, proportional sampling was used to select the tutors. Using the sample size determination guide by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the suggested minimum number of tutors to constitute the sample was 175. Each college was thus assigned a number and then a simple random sampling technique using the lottery method was used to select the tutors from each college. The total sample size for the tutors was 178.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. This was because all the respondents were highly educated persons who could read and write. It was not of much difficulty for the respondents to understand what was required of them and could appropriately respond to the questions. The questionnaire had four sections and 40 items.

Pilot-Testing

The instrument was pilot tested at St. Joseph's College of Education, Bechem in the BrongAhafo Region. The college was selected for the pilot testing based on the fact that they share a lot of similar characteristics with the Colleges in the Ashanti Region, the area chosen for the main study. Pilot testing of the instrument helped to determine its validity and reliability.

After all the 30 questionnaires had been retrieved from respondents, data were analysed using the SPSS version 16. When the electronic analysis was over, the Cronbach's alpha was employed to determine coefficient of reliability and the results was 0.89 suggesting that they were initially consistent and, therefore, reliable.

Data Analysis

Data collected were grouped according to the research questions they answered. Since each section in the questionnaire was meant to elicit specific responses, they were analysed as such. For instance, responses to research questions 1, 2 and 3 were analysed manually and electronically. The manual analysis was in the form of coding the responses with numerical values. When the coding was over, the coded responses were inputted electronically and means, frequencies were run for each response.

In this way, the entries for the tables that the researcher needed in order to draw conclusions were obtained and arranged according to research questions. The main method used in analyzing the data was simple percentages.

Results and Discussions

Research Question One

What is the nature of communication practices in the College of Education?

Table 1. Responses on the Communication channels used in the College

Statements	College Administrators' Responses (N=21)				Tutors' Responses (N=162)			
	SD	D	A	SA	SD	D	A	SA
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
Principal conveys information or gives instructions to subordinates.	-	4(19.0)	9(42.9)	8(38.1)	12(7.4)	30(18.5)	90(55.6)	30(18.5)
Vice Principal conveys information or give instructions to subordinates.	-	4(19.0)	9(42.9)	8(38.1)	4(2.5)	37(22.8)	85(52.5)	36(22.2)
Tutors are allowed to make suggestions to the Principal and the Vice Principal regularly.	-	9(42.9)	10(47.6)	2(9.5)	22(13.6)	60(37.0)	67(41.4)	13(8.0)
Staff share ideas among themselves within and outside their department on regular basis	-	2(9.5)	6(28.6)	13(61.9)	12(7.4)	27(16.7)	84(51.9)	39(24.1)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

N – Number of responses & % - Percentage of the number of responses

Table 2. Responses on Communication Practices in the Colleges

Statements	College Administrators' Responses				Tutors' Responses			
	SD	D	A	SA	SD	D	A	SA
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
Principal consults staff on every issue in the College	4(19.0)	10(47.7)	3(14.3)	4(19.0)	30(18.5)	84(51.9)	47(29.0)	1(0.6)
Vice Principal consults staff on every issue in the College	1(4.8)	13(61.9)	4(19.0)	3(14.3)	27(16.7)	93(57.4)	35(21.6)	7(4.3)
There is a suggestion box by which staff make input in the College's administration	0(0)	2(9.5)	2(9.5)	17(81.0)	102(63.0)	29(17.8)	12(7.4)	9(11.7)
Staff may direct their memoranda directly to the Principal on an issue they feel strong about.	4(19.0)	12(57.2)	4(19.0)	1(4.8)	37(22.8)	78(48.2)	37(22.8)	0(6.2)
Staff may direct their memoranda directly to the Vice Principal on an issue they feel strong about.	0(0)	15(71.5)	2(9.5)	4(19.0)	11(6.8)	67(41.4)	70(43.2)	4(8.6)
College administrators are enjoined to provide feedback to staff through the minutes they make on the memo sent to them	3(14.3)	9(43.0)	5(23.0)	4(19.0)	19(11.7)	62(38.3)	71(43.8)	10(6.2)
College administrators are not obliged to provide any feedback to staff who send memo to them.	1(4.8)	0(0)	6(28.6)	14(66.6)	27(16.7)	49(30.3)	60(37.0)	26(16.0)
College administrators discuss new educational policies with staff.	0(0)	19(90.5)	2(9.5)	0(0)	25(15.4)	48(29.6)	81(50.0)	8(4.9)
Staff meetings are held regularly to solicit views from staff	0(0)	4(19.0)	9(43.0)	8(38.0)	12(7.4)	42(25.9)	79(48.8)	9(17.9)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

