

---

## Effects of Organisational Communication on Group Cohesion in a Multi-Campus University

Charles Baba Campion

University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

### ABSTRACT

*The style in which organisations communicate with their employees could have an effect on their motivation, morale and performance. Organizational communication in a multi-campus University (University of Education, Winneba (UEW) could result in delays, distortion, high cost, and reduction in quality of information flow within and/or across campuses. This study examined the effect of communication on group cohesion in a multi-campus system, University. Multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 313 staff using Krejcie and Morgan Table from a population of 1,739. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Descriptive and inferential statistics in the form of percentages, means, factor analysis, cluster analysis, and chi-square were used to analyse data. The results revealed a good perception of the communication in the University with a grand mean value of 3.86 from a five point likert scale; though bureaucracy and red-tape were pervasive. The two step cluster analysis revealed four groups of employee cohesion patterns. Cluster I and II showed high cohesion while clusters III and IV showed low cohesion. Staff rank and campus influenced the cohesion patterns and membership of a cluster (group). The cohesion among staff results in cordiality and collaborations that ensures complementarity in terms of job performance, promotion/transfer of staff, communication facilities, level of development/growth, staff morale on communication and clarity of University policies. The study recommends for the standardisation and decentralization of administrative and managerial functions in multi campus institutions for effective cohesion.*

**Key words:** Group Cohesion, Multi-Campus University, Organisaional Communication, Staff

### INTRODUCTION

In any work setting and indeed among humans, effective communication flow could enhance administrative performance between employees and management of the organisation. Communication allows organisations to exploit the value information has for their proper functioning, effective and efficient performance, competitiveness and continued success. Communication in every organisation is, therefore, a critical resource for performance. Effective communication takes place when there is a perfect convergence in meaning between the sender and the receiver. Wright (2005) stressed that communication in organisation is the development of a common understanding between the communicator and the manager or practitioner about both the existence and utility of an innovation, leaving the same encounter with different perceptions of that encounter. Morrison (2014) also indicated that of all the life skills available to us, communication is perhaps the most empowering in work settings. It is therefore imperative to view organisational communication as a process with the embodiment of social units formed by individuals with different views and knowledge aimed at a common goal through establishing links with external world with the information they gained from the environment.

According to Adereti et al. (2006), it is when data have been put into a meaningful and useful context that one can say communication has taken place with another and a decision is made. Samuel (2001) indicated that information on the other hand is data for decision-making collected as a resource and passed on as acquired and used in order to make an informed decision. Consequently, accessing communication is implicit across organisations, while disseminating information is explicit to staff. This implies that communication could constitute a great asset to organizations if the appropriate quantity and quality of information obtained is

seriously considered. Shoveller (1987) posited several reasons for distortion in organisational communication resulting in communication dissatisfaction which includes: individuals failing to accept the responsibility to communicate and the lack of interest on the part of the receiver as well as non-convergent in meaning of what are being communicated. Cramton (2001) indicated that management of knowledge resources for knowledge workers in different locations is often difficult than management of centralised knowledge workers. Some organisations with dispersed centers or branches, members often face difficulty or inability to create and maintain mutual knowledge and understanding about work-related issues. This may thus cause misunderstanding, distrust or even frustration among staff of the organisation.

The perception of organisational communication is also considered as the way people view and feel about communication. According to Akinsorotan (2001), perception is a psychological reasoning or conclusion drawn from observing a given phenomenon following experience or prevailing conditions. It is an active cognitive process, a mechanistic system fixed by inherent structure of the nervous system. Poon (2002) stated that several factors, including strength and quality of stimuli, attention, cognitive style, arrangement of subject matter, the experience of the child, physical and emotional health, mood of individual and other factors influence the perception of the individual at work. Furthermore, personal factors such as attitudinal needs, values, credit, situational factors (like work ambiguity, climate and financial factors) could also influence perception of the individual. Hinkson and Keith (2000) indicated that the individual's current appraisal of an object is his perception. It is therefore recognised with social psychologist around the world that perceptions towards work activities including organisational communication affect responses on how people speak, think and view situations in general.

Hence, perception of organisational communication could facilitate or slow the flow of information in a given environment. The flow of information in organisations depends on the necessary tools available to ensure that staff who communicate adhere to the standards and regulations that are embraced by members in the organisation. In the University set up, the effectiveness of organisational communication on administrative performance could be complex most especially in a multi-campus institution like the University of Education, Winneba (UEW).

