Research Article

Internal Communication and Employee Engagement in Tertiary Educational Context: The Case of Presbyterian University, Ghana

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

In the fast growing of higher educational institutions, internal communication and its impact on employee engagement is a significant factors for institutional growth and awareness. The current study aimed to ascertain how internal communications in an organisation will impact on employee being engaged. This research therefore investigated the internal communication and the nexus to employee engagement with emphasis from staff of the Presbyterian University, Ghana. The study used a quantitative approach and administered closed-ended questionnaires. A purposive sampling technique was adopted and acquired 150 respondents for the study. The obtained data was analysed using SPSS. The findings reveal that there is a moderate impact of internal communication on employee's behaviour at the workplace. Also, analysed data provided a significant relationship between Internal Communication and Employee engagement. The findings indicate that enhanced Employee engagement, specified as a committed worker, and improved productivity. The outcomes conclude that there are multifaceted factors influencing the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement in higher educational institution settings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication, as an overarching construct, has undergone considerable growth within specialised fields, particularly in the realm of internal communication. The escalating significance of phenomena such as globalisation, economic downturns, and various other factors has culminated in a global decline in employee trust and allegiance (Ecklebe & Löffler, 2021). Internal communication serves as a pivotal component in ascertaining the degree of employee engagement, a concept that has rapidly developed in response to challenges associated with workforce involvement. In the modern organisational landscape, entities are no longer limited by rigid and formalized administrative and communicative frameworks. According to Tubbs and Moss (2008), there is an increasing recognition of the value of interpersonal interactions among personnel, leading to discussions that transcend official job-related topics. Specifically, informal communication fostered operational efficiency and benefits to the organisation when there is prevalent discussion regarding the efficacy of various internal teams (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Primarily, communication within the organisation transpires both horizontally and vertically. This mode of communication may encompass work-related issues and formal responsibilities. To effectively fulfil their responsibilities and attain strategic goals, it is imperative for every member within an organisation to communicate proficiently regarding their specific roles and tasks. Superiors assign responsibilities to subordinates, while those in subordinate positions deliver results or provide recommendations to leadership (Tubbs & Moss, 2008).

In recent era, academic institutions have exerted considerable efforts to clarify the domain of internal communication. The continual turbulence and transformations occurring within the institutional landscape have impaired the multitude of concerns that employees are compelled to navigate. The significance of fostering internal communication within institutions is paramount to shape employee perceptions and influencing their behaviours. According to scholarly literature, "employees" denote individuals who are contracted by an organisation, encompassing both managerial figures and the subordinates they oversee (Dhingra et al., 2021; Rogers, 2018). Supervisors are delineated as individuals who possess designated authority and are responsible for the oversight of daily operations within a corporation (Welch & Jackson, 2007), and an operational worker referred to staff members occupying positions at the functional tier of the organisation and possessing an official direct connection to a higher-ranking official (McLarty et al., 2021). Enhanced employee engagement and improved institutional image are correlated with superior performance, resulting in augmented leadership and managerial capabilities to foster a highly engaged workforce. Nevertheless, the investigation into how the attributes of internal communication influence employee engagement emerged as a focal point in various research endeavours. Given that subordinate employees constitute the primary subject of this study, they were referred to as "employees" throughout the study (Argenti, 2017; Holland et al., 2017) concerning the attainment of institutional objectives (Hallahan et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2009).

Despite institutions establishing clear visions and strategies to direct their actions in structuring and advancing their operations, they encounter challenges when personnel do not align their behaviours with the intended goals, objectives, and missions. According to Macnamara et al. (2017), institutions confront a prevalent challenge of immobilizing individuals in order to enact policies that ensure productivity within the institution. It is essential for organisations to guarantee that employees fully endorse and align themselves with the vision, goals, and objectives of the institution. The objective of this inquiry is to ascertain why certain employees exhibit higher levels of engagement than others. Previous research has underscored the importance of a variety of desirable behaviours among staff, including the demonstration of a sense of citizenship (Thompson et al., 2020), the possession of visionary attitudes (Ellis et al., 2017), and the capacity for innovation (Aryee et al., 2012; Chen & Huang, 2016).

Lately, there has been a significant focus on internal communication in several research studies (Verčič & Špoljarić, 2023; Whitworth, 2011 & Grunig, 2013) (Lee et al., 2022). Investigations into the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement have been executed across Europe (Welch, 2011; Grunig, 2013) and Asia (Kang & Sung, 2017; Mishra et al., 2014). In the context of Ghana, empirical studies have been performed on these identical factors (Obuobisa-Darko & Domfeh, 2019; Narteh, 2012) spanning multiple sectors.