N – Number of responses & % - Percentage of the number of responses

This research question was formulated to elicit responses in relation to nature of communication practices in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. The nature of communication practices were examined in terms of channels of communication used, how information was communicated between various people in the Colleges and the kind of media used to communicate. The channels of communication used from the perspective of the respondents are reflected in Table 1. To facilitate the discussion, the response variables were collapsed into two. Thus, “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” become “Agree” and “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” become “Disagree”.

Firstly, it is observed from Table 1 that 17(81.0%) of College Administrators and 120(74.1%) of tutors agreed that the principal of a College conveys information or gives instructions to subordinates. Similarly, another 17(81.0%) of College administrators and almost 121(75.0%) tutors agreed that the vice principal of a College conveys information or gives instructions to subordinates. As a matter of fact, the type

of communication channel used in these instances is the downward communication. This is because communication flows from the top to down as most literature on the subject have it. For instance, Lunenburg (2010) and Tourish (2010) underscore the point that traditionally communications within educational institutions have been dominated by the downward communication channel.

The flip side of downward communication is upward communication, which is the focus in this paragraph. To this end, Table 1 shows that 57.1% of college administrators and a little less than 50.0% of tutor respondents agreed that tutors are allowed to make suggestions to the Principal and the Vice Principal regularly. Obviously, the channel of communication that is used in this instance is the upward communication but the proportion of College administrators and tutors even indicate that the upward communication channel is rarely used in the colleges that were studied. This is the case because more than 82(50.0%) of tutors and almost 9(43.0%) of College administrators disagreed that tutors were allowed to make

suggestions to the principal and vice principal. It should be borne in mind that upward communication afford subordinate staff the opportunity to demonstrate whether they have understood information sent down to them and also to meet their ego needs (Canary, 2011). The finding is similar to what Cheney (2011) notes that communication from the bottom does not flow as freely as communication from the top.

The third and last channel of communication that is used in a College setting is the horizontal communication. Regarding this channel, Table 1 shows that 90.5% of College administrators as well as 75.0% of tutor respondents agreed that staff of the seven Colleges share ideas among themselves within and outside their departments on regular basis. It can be observed from the responses given by respondents that horizontal communication is widely used in Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. The practice of horizontal communication confirms Canary's (2011) assertion that regular use of horizontal communication channel among staff ensures proper coordination among staff such that it ties together activities within or across departments on a single school campus or within divisions in a school-wide organisational system.

In this part of the presentation, it has been seen that two communication channels are widely used whilst the third one is not frequently used. Thus, from the data analysis, there was a mean score of 3.2, 2.7 and 3.5 respectively for downward, upward and horizontal by College administrators and 2.9, 2.4 and 2.9 in that order for downward, upward and horizontal communication as given by tutors. It is therefore a clear indication that upward communication is often not used in the Colleges. However, downward and horizontal communications are used very regularly to facilitate the administration of the institutions.

The second part of this section is discusses the actual communication practices that are prevalent among the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. To deal with the issues involved exhaustively, statements pertaining to standardized communication practices in Colleges of Education were proposed for the consideration of respondents. By this, respondents had to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a particular proposition relative to what prevails in their respective institutions.

Table 2 presents the communication procedures found in the Colleges of Education. Table 2 indicates that only 33.3% of College administrators and 29.6% tutors agreed that the Principal consults staff on every issue that crops up in the College.