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The University of Education has four satellite campuses in Ghana, namely: Winneba, Kumasi, Mampong and Ajumanko. It is perceived that, their spatial nature has the potential of posing challenges to effective communication and group cohesion. These campuses rely on means of communication with networks of technology available, staff support, laid down procedures and patterns, and even means of transport (vehicles). Considering the volume of teaching and learning activities and the growing numbers of students relative to the limited resources available, UEW communication systems could have challenges that could affect cohesion of staff. Besides, individuals and groups with their locations in different places without the opportunity to physically group, could have challenges in collaboration and easy flow with work. As indicated in Cramton (2001) that, some organisations with dispersed centers or branches, members often face difficulty or inability to create and maintain mutual knowledge and understanding about work-related issues. The situation could therefore affect the core mandate of the University and quality delivery of services as a whole. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to find answers to the perception of organisational communication on group cohesion in a multi-campus University, like the UEW.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Organisational Communication

Communication is derived from a Latin word 'Communicare' which means to make common, to share, to impart or to transmit. Today, the idea of "sharing" is still the core of communication and definitions of the term. Simply put, communication is the process of conveying message from one person to the other, with the

recipient of the message understanding the content and the meaning of the message (Rouse and Rouse, 2005). According to Barth (2003) communication touches every sphere of human activity and it is an important instrument of social interaction. Communication provides a means by which people in business, industry, politics and the professions act and interact; exchange information and ideas; develop policies, plans and proposals; make decisions and manage people and materials. Barth (2003) argued further that, in both public and private organisations, business and industry, communication helps to orient workers to one another and to the goals of an organisation, and it is the same means by which such goals can be pursued, attained, sustained and improved.

According to the Harvard Business Review's (1999), the process of communication could be classified at the micro levels; formal and informal communications; and internal communication practices (memos, circulars, newsletters, presentations, strategic communications, work direction, performance reviews, and meetings) as well as externally directed communications (public, media, inter-organisational). Baker (2003) also pointed out that communication process could address issues such as innovation, organisational learning, knowledge management, conflict management, diversity, and communication technologies. Thill (2000), defined organisational communication as "exchanging knowledge and opinions in the organisation", while Argenti (2003) defines it as "allowing the creation of a positive atmosphere for all employees of an organisation". These definitions make organisational communication a wider dimensional concept rather than information traffic per se. Effective communication in organisation should involve free a transfer of information from the executive to subordinate and the vice versa. However, as organisation becomes bigger and more complex, communication also becomes more difficult necessitating the need for quality institutional communication (Kalla, 2005). Barth (2003) added that the subject under review is the lubricant that keeps the machinery of bureaucratic organisations functioning; it is the means through which roles are identified and assigned; and, serves as the life-blood of an organisation. The role of communication in modern organisations therefore emphasises its importance in human interaction, of which this research focuses on.

In many ways, organisations have evolved in the directions that make appropriate changes confronting organisations and the associated changes and forms, according to Von Krogh et al (2000); and that have made communication in organisations increasingly important to the overall organisational functions. Anon (2012) quoting from Rogers and Rogers (1996) and Neher (1997) emphasised on social and organisational functions of communications rather than focusing on areas of specific communication exchanges. Thus they combined the functions of informing, directing, and regulating into the broader category of behavioural compliance and made the role of communication in managing threats to organisational order and control.

More literature indicated that communication is the most important variable for management and administrative performance process and it is the key to successful integration of two potentially clashing organisational cultures (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Shearer et al. (2001) opined that integrating different goals, values, beliefs, ideas, systems, leadership styles, management practices, and processes should all form part of communication. Indeed, the problems often arise from lack of understanding between working groups in merging companies, or between headquarters and subsidiaries that decrease the effectiveness of cooperation (Noerreklit and Schoenfeld, 2000). Thus, communication is necessary for forming a strong commitment to blending business cultures and operations, required for achieving successful job performance (Henry, 2002).

Appelbaum et al., (2000) further argued that change in organisations requires not only that good decisions should be made about how the change will affect profits, productivity, or quality, but also that these points should be well communicated. Yazdifar (2005) added that effective communication will inform employees that it is not what is done (or is going to be done), but rather why and how it is done (or will be done) which really matters. Emphasising on the importance of communication, Cartwright and Cooper (2009) also suggested the need to avoid ambiguous language and jargon specific to organisations in the communication process. This is important both at the time of the announcement and throughout the integration period, in order to dispel rumours, reduces uncertainty and overcome the 'fear-the-worst'

syndrome. Employees in public service organisations have the tendency to attend to information which reinforces their worst fears regardless of the validity of the source (Cartwright and Cooper, 2009). Cooper (2009) indicated that clearly communicating on a regular basis, even if the content of the message is only to reaffirm that at the current time, was important. Appropriate communications, in addition to other requirements such as training, will equip employees with the knowledge and tools to help them deal productively with the concept of constant change, to develop new relationships and to engender the support of output (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Hence, true business transformation means equipping employees with actionable knowledge and skills to achieve business results (Henry, 2002).