Drawing on prior research, it becomes imperative to ascertain whether employees exhibiting high levels of workplace involvement possess a distinct status, as well as to explain the function of internal superior-subordinate communication in this regard. This study aimed to specifically address this existing gap. The prevailing literature on employee engagement posited that engaged employees positively influenced organisational outcomes (Rich et al., 2010; Rothmann, 2016) and engaged employees exhibited elevated levels of energy, dedication, and immersion in their occupational environments (Schaufeli et al. (2002). However, Fuller and Shikaloff (2017) contested the assertion that an engaged employee is synonymous with a high-performing employee. Bentele and Nothhaft (2010) highlighted a discourse regarding whether employees perceived as highly committed are necessarily cognizant of the strategic objectives required to extend their contributions beyond their designated responsibilities.

The significance of how internal communication and employee engagement interact in the context of tertiary education in Ghana cannot be less emphasized. This is because they play a significant role in fostering healthy relationships between employees and the organisation. While it is widely recognised that effective internal communication and engaged employees are crucial for the success of institutions in various industries, there has not been adequate study on their specific implications within the unique context of Ghanaian higher education institutions. This study aimed to ascertain the correlation between internal communication and employee engagement in a tertiary education setting. The current data primarily consist of surveys and studies undertaken by private consulting firms, which provide limited information on communication and engagement.

Studies on internal communication and employee engagement have been carried out in several nations with limited studies on Ghana. The questions which this research explored therefore were:

i. to what extent is internal communication effective in a higher educational institution?

ii. what is the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1. Internal communication
Effective internal communication within organisations is crucial for influencing employee perceptions and behaviours. Research conducted by Kim (2018) has revealed that the quality and transparency of internal communication have a substantial impact on employee trust, organisational legitimacy, and engagement. Research conducted by Gomes *et al.* (2023) has demonstrated that the perception of internal communication, particularly in the context of remote work, significantly influences both the flow of organisational information and the level of employee engagement. Furthermore, research has shown that effective internal communication during crises, such as the global pandemic, has a positive effect on the relationship between employees and the organisation (Ecklebe & Löffler, 2021).

Moreover, internal communication has been identified as a critical factor that influences employer branding by serving as a means to convey organisational values and employment benefits to employees (Verčić & Špoljarić, 2023). Furthermore, internal communication has a significant influence on organisational performance by facilitating the exchange of information among staff, ensuring alignment with organisational principles, and coordinating work activities. Ultimately, this demonstrates a direct impact on the overall performance in public institutions (Salim, 2022). The findings underscored the importance of internal communication in shaping how employees perceive their organisation, its outcomes, and its reputation, particularly during crises and when working remotely. Internal communication is an essential process within an organisation that facilitates interactive exchanges and promotes unity and trust among organisational members (Ryynanen *et al.*, 2012). Developing and maintaining relationships among the organisation, managers, and staff is crucial for fostering a sense of unity and trust through internal communication (Hume & Leonard, 2013). Within the workplace, employees form various relationships, but two specific relationships have a significant influence on their professional lives: their relationship with the organisation and with their immediate superior, which are referred to as social exchange relationships (Sluss *et al.,* 2008). The literature emphasized the critical importance of internal communication in shaping employee perspectives, organisational performance, and brand reputation. During crises and remote work situations, the quality, transparency, and effectiveness of internal communication play a decisive role in influencing trust, commitment, and organisational outcomes. Better internal communication in Ghana can improve how organizations work. It can solve problems like poor information sharing, low employee involvement, and different goals in

departments (Agyemang & Ofei, 2013). By having clear and open communication, Ghanaian organizations can make better decisions, share knowledge, and create a united work culture. This can lead to better problem-solving, higher productivity, and improved performance when facing challenges (Mensah & Bawole, 2018).

2.2. The significance of internal communication
The significance of internal communication in institutions is an extensively studied subject, with literature highlighting its crucial role in multiple facets of institutional operation. Efficient internal communication is essential for institutional performance; it impacts leaders' capacity to involve personnel and accomplish planned initiatives (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Operational communication is necessary for fostering a culture of openness and honesty between management and employees, actively including people in the institution's objectives and goals (Andersson, 2018).

Literature indicated that organisations prioritising internal communication tend to have increased employee engagement (Chong, 2007). The significance of internal communication in organisations regarding human resource management and its influence on employee performance has been acknowledged (Dhone & Sarwoko, 2022). Sulaiman & Abdullah evaluated internal communication in institutions, focused on the impact had on institutional identification and performance (2019).

Internal communication considerably influenced both employees and institutional efficiency (Slijepčević *et al.*, 2018). Research has shown internal communication played a fundamental aspect which determined institutional productivity. Empirical evidence provided a clear definition of internal communication and demonstrated its significant impact on institutional growth (Chmielecki, 2015). The importance of internal communication in effectively managing an institution has been highlighted, especially in change management and personnel development (Proctor & Doukakis, 2003).