In the same way, Table 2 shows that 14(66.7%) of College administrators and a majority, 120 (74.0%) of tutors, disagreed that vice principals consults their subordinate staff on every issue in the College. This goes to confirm that College administrators do not consult staff on all issues before decisions are made.

With regards to creating avenues for consultations or seeking the views of subordinates staff in the decision making process with the provision of suggestion boxes, Table 2 indicates that 80.8% of tutors disagreed with the proposition that 'there is a suggestion box by which staff make input in the College's administration'. However, 90.5% of College administrators agreed that there were suggestion boxes by which staff can make alternative views available to the College. From the Table 2 and in relation to the Principal, 76.2% of College administrators and 71.0% of tutors disagreed that Staff may direct their memoranda directly to the

Principal on an issue they feel strong about. From the views expressed by respondents, the indication is that staff resorting to the use of memos is not very popular way of taking part in the decision making process of the Colleges. Even if memos are used they are rarely used. In the Universities and many tertiary institutions, apart from decisions made by committees, memos that emanate from individuals are starting points of policy decisions because memos are well thought out modes of communicating alternative courses of action. In a closely related issue, it is seen from Table 2 that a little of over 57.0% of College administrators and exactly 50.0% of tutors disagreed that College administrators are enjoined to provide feedback to staff through the minutes they make on the memo sent to them.

In formal administrative practice, administrators make comments on a letter or memo to indicate the direction certain things should be done, which is technically known as 'minting'. In this context, respondents were made to indicate whether the few memos that staff initiate are given any attention in the form of minting on them to show approval or disapproval relative to existing rules in the College. From the views expressed, the majority of administrators do not think there should be any form of minutes on the memo, which amounts to giving feedback to the originator. Also, in cross checking whether, respondents understood the proposition of minuting on memos as an obligation; Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents agreed that College administrators are not obliged to minute on memos sent to them.

Communication practice regarding attention given to memos from staff is a form of upward communication channel but it is not properly used in Colleges of Education in Ghana. In buttressing this point, Cheney (2011) indicated that unfortunately, communication from the lower ranks of educational institutions does not flow as freely as communication from the top. One barrier to effective upward communication in a school is that administrators fail to respond when staff members bring up information or problems in the form of memo and failure to respond will ultimately result in no communication.

Table 2 also shows that 81.0% of College administrators and 66.7% of tutors agreed with the proposition that staff meetings are held regularly to solicit views from staff. In deed staff meetings are avenues for which face to face interactions are made manifest. There is no denial the fact that staff meetings are used by the College administrators as a form of communication practice. It should be stated that regular staff meetings are an effective method for ensuring that your staff members become involved in decisions important to the functioning of the organisation (Arnold, 2005).

Table 3. Responses on Medium of Communication Used College Administrators and Subordinate Staff

	College Administrators' Responses (N=21)			Tutors' Responses (N=162)		
	Not Used	Seldom	Often	Not Used	Seldom	Often
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Face to face	0(0)	9(42.9)	12(57.1)	13(8.0)	84(51.9)	65(40.1)
Notice boards	0(0)	19(90.5)	2(9.5)	25(15.4)	51(31.5)	86(53.1)
Suggestion box	2(9.5)	0(0)	19(90.5)	121(74.7)	13(8.0)	28(17.3)
Memorandum	3(14.3)	2(9.5)	16(76.2)	84(51.9)	52(32.1)	26(16.0)
Telephones	4(19.0)	13(62.0)	4(19.0)	53(32.7)	93(57.4)	16(9.9)
Text messages	2(9.5)	5(23.8)	14(66.7)	75(46.3)	52(32.1)	35(21.6)
Emails	11(52.4)	1(4.8)	9(42.9)	125(77.1)	15(9.3)	22(13.6)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

It can be observed from Table 3 that seven media of communication were noted to be used by college administrators. To that end, Table 3 shows that 57.1% of

College administrators and 40.1% of tutors held the view that the face to face medium was used often by College administrators in their communication practice. Brown and Duguid (2000) stated that face to face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls and explained that although, with the rapid technological development people have many ways to communicate with each other, the face to face medium is still very relevant. Also, Gerritsen (2009) and Trevino, Daft and Lengel (1992) have espoused the benefits that face to face brings to the fortunes of an organisation and this is true in the training of teachers where the managers (college administrators) and staff (tutors) are enjoined to interact frequently to plan the way out in the form of staff meetings or on a one to one basis interaction to discuss issues of mutual consent.