From the foregoing it should be noted that all forms of communication do not have the same effect, and true communication is difficult to achieve since the communication process faces numerous potential obstacles (Appelbaum et al., 2000) and may lead to “confusion or distortion”, “misunderstanding or different interpretations” Furthermore, Henry (2002) emphasised that, appropriate communication was necessary for change in behaviours. Arguably, systems of measurement and accountability display the potential for improving intra organisation communication by infusing managers and ‘non-accountants’ with a common financial vocabulary for communication and ‘reading’ the state of the business affairs (Busco, 2001).

### **Group cohesion**

Group cohesion could be regarded as the degree to which a number of people constantly work together in a given environment for the achievement of a common goal. Yoo and Alavi (2001) found that in established groups, group cohesion had a larger influence than communication media for measures of task participation and social presence. Furthermore, they found that group cohesion influenced how group members perceived communication media in established organisations. Yoo and Alavi (2001) again argued that group cohesion can sometimes help to improve the richness of lean media. Cohesiveness is an important component of every groups, and it contributes to the overall effectiveness of the goals of the group. An effective way for a leader to increase the cohesiveness of their group is to become competent in nonverbal communication. Also, nonverbal competence is important to interaction within the group in order to correct inadvertent messages, and if possible, to eliminate them (Daniels 2002). Further, those groups that are cohesive tend to be happier and more productive (Engleberg and Wynn, 2003). According to Kolb, Jin, and Song (2008), most teamwork training effectively covers relationship management, yet not much attention is directed toward communication and conflict.

McBride (2006) writes that the more cohesive the group, the happier and more productive the group is. When leading a small group, it is important to understand the appropriate times to use nonverbal competence to avoiding misunderstandings which pays a high reward by enhancing our self-esteem and gaining the esteem of others (Caputo, Hazel, McMahon, and Dannels, 2002). Engleberg and Wynn (2003) stated that when analyzing the effectiveness of a group, it is important to consider that increased productivity and increased cohesiveness have a reciprocal relationship in the group functionality. From casual peer chatting to formal meetings, regular group discussions, and presentations, small group interactions are governed by complex conscious and subconscious rules (Gatica-Perez, 2009). In addition to the above, Kolb, Jin, and Song (2008), indicated that organisations benefit greatly from effective teamwork, unfortunately, (despite possessing the necessary members, tools, and resources) not all groups today have successful outcomes. However, effective ways to improve worker performance are sought more and more today, and group performance is one of the most important focal points (Robertson and Huang, 2005). Numerous scholars have studied the value and properties of group effectiveness and such studies have shown that the abilities of the leaders are important in terms of group effectiveness (Kolb, Jin and Song, 2008).

Close and collaborative relationships with customers may be an important factor in influencing cohesion and performance (Riggio, 2006), market performance (Swink and Song, 2007) and innovation (Koufteros et al., 2007). Stokes (1993) indicated that because of its strategic nature, supplier integration can be characterized by the collaborative and long-term relationship between buyer and supplier involving high levels of trust, commitment and information sharing; which could be no different from group cohesion.

### Multi Campus University

Holland and Sullivan (2005) indicated that a multi-campus institution most often has a complex and challenging administrative perspective. A typical multi campus institution with its mission drives the policies, practices, services, and organisational structure at each campus. Campuses that are part of a large University system generally have diverse student populations, including those from senior secondary schools, moving through a four-year program, or matured students who are much older and employed. In addition, individual campuses and their schools/faculties, typically develop business processes at different times using a variety of systems. For instance, different tuition and fee, academic year calendars, human resource policies and communication issues vary too. These differences could result in a large diverse constituency that takes into consideration uniformity in communication and general implementation of activities.

In a related study, Yingxian-Zou (2011) pointed out the disadvantages of multi-campus University in China to include: less exchange between teachers and students, the time wasted on the way for teachers, the additional traffic costs for the universities and the environmental pollution caused by additional traffic caused among campuses. In Xi'an Jiaotong University with four campuses at Xingqing, Qujiang, Yanta and Caotan, many lecturers move from one campus to another in long distances with traffic issues every day. Besides these distances, delays and time wasted are huge cost associated with claims from staff on fuel and hotel bills.

One of the few multi-campus universities in Ghana is the University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale in the Northern Region. UDS was established in 1992 as a multi-campus institution and as the fifth public University in Ghana. It was created within the four northern regions of the country in mind, which deviates from the usual practice of having universities with central campuses and administrations. The Brong Ahafo Region, Northern Region, Upper East Region and the Upper West Region were to accommodate UDS under decentralised administrative structures with the Deans forming constituent campuses. This novel experiment brought along with it certain challenges to educational administrators, teachers, learners and surrounding communities.