Internal communication within tertiary educational institutions is crucial, impacting multiple aspects of institutional operation. It significantly affected institutional culture, employee engagement, and overall performance (Muyanga & Phiri, 2021). Coordinating activities and properly disseminating information among staff and students is crucial for optimal functioning and communication (Muyanga & Phiri, 2021). The influence of internal communication on work motivation and worker productivity in educational institutions has been recognised (Dhone & Sarwoko, 2022).

The effect of internal communication extended to cultivating trust and employee engagement (Thomas *et al.,* 2009). Effective communication is vital for fostering trust inside an organisation, especially in educational settings where trust between faculty, staff, and students is key for creating an environment conducive to learning (Thomas *et al.*, 2009) and influenced worker dedication, particularly among the millennial cohort, has been emphasised (Parimita, 2021). Furthermore, the literature highlights the significance of internal communication on universal education and adapting to other cultures within educational institutions (Johnston *et al.*, 2020). It is essential to create a comprehensive model of intercultural adaption

ecosystem for tertiary educational institutions to achieve strategic development and long-term competencies (Ilkevich *et al.*, 2021). Internal communication also impacts the distribution of communicative directions and the development of skills in physical and rehabilitation medical education (Gutenbrunner, *et al*, 2014). The results emphasise the crucial significance of internal communication in influencing institutional culture, staff involvement, and overall effectiveness within educational establishments.

Effective internal communication is essential for developing employee views and affecting institutional performance. It ensures employees are adequately informed about the organisation's policies, objectives, and principles (Rodwell *et al.*, 1998). This cultivates trust and dedication among employees, resulting in heightened engagement and productivity. Internal communication facilitates productive collaboration and synergy, enabling efficient sharing of ideas and information. As a result, the institution experiences enhanced decision-making and conflict resolution capacities (Constantin & Băiaş, 2015), additionally, crucial for established favourable institutional culture in which employees feel appreciated, listened to, and incorporated (Constantin & Băiaş, 2015).

2.3. Employee engagement

Employees are fundamental assets for organisational success. Their engagement strongly influences goal achievement and institutional effectiveness. While employee engagement lacks a unified definition, it ensured job satisfaction, involvement, commitment, and citizenship behaviour.

Employee engagement, often viewed as the opposite of burnout, involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements that show dedication to organisational goals. It goes beyond basic duties, requiring additional personal effort. Despite varying definitions, employee engagement clearly connects to improved corporate performance through physical, cognitive, and emotional investment in work roles (Lee *et al*, 2022). This complexity calls for a comprehensive framework to understand its various aspects and impacts.

Engaged employees are driven, proactive, and highly productive individuals who are intellectually and emotionally dedicated to their profession. According to Sias (2005), engaged workers willingly contributed discretionary effort beyond their required duties. These employees typically display several key characteristics: positive work attitude, strong organisational loyalty, active workplace improvement, peer support, exceeding expectations, maintaining industry awareness, and seeking opportunities to enhance institutional achievement (Harley *et al.*, 2005).

Baumruk *et al.* (2006) identified three common behaviours of engaged employees exhibited; advocacy for the institution, strong desire to stay despite other opportunities, and investment of additional time and resourcefulness.

Coleman (2005) noted a shift from simple job satisfaction to a more comprehensive organisational commitment. Over the past fifteen years, the focus evolved from basic job contentment to measurement of levels of engagement. This shift necessitated revision of traditional satisfaction metrics to include engagement scales (Harley, 2005).

Modern employees sought more than just remuneration from their organisations. According to D'Aprix (1999), they desired additional benefits from their employment relationship. Organisations have recognized a gap between employee desires and current benefits. Workers now seek; organisation's trustworthiness, beliefs and aims alignment, meaningful work, emotional and intellectual connections, and work fulfilment (Eldor & Harpaz, 2016).

The field of employee engagement presented opportunities for academic research to provide practical solutions for organisations seeking to enhance their workforce engagement and effectiveness. This research could bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical implementation of engagement strategies. In this study, we focused on one potential remedy, namely communication, and analyse its impact on engagement.

2.4. Changes in internal communication

This study investigated institutional communication as well as the procedure by which messages are distributed, known as communications. Internal communication is described to be a process of exchanging information, formally and informally, amid the management and staff of an organisation. Communications refer to the specific technologies and systems employed for the purpose of transmitting and receiving communications. Methods of communication can include various forms such as newsletters, surveys, meetings, email, and related means. These methods have been discussed and researched by various authors (Baumruk *et al.*, 2006; DeBussy *et al.,* 2003; Goodman & Truss, 2004). The research acknowledged which elements listed above are a blend of the communication and the tools. The anticipation of this survey was to underscore these factors on employee engagement.