A second medium of communication used in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region was staff notice boards. Table 3 shows that majority 19(90.5%) of College administrators indicated that it was not often used. Papa (2012) was of the view that among the relevance of staff notice boards to communication practice in College of Education is that, it serves the purpose of keeping one's staff informed and connected to the daily routine of the office. Similarly, Trevino, Lengel and Daft (1987) emphasised that when the information on the staff notice board is updated there is the likelihood that staff would make use of it very often. From these points of view, the importance of staff notice boards has been clearly stated and it is incumbent of educational administrators to use them often. It is more useful in a College of Education because tutors should know at a glance when they are going for on or off campus teaching practice and at what time. Besides, the notice board would help correct any clash or anomaly in scheduling of tasks among staff in the College.

Table 3 indicates that regarding the use of suggestion boxes as media of communication, 19(90.5%) of College administrators agreed to its regular use as against 28(17.3%) of the tutors who agreed suggestion boxes were used regularly. Anandarajan, Maliha, Qizhi and Bay (2010) emphasised that employees' comments can be gathered with a suggestion box, especially in groupthink-prone environments and within a corporate culture. In spite of this benefit, the suggestion box system can be abused when anonymous views are allowed without being checked, therefore, systems should be put in place to check on its usage to avoid its abuse.

The fourth communication media is memorandum. From the responses captured in Table 3, 76.2% of College administrators indicated that memos were used often in their communication practice but only small proportion (16.0%) of tutors agreed with the view point. However, 84(51.9%) of tutors and 3(14.3%) noted that memos were not used in the Colleges for communicating among staff.

Lastly, Table 3 shows that 42.9% of College administrators and 13.6% of tutors noted that emails are used often in the Colleges' communication practices. However, 11(52.4%) of administrators and 125(77.1%) indicated that emails were not used at all in their colleges as a means of communication. This could be as a result of emails not being popular among the media of communication that is available to College administrators or unavailability of internet services in the Colleges of Education. There is no doubt that electronic medium of communication has come to stay in all organisations, as such administrators of Colleges of Education

and tutors must avail themselves for such media so that there would be effective communication within the institutions.

In conclusion, the information presented about the Colleges of Education in Ashanti Region suggests the presence of some form of communication practices. Both College Administrators and tutors agree that Principals and their vices convey information or give instruction to their subordinates, and tutors are allowed to make suggestions to the Principals and their vices regularly. Staff also shared ideas among themselves within and outside their department on regular basis. However, College Administrators and tutors disagreed to the issue that Principals and their vices consulted staff on every issue.

Administrators and staff were divided on the use of suggestions box as a means of communication. While 90.5% of the administrators agreed that there was a suggestion box by which staff made input in the Colleges' administration, 80.8% of the tutors disagreed to the statement. Again, administrator and tutors were divided as to whether College administrators discuss new educational policies with staff. Surprisingly while 90.5% of the administrators disagreed that College administrators discuss new educational policies with staff, 54.9% of the tutors agreed to the statement.

The respondents also indicated that face to face interactions, notice board, suggestion box and telephones were the main media of communication used among College administrators and subordinate staff. As many as 77.1% of the tutors and 52.4% of the administrators indicated that E-mails were not used at all as a medium of communicating in the Colleges. Administrators and tutors were of opposing views on the use of suggestion box and memorandum as media of communications in their colleges.

Research Question Two

What are the challenges faced by Colleges of Education in practicing effective communication?