Similarly, the NIIT in Ghana (now known as Blue Crest College) has also forged an alliance with other partner institutions like the UEW in Ghana for students to acquire degree in IT without leaving the country. With this, are large populations of students with Campuses spread throughout six regions of Ghana to train IT professionals.

### METHODOLOGY

This study used survey method to ascertain the effects of organisational communication on group cohesion in a multi-campus University, UEW. The survey design was used because it is flexible, efficient and the results are generalisable (McMillan, 2004). The population of study was 1,739 comprised of management members, senior members, senior staff and junior staff from all the four campuses of the University. A sample size of 313 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan Table of 1970. The various campuses were stratified into groups namely Winneba, Kumasi, Mampong and Ajumako from which a simple random sampling was used to select the required respondents.

Systematic stratified sampling procedure was used for the study to ensure that all four campuses and all categories and levels of staff were represented in the study. Sampling size was large enough to meet a valid alternative to a survey (as supported in deVaus (2002) who opined that the smaller the absolute sample size of the relative total population sampled, the greater the margin of error and such errors also decreases for larger sample sizes).

The research instruments employed for the study were combination of questionnaires and interviews. The instruments for data collection were developed with the support of four experts in the area of study. Out of the number of questionnaires administered, 309 questionnaires were received from respondents in all campuses after several follow ups. In all however, 304 respondents answered all the 133 questions which resulted in the Cronbach Alpha of 0.83 valid in content and in measurement.

Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive and inferential statistics in the form of percentages, means, factor analysis, cluster analysis, and chi-square were used to analyse data which results were presented in tables. The Kendall Coefficient of Concordance (W) was used to rank constraints to communication in the University. It is a tool that was used to assess agreement among respondents. The researcher also used factor analysis with the Varimax rotation method to categorise the constraints.

Two step cluster analysis was used to analyse group cohesion among respondents and to identify the natural group. Though the variables were measured on a three point Likert scale (low, moderate, high), the two step cluster analysis was deemed appropriate to meet the four groups of employee cohesion patterns. A chi-square test of independence between the groups and employee ranks was also considered here, since employee rank could influence the interest of group patterns. Again the chi-square test for employee membership of a cluster (group) was also used to check the influence level by campus of the employee. All these were carried out to check the consistency of communication practice in the University.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Staff cohesion in the University was expected to influence larger group communication and general participation in University activities. Group cohesion as used in this study refers to the degree to which a number of people constantly work together for the achievement of a common goal. On the whole respondents are of the opinion that group cohesion in the University is moderate with a mean of means of 1.90 which is equivalent to 2 on the scale. All statements with mean values greater than the mean of means value of 1.90, were deemed to influence group cohesion in the University positively.

The first variable, staff cooperation, had a mean value of 2.04 and therefore influences group cohesion in the University. The cohesion among staff has resulted in cordiality and collaborations that ensures complementarity in terms of job performance. Sections within the University complement each others efforts where necessary, to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Staff with heavier work load sometimes get assistance from colleagues. Some departments on the same campus in the University which do not offer sandwich academic programmes, for instance, rely on the support of staff of other departments to augment their manpower base for effective implementation of their programmes. Similarly, there is cross-campus collaboration among staff that makes it possible for staff with special skills and expertise to offer support in the running and management of programmes that require their expertise. Neorrekliit and Schoenfeld (2000) however, opined that the problems of cooperation among staff arises from lack of understanding between working groups in merging organisations and that reduces effectiveness at work. Staff cooperation, according to Alagheband (2004), is rather a mutual communication between subordinates and superiors that makes them more acquainted with each other. Building acquaintances among staff ensures cordiality and harmony which ultimately enables them to work together without much difficulty.

Allowing staff to express their opinions freely on matters relating to the management of the University yielded a mean score of 2.14, meaning that the staff are of the view that expression of opinions has a moderate influence on group cohesion as shown in Table 1. When individuals appear in groups and are given the opportunity to air their views in the University, it could enhance the level of cohesion of those groups. Decision-making process in most cases, give staff the opportunity to make their suggestions and bring forward their views on critical issues. This makes them feel involved and enhances their active participation in the decision-making process. It again enhances ownership of decisions made and thus reduces resistance during implementation. Boree and Thill (2000) are of the view that exchanging knowledge and opinions in organisational communication promotes positive atmosphere in organisations.