Although the study of internal communication is relatively new, it has seen significant changes within a short time. In 1982, D'Aprix emphasised the importance of effectively interacting with employees during a crucial period and advocated in place of the reassessment of internal communication. Regarding communication of institutions, it was considered that a deficiency in clarity, insufficient financial resources, a scarcity of skilled personnel, and a narrow-minded perspective was epitomised. The need for improvements in corporate communication arose due to the combination of "near sighted vision" and changes in the workforce. D'Aprix (1982) elaborated, "Organisations are now faced with a distinct type of employee compared to previous times - an employee who seeks job satisfaction, values personal choices, and desires expressive duties". Erstwhile to the implementation of employee engagement initiatives, organisations mostly concentrated on assessing employee satisfaction as a means of understanding their employees' sentiments about their workplace (Eldor & Harpaz, 2016).

The variables pertaining to internal communication and job satisfaction are insufficient to meet the current demands of institutions. Organisations can no longer rely on a simple survey indicating employee satisfaction; they must establish strategies to actively involve and motivate their personnel. Nevertheless, organisations that have established a structured method of routinely engaging with their staff may not automatically

guarantee success in the economic realm. Simply engaging in communication with staff is not sufficient to ensure the success of an institution; instead, those who have a structured approach to effective communication distinguish themselves from others. According to the Watson Wyatt (2004) survey, institutions, which have good communication are more likely to be successful in several areas of communication. However, there is less knowledge on the strategic approaches that may be employed to enhance employee engagement. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of study and corporate comprehension regarding employee engagement.

2.5. The correlation amid internal communication and employee engagement

Several things can help get workers invested. According to Baumruk *et al.* (2006), Kahn (1990), and Woodruffe (2006), management's interest in well-being, coaching, career development, recognition, rewards, accountability, satisfaction, meaningful work, perceived safety, adequate resources, individual attention, management's interest in well-being, challenging work, input in decision making, clear vision of the organisation's goals, and autonomy are all factors that contribute to employee engagement.

Internal communication facilitates the dissemination, support, and communication of these variables. The suggested correlation amid internal communication and employee engagement, be it implied else stated directly, could prompt further investigation which either validate or challenge this concept. While the objective of any organisation should be to achieve good communication, it is important to note that communication alone is only the initial stage. An organisation that lacks open communication can have detrimental consequences, as it compels employees to engage in speculation, rely on rumours, and seek information about their company from external sources such as the media (Hoover, 2005). During periods of transformation and difficulty, effective communication is crucial for maintaining the viability of a firm. According to Hoover (2005), effective communication is crucial for keeping staff engaged and ensuring the progress of the organisation, even during times of crisis. In contrast, the absence of communication can give rise to a "discrepancy between the information employees receive from their manager and what they observe in the media. This, in turn, results in unfocused and demotivated employees who experience a sense of distrust stemming from a lack of transparency, regardless of whether it is actual or perceived." To maximise their effectiveness, organisations should develop a communication plan that prioritises internal messaging and media while also being flexible enough to adapt to external messages.

Proficient communicators experience reduced employee resistance and turnover, increased shareholder returns, enhanced commitment, and elevated levels of employee engagement (Goodman & Truss, 2006; Guzley, 1992; Sias, 2005; Yates, 2006). According to Yates, successful communication techniques have a direct impact on employee engagement, dedication, retention, and productivity. This, in turn, leads to improved corporate performance and provides higher financial returns.

Multiple academic studies have emphasised the significant impact of internal communication on employee engagement in various corporate settings. Welch and Jackson (2007) emphasised the importance of internal communication in fostering employee engagement inside organisations. In addition, Mmutle (2022) and Welch (2011) highlighted the significant link between internal communication and employee engagement. Another study also investigated the impact of internal communication and employee well-being on employee performance, emphasising the intermediary function of employee engagement (Sumarno & Iqbal, 2022).

Mishra *et al.* (2014), also intimated that engaged employees were those who have a deep emotional connection to their workplace, actively promote it to others, and dedicate their time and effort to contribute to the organisation's success. This definition highlights the complex and diverse aspects of employee engagement. Furthermore, Verčić & Vokić (2017) and Karanges *et al.* (2015) conducted studies that delved deeper into insights into the ways in which internal communication practices help to improving employee engagement.

Employee engagement referred to the extent to which workers exercise autonomy in their job tasks (Frank *et al.*, 2004; Shuck & Wollard 2011). Saks (2006), intimated that an engaged workforce contributes to achieving organisational goals and enhancing productivity. Although managers worldwide have recognised the benefits of prioritising, emphasising, and allocating resources to create an engaged workforce, recent industry research suggested that these efforts may not be achieving the desired results, and nevertheless (Iyer & Israel, 2012) have identified internal communication as a crucial element in fostering employee engagement.

Internal communication plays a crucial role in promoting employee engagement within higher educational institutions in Ghana. According to a recent study by Imam *et al.* (2022), it was discovered that supervisor support, employee engagement, and internal communication are closely linked in terms of their impact on performance.