The purpose of this research question two was to provide information on the challenges faced by the Colleges of Education in practicing effective communication. In the light of this, statements relating to the challenges were put forward and were considered by respondents whereby they had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement as they perceived the situation in their respective Colleges.

Table 4 presents the responses of tutors and administrators on challenges College administrators face in practicing effective communication in the Colleges of Education.

Table 4 shows that 71% of tutor respondents saw ineffective committee systems in the colleges as a challenge to communication but 71.4% of College administrators disagreed to the assertion. The committee system as Nwachukwu (1988) described is a mechanism for achieving coordination of activities and sharing information among departments and between administrators and staff. As such decisions emanating from committees help to promote better coordination in the institution. The two parties disagreeing on the effectiveness of the committee systems in the colleges is an issue that needs immediate attention.

In addition, College administrators and tutors were at variance on the appropriateness of the medium of communication. Example is using a notice to communicate important information when a circular could have been more appropriate.

Table 4. Responses on the Challenges College administrators face in practicing effective communication

Statements	College Administrators' Responses (N=21)				Tutors' Responses (N=162)			
	SD	D	A	SA	SD	D	A	SA
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Time of sending message (for instance when a text message is used to summon staff to meeting but their phones are off).	3(14.3)	4(19.0)	6(28.6)	8(38.1)	15(9.3)	34(21.0)	50(30.9)	63(38.9)
Ineffective committee system to deliberate on issues in the College.	5(23.8)	10(47.6)	0(0)	6(28.6)	15(9.3)	32(19.8)	52(32.1)	63(38.9)
Inappropriate medium of communication; That is using a notice board when a circular could have been used, etc.	7(33.3)	9(42.9)	5(23.8)	0(0)	11(6.8)	50(30.9)	82(50.6)	19(11.7)
Apathy – when tutors refuse to cooperate with administrators because their views are disrespected.	6(28.6)	10(47.6)	3(14.3)	2(9.5)	0(0)	45(27.8)	93(56.7)	24(14.8)
Poor internet connectivity.	4(19.0)	0(0)	11(52.4)	6(28.6)	0(0)	26(16.1)	106(65.4)	30(18.5)
No feedback is given on memos sent to administrators by tutors.	3(14.3)	3(14.3)	11(52.4)	4(19.0)	20(12.3)	38(23.5)	83(51.2)	21(13.0)
The mood by which the College administrator uses in communicating with tutors are not the best.	4(19.0)	2(9.5)	9(42.9)	6(28.6)	17(10.4)	51(31.5)	72(44.4)	22(13.6)
Sometimes text messages fail to get to their intended audience.	3(14.3)	5(23.8)	9(42.9)	4(19.0)	17(10.4)	29(17.9)	88(54.3)	28(17.3)
Most of the time tutors are only given instructions.	6(28.6)	1(4.8)	10(47.6)	4(19.0)	13(8.0)	28(17.3)	93(57.4)	28(17.3)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

N – Number of responses & % - Percentage of the number of responses.

Table 5. Responses on the measures the Colleges have instituted to overcome the communication challenges

Statements	College Administrators' Responses (N=21)				Tutors' Responses (N=162)			
	SD	D	A	SA	SD	D	A	SA
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Medium of communication are made known to tutors	0(0)	3(14.3)	14(66.7)	4(19.0)	0(0)	48(29.6)	94(58.1)	20(12.3)
There is prompt feedback on queries raised by tutors.	4(19.0)	2(9.5)	6(28.6)	9(42.9)	34(20.9)	14(8.6)	21(13.0)	93(57.1)
College administrators tolerate dissenting views.	9(42.9)	8(38.1)	2(9.5)	2(9.5)	22(13.6)	73(45.1)	48(29.6)	19(11.7)
Written Job descriptions are given to every tutor.	14(66.7)	3(14.3)	2(9.5)	2(9.5)	37(22.8)	81(50.0)	28(17.3)	16(9.9)
Tutors are instructed on what to do and are consulted regularly.	3(14.3)	2(9.5)	6(28.6)	10(47.6)	77(47.5)	54(33.3)	20(12.3)	11(6.8)
Information for staff are appropriately disseminated.	2(9.5)	4(19.0)	9(42.9)	6(28.6)	61(37.4)	68(42.0)	16(9.9)	17(10.5)
Proceedings of staff meetings are properly documented and copies given to tutors.	2(9.5)	9(42.9)	2(9.5)	8(38.1)	21(13.0)	48(29.6)	59(36.4)	34(21.0)
Efforts are made to improve internet connectivity and access.	2(9.5)	4(19.0)	6(28.6)	9(42.9)	14(8.6)	25(15.4)	97(59.9)	26(16.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Key: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