The following respondents from the interview conducted appear to be in line with the above outcome,

*“Some meetings like the open forum facilitate group cohesion. The end of year party for me is best and that is where people have the opportunity to socialise. I get satisfied and closer to people when our leader is good and sociable but rather afraid when he is the strict type.”*

Tribalism influences group cohesion in the University with a mean score of 2.08. From the results in Table 1 respondents agreed that the influence of tribalism was moderate within staff of the University. It is normal to find people from the same cultural background with the same values/beliefs interacting more often at work places than they would do with people from other cultural backgrounds. This could result in segregation, sidelining, exclusion, non-recognition and nepotism. Even though tribalism may not be new to staff experiences in UEW, the fact that it has a moderate influence on group cohesion is indicative of the fact that management has to find ways of encouraging interaction across cultures and tribes so as to further reduce its influence to the barest minimum. The findings of this study confirms what was discovered by Grunig et al (2001) and Tindal (2009) that people coming from different backgrounds could promote racial, tribal insensitivity, tension and mistrust in the work place. This sentiment expressed by one of the respondents about the medium of communication lends credence to the influence of tribalism on group cohesion in the University.

*“I feel comfortable communicating in my local language than in English, so I am closer to people from my traditional or cultural background.”*

The effect of dissatisfactions among staff in the University on group cohesion also recorded mean of 2.01 as indicated in Table 1. From the results, it is agreed that dissatisfaction among staff at work was moderate. Factors that make staff unhappy or uncomfortable are most likely to result in dissatisfaction among staff. Some of these factors include management/leadership style, conditions of service, inadequate facilities for work and selective justice. This finding by this study falls in line with the outcome of Zhang and Agarwal (2009) research which indicated that many organisational output including staff dissatisfaction could affect organisational efficiency negatively.

*“When information is not coming, cohesion is slow and sometimes people feel management is hiding things from them or does not seem to care at all.”*

Inadequate or explicit information communicated through the use of circulars, bulletins and magazines is also perceived by the respondents to moderately affect group cohesion with a mean score of 2.08. It is perceived that the use of such documented means of communication could promote group cohesion, enhance performance and promote information flow in the University if staff were well informed and well connected on their availability and use, as their circulation to campuses of the University become a challenge. In the opinion of Cheney and Christenson (2001), lack of adequate information, interaction, the right network and cross-fertilisation of ideas could partly be blamed on poor group cohesion.

Respondents perceived all the remaining statements to have moderate influence on group cohesion in the University. These statements have mean values ranging from 1.65 for gender stereotyping to 2.05 for non-uniformity in salary. University management need to work towards addressing these sentiments or opinions expressed by staff. A further deterioration in group cohesion could create divisions and disunity among staff. This will, in turn reduce staff morale and ultimately affect performance adversely.

Another variable that lowly affected group cohesion was the inadequate nature of capacity building in communication among peers in the University. From the Table 1, the mean score of 2.04 shows that there was an influence of on group cohesion. In effect, the availability of training (long and short term), in-services training, on-the-job training, orientations and attachments for staff in the University, could greatly affect the level of cohesion. Inadequate nature of capacity building in communication among peers was observed by Chory and Hubbell (2008) who stressed that communication barriers that interrupt activities could commence from limited capacity building due to lack of money and time. Interview results obtained equally agrees with by Chory and Hubbell (2008):

*“In-service training brings us together too and that can enhance communication. Promotion is slow and that is not good enough and I think it could affect our togetherness.”*

Non uniformity in the single spine salary structure on group cohesion also influence group cohesion in the University with a mean score of 2.05 recorded, indicating the effect of disparities in pay structure on group cohesion. When senior members, senior staff and junior staff of the University have issues on salary placements and some disparities, it beholds on the Public Service Authorities (PSA) to streamline such issues to avoid possible strikes and other social unrest cases. Non uniformity here is similar to absence of fairness and if not considered could affect not only group cohesion but general commitment of staff in UEW. In a similar argument on fairness in working environment, Podskeoff et al.,(2000) developing their argument from Organ and Ryan (1995) concluded that when personality and citizenship performance are carefully considered, it will result in organisational commitment in the long run. Similarly the results obtained from the interview:

*“Salary and allowances discrimination issues also get me angry and this could reduce cohesion.”*

Other Variables from the analysis have effect on group cohesion but were at a lower level. For instance, promotion/transfer of staff, communication facilities, level of development/growth, staff moral nature of communication and unclear University policy all scored a mean greater than 1.90. In fighting among staff, individual personal interest, inter/intra campus communication, time/place of communication, the use of grapevine information, divide and rule method, the multi campus nature of the University, well defined nature of job description, the availability of information feedback information and the level of motivation were also categorized with score greater than 1.80.