2.6. Theoretical review
2.6.1. Social exchange theory

Social Exchange Theory is a theoretical framework that examined social interactions and associations of the exchange of resources and benefits between individuals (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The social exchange theory posited that individuals have a tendency to optimise their gains and minimise their losses when making choices and commitments to a particular cause or organisation. The theory aimed to forecast the variables that can alter the configuration of relationships, assuming that individuals will modify relationships in order to achieve a state of fairness where the perceived benefits are equivalent to the perceived drawbacks of any association or connection (Karanges *et al.*, 2014).

Interpersonal connections are crucial elements of professional life (Masterson *et al.*, 2000), significantly impacting work environments (Bartunek & Dutton 2000) and employees' self-perception (Gersick *et al.*, 2000). Social Exchange Theory (SET) serves as the primary framework for understanding workplace relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), encompassing leader-member exchange, transformational leadership,

organisational support, and trust. S*Et al*igns with service-dominant logic, which examined value creation between organisations and stakeholders (Vargo & Lusch 2008).

Employees maintain social exchange relationships with supervisors, colleagues, customers, suppliers, and the organisation (Masterson *et al.*, 2000). Two primary relationships shape an employee's work life; relationship with the organisation and relationship with direct supervisor (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). SET theory indicates that effective internal communication is crucial for managing employee uncertainty and frustrations (Gallup, 2013; Luo & Jiang, 2014). Also, internal communication can be analysed through social exchange theory as relationships depend on mutual dependency (Karanges *et al.*, 2014), and to acquire valuable resources, and maintain long-term relationships (Cook *et al.*, 2006).

2.6.2. The relational coordination model

Heredero *et al.* (2015), suggested that the pursuit of academic excellence is a significant concern for educational institutions, as well as employees and decision- makers globally. In this context, implementing the relational coordination model can enhance outcomes and account for the superior levels of academic excellence achieved by certain universities. The authors argue that while communication processes may not appear problematic on the surface, a closer examination reveals that most internal communication lacks a common mission. This lack of shared purpose could hinder the pursuit of excellence.

The relational coordination model, established by Gittell in 2002, is a theoretical framework consisting of three primary assertions; relationships characterised by common objectives, shared expertise, and mutual admiration. These dimensions then result in relationship coordination, strong relational coordination; and organisations establish their own relationship structures and processes to mitigate sub-goal optimisation.

Gittel (2010) emphasised that the use of the relational coordination model in higher education focused on recognising the significance of coordinating relationships and communication dynamics within institutions to achieve optimal outcomes. The relational model asserts that through consistent and effective communication, bolstered by common goals, knowledge, and mutual esteem, employees and stakeholders exhibit greater loyalty and dedication to the organisations.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological theory underlying the study is positivism. Antwi and Hamza (2015) define positivism as a philosophical perspective in which scholars address problems in an objective manner, without allowing their personal biases to influence the examination of the actual topic. The positivists believe that a social phenomenon are borne out of objectiveness which arise out of statistics and numerical analysis. Stated more assertively, reality consists of objective interpretations and cannot be studied subjectively.

This study uses the positivist lens. A positivist research philosophy, according to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), involved testing an existing theory. According to Lee *et al.* (2022), in contrast to a positivist philosophy, a constructivist or interpretivist philosophy assumes that there are several features that can be discovered through subjective methods. The positivist approach adopted for this study assures that objective interpretations were provided based on statistical data and analysis.

3.1. Study area

The Presbyterian University, Ghana (PUG), was founded in April 2003 by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. It received institutional accreditation from the National Accreditation Board, now known as the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, in November 2003, allowing it to start functioning. The PUG initially offered two undergraduate degrees in Business Administration and Information and Communication Technology. The University presently offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the fields of Social Science, Humanities, Health and Medical Sciences, Education, and Science and Technology. Since its first certification in 2003, the PUG has expanded to include six faculties, each containing nine departments. These departments collectively provide fifteen (15) undergraduate degrees and twelve (12) postgraduate programmes. The PUG achieved autonomy when the President of Ghana granted it Charter Status in March 2022. The University's head is located at Kwahu Abetifi, situated in the Kwahu East District within the Eastern region of Ghana. There are five (5) campuses the University possesses in Ghana. They are Okwahu campus which is the Head campus among the campuses of the University, Asante Akyem campus, Akuapem campus, Kumasi campus, and Tema campus. The University's staff population consists of 245 individuals, including management, lecturers, administrators, and junior staff, who serve in different roles and capacities. The population of the study is made up of all employees within Presbyterian University, Ghana. Which according to the head of human resource the University had a total of 245 employees.

Therefore it is attempted to evaluate the impact of internal communication and employee engagement within Presbyterian University, Ghana.

3.2. Sample selection process

The study adopted random sampling method of probability sampling in which every element of the sample frame has an equal probability of being selected for inclusion in the sample (Pace, 2021).

Following the sample size estimation rule by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 148 is required for such large population for the study. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) established that a sample size of 150 is sufficient to accurately reflect a population of 245. The statistical quantification of the data is influenced by the sample size.