N – Number of responses & % - Percentage of the number of responses

While 62.3% of tutors indicated inappropriate media of communication was often used by College administrators in communicating with staff, 76.2% of administrators disagreed to the assertion. Kramer (2004) opined that communicating using the appropriate medium was very important for every institution or organization. To this end managers and administrators in this context should strive at using the most appropriate channel of communication in relaying information to their staff since this will go a long way to improve on the institutions' output.

Also, 81.0% of College administrators and 83.9% of tutors agreed that poor internet access was a challenge to effective communication practice in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. This was because college administrators and tutors had resorted to using modern communication channels (ICT) in their colleges, but this came with its associated challenges. College administrators were noted to be using text messages in the wake of technology to communicate with their staff especially in inviting staff to meetings. Tutors (71.6%) and College administrators (62.0%) indicated that sometimes text messages fail to get to their intended destination.

In another development, both College administrators 15(71.4%) and tutors 104(64.2%) agreed that no feedback was given to the suggestions and propositions made by subordinate staff as memo to College administrators and this they indicated did not help with the communication processes in the Colleges. Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer (2008) intimated that communication was a two way process as such it was imperative for the recipient to respond to the communication sent to him/her. The communication process becomes a failure when information flow is only in one direction. In a similar vein, the tutors 121(74.7%) were of the view that most of the time, they were only given instructions. This means that tutors were not allowed to make inputs or suggestions for consideration, reducing the communication process to a one way communication channel.

Research Question Three

What strategies have been put in place to overcome the challenges?

In view of the challenges that confront College administrators in their attempt to practice effective communication, respondents were asked to indicate strategies that have been put in place to avert the situation. Table 5 presents the responses suggested by the respondents.

Table 5 shows that 85.7% of College administrators and 70.4% of tutor respondents agreed that medium of communication are made known to staff. This is laudable because if over 70.0% of tutors who are the subordinates admit this strategy had been adopted then it is in the right direction since the making known the media of communication in the organisation is a sure way of ensuring effective organisation communication. Also, 123(75.9%) tutors and 13(71.5%) administrators agreed that efforts are made to improve internet connectivity and access in the Colleges of Education as a measure to overcome the communication challenges.

However, 95(58.7%) of responding tutors and 17(81.0%) of administrators disagreed that College administrators tolerate dissenting views from staff. College administrators tolerating dissenting views from tutors and other members of staff could have gone a long way to overcome the communication challenges in the Colleges especially now that democracy allows freedom of speech and expression of one's

views. Tutors and administrators disagreed that written job descriptions were given to every tutor as a means of overcoming communication challenges. Newly appointed persons in institutions are to be given job descriptions, preferably written job descriptions to guide and direct new staff on what is expected of them.

The job description will also spell out the various channels of communication to the new employee starting the two way communication between the employer and the employee, and this context, the College administrators and the tutors or staff of the Colleges.

Both tutors 118(72.8%) and administrators 17(81%) disagreed that written job descriptions were given to tutors in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. According to Canary (2011), job descriptions are administrative directives that are focused on how to do a specific task and how the job relates to other activities of the school organisation.