Those variables with less influence on group cohesion recorded mean scores between 1.60 and 1.80, which included: gender stereotyping, information from colleagues. Effect of job improvement/rotation, the use of ICT and periodic training for staff also affects group cohesion. Okiy (2005) in line with similar with the above points out poor and inadequate telecommunication facilities among others as challenges militating against effective communication. Improving on effective communication upwards, grapevine communication, among others, that could more faster in working organisations should be restored to (Keyton, 2011). Again communication based on feed back for effectiveness. Harvey-Jones (2005) indicated that communication must be seen as a dialogue and not a monologue.

### **Cluster Analysis of Staff on Group Cohesion in UEW**

The University promotes the use of committee system which contributes to building team spirit among staff across the organisational structure. Creation of committees are based on policy documents provided by the University and officially communicated to all staff. Team dynamics such as personality differences, qualification and personal interest drive the action(s) of each staff, hence the tendency to either stick to work norms or get involved in other personal matters or organisational politics in an attempt to lobby for specific policy measures to be taken in the University. These team differences, competition and indirect struggle for limited budgeted resources could again result in the formation of natural cliques, given the different background of staff. These cliques again metamorphose into ideological blocs, thereby creating larger groups (clusters) in communicating directives on task execution to promote the objectives of the University.

A two step cluster analysis was therefore used to identify the natural group cohesion of staff in UEW. Though the variables were measured on a three-point Likert scale (low, moderate, high), the two step cluster analysis was deemed appropriate, because, it was to identify the tendency for respondents to converge in a particular group, if even the variables were measured differently or not on the same scale.



**Table 1. Group Cohesion**

Variable	N	Mean	SD
staff cooperation	304	2.04	0.59
staff motivation	301	1.88	0.59
periodic training	300	1.70	0.71
Two-way communication	300	1.84	0.62
Effect of feedback	300	1.84	0.70
Use of ICT	301	1.79	0.68
Opinion expression	297	2.14	0.72
promotion/transfer of staff	301	1.94	0.72
communication facilities	296	1.95	0.75
Information availability	296	1.84	0.65
Well-defined job description	299	1.84	0.79
Effect of job improvement	291	1.73	0.75
multi-campus nature	296	1.86	0.79
level of growth & dev't	294	1.94	0.68
divide & rule method	292	1.80	0.82
staff morale	296	1.91	0.72
use of grapevine information	293	1.90	0.79
effect of tribalism	296	2.08	0.81
self ego/selfishness	290	1.98	0.84
dissatisfaction among staff	294	2.09	0.84
Time of communication	294	1.89	0.81
lack of circulars/bulletins	292	2.08	0.85
Intra/inter campus communication	294	1.90	0.79
Effect of C'tn	296	1.91	0.74
nature of communication	285	1.93	0.79
Information from Colleagues	283	1.80	0.82
Gender stereotyping	288	1.65	0.78
personal interest	282	1.81	0.82
nature of capacity building	287	2.04	0.82
Unclear policy statements	289	1.94	0.84
Non-uniformity in salaries	292	2.05	0.87
In fighting among colleagues	291	1.83	0.88

**Source: Field Survey, 2012****Grand mean 1.90**

In all, four clusters were identified and these were based on staff classification. Cluster one was dominated by Senior members and Senior staff (lecturers, Assistant Registrars, Senior Research Assistants and Senior Administrative Assistants) who are likely to assist or be directly involved in the implementation of the strategic objectives of the University. The cluster is therefore labeled tactical group, which serves as the medium for work plan implementation too. Cluster two was also dominated by Junior and senior staff (Senior Research Assistants, Senior Administrative Assistants and clerks) and is named as operational group



(cluster). This group contributes to communication through proposals, suggestions, appeals and requests. Cluster three (3) comprise only Senior members of the University community: Professors, Registrar, Associate Professors, Deputy Registrars, Senior Lecturers and Senior Assistant Registrars, hence the cluster is the Strategic communication group in the University. The calibre of staff here are likely to make final decisions for the University and approve all plans including the corporate strategic plan initiated by the tactical group. Contingent cluster (group), cluster four (4) on the other hand, is not dominated by any management level group but consists of a mixed spectrum of staff who associate themselves with the work environment based on the situation at hand. Membership of this cluster is drawn from various segments of the University based on expertise, skill, interest among others. A case in point is a committee put in place to investigate issues or staff or a representation to a funeral on behalf of staff in the University.

The clusters, names, membership and their roles are summarised in Table 2. what is common in them is a common objective. There may also have gains from the cluster and their groupings depending on the model, the culture, and certainly, the capacity of the cluster, and staff members. These include the fulfillment of the key steps to effectiveness of the overall implementation, visibility and target of different audiences, knowledge gained about the cluster’s aims, strategy and activities with an instrument to prioritise them without losing strategic sight. Again master relationships in a professional way and with the highest impact and benefit to the cluster partners, increase the chances of reaching the right audience and do so effectively, save the cluster members lots of energy, misunderstanding, and resources, enhance the learning capacity of the cluster to generate behavioural changes to improve the motivation of the people (Cadic Guidelines, 2013).