Here is the formula for arriving at the sample size according to Krejcie & Morgan (1970):

$$S = \frac{x^2\,NP\{1\text{-}PP\}}{d^2\,(N\text{-}1)+x^2\,P\{1\text{-}P\}}$$

Where,

s = sample size required

X^2 = 1 degree of freedom at the preferred confidence level

(3.841) N = Size of Population
P = Population proportion
d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

3.3. Data collection

Data was gathered through closed-ended questionnaires to the employees at the various campuses, notably through face-to-face interactions and via their respective Staff WhatsApp platforms. The questionnaire was into sections; background information about the respondents, including questions about internal communications, and employee engagement and the relationship between internal communications and employee engagement.

3.4. Data analysis

The data collected from the answered questionnaires was analysed using SPSS v27, a structural equation modelling, and adopted SMART-PLS 3 to test for the hypothesis of the study. The variables were measured using a primary data source through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were adopted to summarise the internal communications methods and elements of employee engagement. The study used inferential statistics to also determine the significance of the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the analysis of the acquired information, providing background details about the respondents. The following data presents the gender, age, educational level, and staff category of the respondents at the Presbyterian University in Ghana. The demographic distribution of the respondents is displayed in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Demographics of respondents

Variable	Level	Frequency	Total	Proportion
Age	18 – 23 years	4		0.027
	24 – 30 years	30		0.2
	31 - 40 years	55	150	0.367
	41-50 years	39		0.26
	Above 50 years	22		0.147
Gender	Male	97	150	0.647
	Female	53		0.353
What is your level of education?	PhD	27		0.18
	Master's Degree	68		0.453
	Bachelor's Degree	29		0.193
	Diploma	6	150	0.04
	S.S.C.E / WASSCE	8		0.053
	B.E.C.E.	4		0.027
	No formal education	8		0.053
What category of Staff do you fall under in the University?	Senior Management	16		0.107
	Senior Member (Academic)	37		0.247
	Senior Member (Administrative)	33	150	0.22
	Senior Staff	38		0.253
	Junior Staff	26		0.173
How many years have you been working with the University?	10 years and above	48		0.32
	5 – 9 years	54		0.36
	1 – 4 years	43	150	0.287
	Less than 1 year	5		0.033

Upon analysing Table 1, the age distribution, it is clear that most of the staff members belong to the 31 to 40 years age range, making up 36.7% of the sample. The next largest group is the 41 to 50 years age range, comprising 26.7% of the sample. The age group of 18 to 23 years has the smallest percentage, accounting for 2.7% of the population, whereas individuals aged 50 years and above make up 14.0% of the population. This shows that majority of the respondents were the adult youth demographic, likely possessing the inclination to understanding internal communication. Furthermore, of the respondents of 150,

ninety-six were identified as men, accounting for 64.0%, while fifty-four indications of females, accounting for 36.0% of the total. This indicates that most staff are males likely due to the roles of responsibility.

Amongst the respondents to determine the educational attainment, including their qualifications and whether they had received any formal education. It is evident that in terms of level of education, Master's degree sixty-eight has the highest representation with 45.3%, followed by bachelor's degree twenty-nine at 19.3%, PhD followed by twenty-six at 17.3% and SSCE/WASSCE eight at 5.3%. The B.E.C.E category represented the smallest proportion at 2.7% while those with No formal education make up 6.0%. This shows that more staff with Master's degree completed predominantly responded to the survey as compared to other staff.

Of the category of designation of the respondents, it was classified into five groups namely; Senior Management, Senior member (Academic), Senior member (Administrative), Senior Staff and Junior Staff. It became obvious that thirty-eight employees, representing 25.3% of the respondents identified as Senior staff, thirty-six people, representing 24.0% are identified as Senior member (Academic), thirty-three people, representing 22.0% are Senior member (Administrative) and sixteen representing 10.7% are identified as Senior Management. There were respondents of twenty-seven representing 18.0% as Junior Staff. This verifies that majority of employees fall under Senior members of the University.

Also, concerning the number years the Staff has rendered their services to the University, survey data shows, there were fifty-four respondents, representing 36.0% have worked for 5-9 years, followed by forty-eight (48) respondents, representing 32.0% who have worked for 10 years and above, and forty-three (43) respondents, representing 28.7% have worked for 1-4 years. Five (5) respondents have worked for less 1 year, representing 3.3%. The number of years indicated how the respondents understood the impact of the survey undertaken. Data analysis, indicated by the p-values, demonstrates significant differences in proportions across as gender, age range, level of education and category of staff with all variables showing p-values less than .001 when tested against the value of 0.5.