Table 5 shows that tutors and administrators were divided on the appropriateness of dissemination of information to staff as a measure to overcome the communication challenges. While 15(71.5%) of College administrators agreed that information for staff are appropriately disseminated, in a sharp contrast, 129(79.4%) of tutors disagreed that the appropriate information are disseminated to staff. From this revelation, it becomes imperative that some administrator lack communication skills to make them good communicators since from the perspectives of tutors, administrators did not communicate effectively.

Also, Table 5 shows that 131(80.8%) of tutors disagreed that tutors are instructed appropriately and consulted on regular basis. However, 16(76.2%) of College administrators maintained that tutors were appropriately instructed and consulted regularly. To conclude, it can be said that Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region have instituted some measures to ensure that there are effective communication practices. Among the measures are that, media of communication are made known to subordinates. Prompt feedback is given to tutors and efforts have been made to improve on internet connectivity

Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the main traditional channels of communication used in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region are face to face interactions, notice board, memorandums, telephone calls and text messages. There were some communication challenges which there is a need to develop strategies to deal with. Some strategies have been instituted but it was realised that the strategies that have been adopted had not been far reaching enough to deal with all the challenges that confront the practice of effective communication in the colleges.

Recommendations

1. Colleges Councils and management in the Ashanti region should take steps to set up appropriate committees according to the statutes that established them to ensure that tutors are adequately involved in the administration of the colleges as is the case in the tertiary institutions.
2. Colleges of Education administrators should adopt appropriate medium of communication to relay information to their staff.
3. Administrators should endeavour to involve tutors in the decision making process by consulting them regularly and providing prompt feed back to their queries as much as practicable.

4. Colleges of Education in Ashanti region should invest more into improving internet connectivity to facilitate electronic communication.

References

- Anandarajan, M., Maliha, Z., Qizhi, D., & Bay, A. (2010). Generation youth adoption of instant messaging: Examination of the impact of social usefulness and media richness on use richness. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 53 (2), 132–143.
- Brown, J.S., & Duguid, P. (2000). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Canary, H. (2011). *Communication and organizational knowledge: Contemporary issues for theory and practice*. Florence, KY: Taylor & Francis.
- Cheney, G. (2011). *Organizational communication in an age of globalization: Issues, reflections, practice*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon
- Gerritsen, M. (2009). The impact of culture on media choice: The role of context, media richness and uncertainty avoidance. *Language for Professional Communication: Research, Practice and Training*, 146–160.
- Greenberg, J., & Baron, R.A. (2010). *Behavior in organizations* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Johanson, C. (2007). Research in organisational communication: The case of Sweden. *Nordicom Review*, 28(1), 93-100
- Kerlinger, F.N. (1979). *Behavioral research: A conceptual approach*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Kramer, M.C. (2004). *Managing uncertainty in organizational communication*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Krejcie, R.V., & Morgan, D.W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610.
- Lunenburg, F.C. (2010). *Formal communication channels: Upward, downward, horizontal, and external*. Houston: Sam Houston State University.
- Lunenburg, F.C. (2010). Communication: The process, barriers and improving effectiveness. *Schooling*, 1(1), 1-11
- Nwachukwu .C.C. (1988). *Management theory and practice*. Onitsha: Africana-Feb Publishers Limited.
- Osuala, E. C. (1993). *Introduction to research methodology*. Onitsha, Nigeria: Africana-Fep Publishers Limited.
- Papa, J. (2012). *Effective communication for school administrators*. Retrived March 20, 2012 from <http://www.ehow.com>
- Rayburn, E. (2010). *Effective communication*. Retrieved March 17, 2012 from <http://education.astate.edu/dcline/slides>
- Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., Ulmer, R. R. (Eds.) (2008). *Crisis communication and the public health*. Hampton Press: Cresskill, NJ.
- Trevino, L.K., Daft, R.L., & Lengel, R.H. (1992). Understanding manager's media choices. In J. Fulk, & C.W. Steinfield (Eds.), *Organizations and communications technologies* (pp. 3-9). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.