**Table: 2 Summary of Group of Staff/Roles**

Cluster	Name	Membership	Roles
1	Tactical group	Senior members and senior staff	Supervisory role (leading, directing and instructing) Implementor of tasks
2	Operational group	Senior staff and Junior staff	Executing day to day tasks, workforce (executing task, taking instructions & reporting)
3	Strategic communication group	Senior members	Managerial role of providing vision (terms of reference, resources, discipline, etc)
4	Contingent group	Mixed group	Depending on situation/tasks, staff are selected for particular an specific tasks. (eg. Crises Communication management, Ad-hoc committee, etc)

The four clusters identified represent employee cohesion patterns. Cluster 1 had 105 respondents, representing 34%. Cluster 2 has 107, respondents representing 34.6%. Clusters 3 and 4 had 81 and 16 members, representing 26.2% and 5.2% respectively. A chi-square test of independence between the groups and employee ranks showed  $\chi^2 : 51.797$  (df = 15)  $P < 0.01$ . This means that employee rank has the tendency of influencing group patterns as staff usually will feel more comfortable with colleagues of the same rank. Again the chi-square test for employee membership of a cluster (group) was also influenced by the campus of the employee with  $\chi^2 : 19.061$  (df = 12)  $P < 0.05$ . The results are consistent with communication practice in the University, since ranks and campuses determine the job specification (various campuses have different areas of specialisation). Winneba campus specialises in Arts and Social Science; Kumasi, in Business and Technology; Mampong is into Agriculture while Ajumako specialises in Languages.

## CONCLUSION

Staff cohesion in a multi-campus University was expected to influence larger group in communication and general participation of activities. Group Cohesion is the degree to which a number of people constantly work together for the achievement of a common goal. In the study under review, a mean difference test influenced group cohesion. The categorisations on three groupings (High, Medium, Low) were measured against a hypothesized mean value of (two) 2; meaning all mean values at 2 and greater, significantly influence communication and group cohesion in the University. The first variable, staff cooperation, had a mean value of 2.04 and therefore significantly influences group cohesion in the University. A high percentage of respondents (70.2%) agreed there was moderate collaboration in the University, as against 10.4% who responded that cohesion was low. With the same variable however, 17.8% said group cohesion was high in the University. Staff support on collaboration here is very important with each section in the University, complementing each other. This means that campuses perform similar jobs to support each other in case in point of collaboration here. Again the result from the above objective could mean that most staff have extra working load, hence average cohesion. Besides, cohesion appears in only six areas (staff cooperation, expression of opinion, effect of ethno-linguistic, dissatisfaction among staff, lack of circulars and bulletins, nature of capacity and non-uniformity of salary).

To enhance organisational communication, group cohesion and team work is important. The result revealed that staff were unhappy with the influence of ethno-linguistic issues at work, discrimination in salary of staff, lack of capacity and non-cooperation of some staff. It is therefore recommended for management of the University to consider reducing challenges in reviewing periodic strategic plan of the University. Literature also pointed out that clear information and honesty from managers are key factors in employee motivation and cohesion. Managers who are known for promoting traits of cohesion are seen as being up front with staff, being able to tell it like it is; and as having no hidden agendas. It is important to provide staff with specific feedback. Acknowledging good performance and address problems as soon as they arise; have periodic, ongoing progress conversations with staff and be able to keep communications openly and regularly enhance cohesion. The University management should therefore be reminded that teamwork, integrity, effective communication, and fair treatment of staff play an important part in the way the University operates as a group.

## REFERENCES

- Adereti, F. O., Fapojuwo, O. E., & Onasanya, A. S. (2006). Information utilization on cocoa production techniques by farmers in Oluyole local government area of Oyo State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Science*, 3 (1), 1–7.
- Akinsorotan, A.O. (1995). Village extension agents' perception of the appraisal systems in Oyo State agricultural development programme in Nigeria. *Journal of Extension Systems*, 17(1), 59–67.
- Appelbaum, S.H., Gandell, J., Yortis, H., Proper, S. & Jobin F. (2000). Anatomy of a merger: Behavior of organizational factors and processes. New York, 44-61.
- Baker, A. (2003). Biotechnology's growth-innovation paradox and the new model for success. *Journal of Commercial Biotechnology* 9 (4), 286–88.
- Barth, S. (2003). A framework for personal knowledge management tools. *KMWorld*, 12(1), 20-21.
- Busco, C. (2001). When crisis arises and the need for change confronts organizational communication. *Communication Plan Report on South East Zone of Nigeria*, p.87.
- Caputo, J. S., Hazel, H. C., McMahan, C., & Dannels, D. (2002). *Communicating effectively: Linking thought and expression*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt. Pp89-102.
- Cartwright, S. & Cooper, C.L. (2009). The Impact of Mergers and Acquisitions on People at Work: Existing Research and Issues. *British Journal of management*, 1, 65-76.
- Cheney, G. & Christensen, L.T. (2004). *Organizational identity: Linkages between internal and external organizational communication*. pp.231-69. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Chory, R., & Hubbell, A. (2008). Organizational justice and managerial trust as predictors of antisocial employee responses. *Communication Quarterly*, 56 (4), 357-375.