Table 2. Factor loadings of the constructs

Items Code	Employee Engagement	Internal Communication
EE1	0.561	
EE10	0.842	
EE11	0.525	
EE12	0.718	
EE13	0.678	
EE14	0.724	
EE15	0.759	
EE16	0.718	
EE17	0.365	
EE2	0.453	
EE3	0.854	
EE4	0.872	
EE5	0.749	
EE6	0.535	
EE7	0.808	
EE8	0.521	
EE9	0.164	
IC1		0.682
IC10		0.667
IC11		0.799
IC12		0.731
IC13		0.753
IC14		0.758
IC15		0.818
IC16		0.838
IC17		0.786
IC18		0.514
IC19		0.804
IC2		0.62
IC3		0.715
IC4		0.546
IC5		0.71
IC6		0.719
IC7		0.72
IC8		0.811
IC9		0.82

Table 2 presents the factor loadings for each item related to the constructs of Employee Engagement and Internal Communication. Factor loading indicates the strength of the relationship between each item and its respective construct. Items with higher factor loadings contribute more significantly to the construct. For Employee Engagement, items EE3 (0.854) and EE4 (0.872) show high loadings, while for Internal Communication, items IC8 (0.811), IC9 (0.82), IC15 (0.818), IC16 (0.838) and IC19 (0.804) have high loadings. Items with loadings below a certain threshold of 0.7 might be considered for removal as they do not strongly associate with the intended construct.

Table 3. Validity and reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Engagement	0.918	0.936	0.925	0.442
Internal Communication	0.952	0.958	0.956	0.536

Table 3 displays the measures of Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for both Employee Engagement and Internal Communication. These metrics assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.7 generally indicate good internal consistency. The AVE values, which reflect the amount of variance captured by the construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error, should ideally be above 0.5 to establish convergent validity. Employee Engagement shows a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.918, rho_A of 0.936, Composite Reliability of 0.925, and AVE of 0.442. Internal Communication has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.952, rho_A of 0.958, Composite Reliability of 0.956, and AVE of 0.536. We could therefore conclude that the Staff of PUG were satisfied with the systems of internal communication being utilised.

4.2. The extent of internal communication within a higher educational institution in Ghana.

This section discussed the issues of internal communication in higher educational institution by focusing on what employees' expectations and how communication with their superiors within the organisation.

As per Table 4 below, this study analysed the internal communication within Presbyterian University, Ghana. There were 19 items measuring this construct, the findings indicated a generally favourable opinion concerning the significance attributed to employee feedback by their superiors. This is because on the Likert scale of 1 to 5, the mean values ranged from 3.11 to 4.19. The analysis showed an average mean of 3.501. Results indicate a generally favourable opinion about the trustworthiness of information provided by management, with a mean score of 3.60. The majority of the respondents perceive information from superiors as reliable and credible.

Table 4. Level of internal communications

Variable	Average Mean	Average Std. Deviation
Internal Communication	3.501	1.1169

Largely, the internal communication among employees at Presbyterian University, Ghana was found to be at a moderate to high level at an average mean score of 3.501. This suggested that employees at the University generally agree that the University effectively communicates internally. The results suggested that staff at Presbyterian University, Ghana (PUG) have a favourable view of internal communication. This was found to be in support with studies from Johnson *et al.* (2020) and Rodwell *et al.*, (2008) that internal communication is very important in organisational settings.

4.3. Employee engagement in a higher educational institution

This section examines the variable employee engagement in a higher educational institution and the perceptions of employees and being engaged in terms of their physical, mental vitality, dedication and absorption of themselves into the work with the University. The Table 5 below provides and analyse the data collected.

According to Table 5, there is a high level of both physical and mental vitality among employees during working hours. This is evidenced by the mean values which ranges from 3.38 to 4.27 with reference to the Likert scale (1 to 5) regarding the employee engagement in the University. Therefore, it suggests that this experience is not consistent among all employees. Further, the data demonstrated a significant level of dedication to work among employees exhibiting a significant emotional attachment to their work. This demonstrates that the respondents consider it essential that there is a high level of both physical and mental vitality among employees during working hours which made them satisfied in the University. This supports past research (Lee *et al.*, 2022; Harley *et al.*, 2005), which has established employees consider both physical and mental vitality attachment within the context of an organisation.

Table 5. Employee engagement in the university

Variable	Average Mean	Average Std. Deviation
Employee Engagement	3.87	0.9623

4.4. The relationship between Internal communication and employee engagement

This section looks into the relationship that internal communication would have on employee engagement.