- 
- Cramton, C. D. (2001). The mutual knowledge problem and its consequences for dispersed collaboration. *Research Management Study for Communication Research Institutes in Nigeria*. 1, p.34.
  - Engleberg, I. N., & Wynn, D. R. (2003). *Working in groups' communication principles and strategies*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
  - Gaticia-Perez, D. (2009). Automatic non-verbal analysis of social interaction in small groups: A review *Image and vision computing*, 27 (12), 1775-1787.
  - Harvard Business Review (1999), 180, 25-33 (July).
  - Harvey Jones, J. (2005). Facebook: Threats to PrivacyPublic Policy, MIT
  - Henry, P. (2002). Learning enters the boardroom: making the connection between strategy and enterprise wide learning. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 34(2), 66 – 69.
  - Kalla, H. K. (2005). Integrated internal communications: a multidisciplinary perspective. *Corporate Communications* 10(4), 302-314.
  - Keyton, J. (2011). *Communication and organizational culture: A key to understanding work experiences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.201-222 pp.
  - Kolb, J.A., Jin, S. & Song, J.H. (2008). A model of small group facilitator competencies.
  - Koufteros, X.A., Nahm, A.Y., Cheng, T. C. E., & Lai, K. (2007). An empirical assessment of a nomological network of organizational design constructs: From culture to structure to pull production to performance. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 106(2), 468-492.
  - McBride, M. C. (2006). "-Ing" project: Encouraging cohesion in small groups.
  - Neher, W.W. (1997). *Organizational communication – challenges of change, diversity, and continuity*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. No. 3, pp. 241-67. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
  - Noerrekli, H. & Hanns-Martin W. Schoenfeld (2000). *Controlling Multinational Companies: An Attempt to Analyze Some Unresolved Issues*. The International Journal of Accounting. 35, No. 3, pp. 415 ± 430. ISSN: 0020-7063
  - Okiy, R.B. (2005). Strengthening Information Provision in Nigerian University Libraries. 397-400 *Libraries. A Key Note to Organizational Dynamics .Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Sage, Newbury Park, CA. 29(4), 274–288.
  - Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2000). *Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: A Critical Review of the Theoretical and Empirical Literature and Suggestions for Future Research* *Journal of Management*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 513–563
  - Von Krogh, G., Ichijo, K. & Nonaka, I. (2000). *enabling knowledge creation\_ how to unlock the mystery of tacit knowledge and release the power of innovation*. Oxford University Press, New York. Vol 1, p.22.
  - Robertson, M. M., & Yueng-Hsiang H. (2006). *Effect of a workplace design and training intervention on individual performance, group effectiveness and collaboration: the role of environmental*. Institute for Safety, Center for Safety, Hopkinton, MA
  - Riggio, R. (2006). Nonverbal skills and abilities. In V. Manusov, & M. Patterson (Eds.),
  - Rouse, M. J. & Rouse, S. (2005). *Poslovnecomunikacije: Masmedia*. Zagreb. 90-99 pp.
  - Rogers, Everett M., & Rekha A. R. (1996). *Communication in Organizations*. New York: Free Press.
  - Shearer, C. S., Hames, D. S. & Runge, B. J. (2001): How CEOs influence organizational culture following acquisitions. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, 22(3), 105-113.
  - Stokes, J. P. (1983). *Components of group cohesion suggestions for future research: Strategic communication audits*. New York: The Guilford Press. pp212-214.
  - Tindall, N.T.J. (2009). In search of career satisfaction: African-American public relations practitioners, pigeonholing, and the workplace. *Public relations review*, 35(4), 443-445.
  - Wright, D. (1995). The role of corporate public relations executives in the future of employee
  - Yazdifar, H. (2005): Management accounting change in a subsidiary organization. *Working paper* 122.
  - Yoo, Y., & Alavi, M. (2001). *Media and group cohesion: relative influences on social presence task*. York: Free Press.
  - Zhang, H. & Agarwal N. C. (2009). The mediating roles of organizational justice on the relationships between HR practices and workplace outcomes: an investigation in China. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(3), 676-693.