Table 6: Statistical Relationship

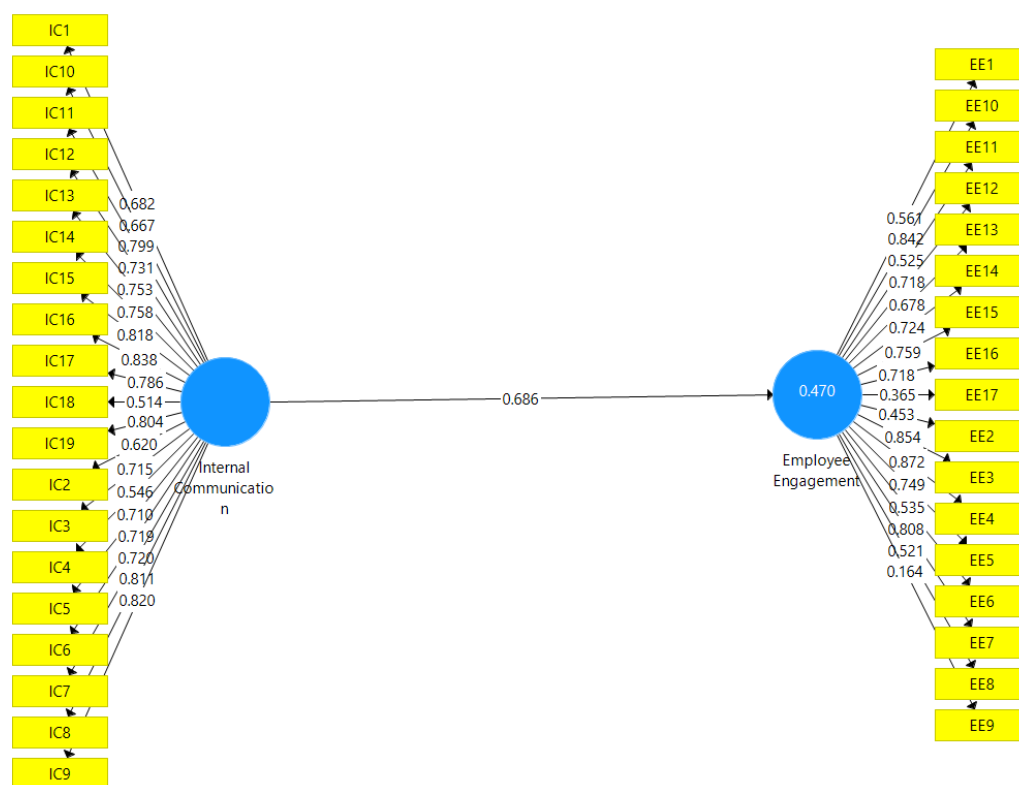| Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Internal Communication -> Employee Engagement	0.686	0.697	13.102	0

Figure 1. Structural equation modelling for the constructs

Table 6 illustrates the relationship between Internal Communication and Employee Engagement using Structural Equation Modelling from SMART PLS. The original sample mean (0.686) indicates the strength and direction of the relationship. The T-statistics (13.102) and P-values (0.000) are used to determine the statistical significance of the relationship. A p-value of 0 indicates a highly significant relationship, suggesting that Internal Communication has a significant positive impact on Employee Engagement. This can be concluded that the effective internal communication strategies lead to highly probable levels of employee engagement in higher educational institution and aligns with Kim (2018) and Mishhra *et al.* (2018).

The results of this study provide empirical support for the significant direct relationship between internal communication and employee engagement. Internal communication emerged as a strong predictor of employee engagement, indicating that timely, transparent, and reliable communication strategies foster greater motivation, energy, and emotional attachment among employees in the Presbyterian University, Ghana. This aligns with prior research (Kim, 2018; Mishra *et al.*, 2014), which has established internal communication as a promoter for enhancing employee involvement and organisational commitment. This suggests that while relational factors such as trust, mutual respect, and long-term commitment are important, they do not serve as an intermediary in the internal communication-engagement relationship within the context of Presbyterian University, Ghana.

5. CONCLUSION
It is evident from the study that implications derived from the empirical findings that internal communication assumes a pivotal role in the interpretation and dissemination of the business strategy, objectives, and governance within a higher educational institution. Internal communication augments the flow of information within an organisation and cultivates a collective goal, thereby conferring a competitive advantage upon the institution.

Organisations that adeptly leverage internal communication to comprehend their workforce are capable of optimizing their performance by fostering a resilient and reciprocal dialogue that enhances organisational prosperity.

Further, higher educational institutions should establish initiatives that explicitly link internal communication strategies to outcomes related to employee engagement. Noteworthy examples include recognition programmes, collaborative projects, and career development opportunities that are communicated effectively and made readily accessible to all personnel.

The research advocates that organisational policy-makers devise and promote protocols aimed at enhancing effective internal communication within institutions. The emphasis of these guidelines should be on fostering transparency, ensuring clarity, and sustaining consistency within communication processes. Additionally, it is imperative to develop measurable criteria and standards to assess the impact of internal communication on employee engagement. These metrics can facilitate organisations in appraising and refining their communication practices.

Nevertheless, one may conclude that the current body of literature has not comprehensively scrutinised the nexus between employee engagement and the quality of internal

communication in higher educational institution. In a limited array of studies, the research conducted conclude that effective internal communication fosters a sense of affiliation and alignment with organisational values, thereby enhancing employee engagement.

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