THE POSTAL SYSTEM IN THE ERA OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT IN COMMUNICATION:
A CASE STUDY OF GHANA POST

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DECLARATION

I declare that except for works of other authors which have been duly referenced, I personally, under the supervision of Mr. Gilbert Tietaah, did this work.

I also affirm that this work has not been submitted in whole or in part to any other educational institution for any purpose.

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Date

Date
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family which is made up of my mother, Miss Agnes Owusu-Agyemang and my siblings, Josephine, Robert, John and Edward Amponsah for spurring me on to success. I love you and God bless you all.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

No man is an island onto himself. As such, I have relied on other people to reach this far. I appreciate the support and encouragement received from my family, especially John for the technical assistance he gave me throughout the course. Many thanks go to Mr. Gilbert Tietaah for his limitless patience and immense support in supervising this work. I am so grateful to Mr. Ekow Paintsil of the Ghana Post Head Office and his colleagues for their cooperation and show of love. I shall forever be grateful.

I thank all those who so selflessly lent me their time in making this dream a reality and I appreciate the show of love from members of my year group especially Doris, Agyeiwaa and Dayan.

Your works shall forever be treasured.
ABSTRACT

The world is today referred to, metaphorically, as a global village and a key contributing factor is the advances in technology. A great deal of these advances is happening in the communication sector. Faster and more economical ways of technology-aided communication keep on flooding the social and corporate market. The postal system until the introduction of the internet was a key player in the communication industry as the majority of people communicated through hard copy mails. The question is, what has become of the postal system in these times when there is fast technological advancement in the area of communication? This study was designed to provide answers to this question. Grounded within the framework of three interrelated change theories, the study employed a qualitative approach in gathering data. Specifically, in-depth interviews were conducted with key and relevant management staff of the Ghana Postal Services Corporation.

The study found out that Ghana Post has been affected by technological advancement in communication as communication via hardcopy mail has gone down drastically. However, its services are being patronized extensively by the corporate institutions that send correspondence to their clients. Also, Ghana Post has taken advantage of the advance in technology to improve their services, including the ability to verify an address before it is posted to avoid mails that are sent back to senders. There has also been a change in the traditional role of the post office since Ghana Post is now into insurance as well as telecommunication as part of its response to the changing communication needs of the public.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The world today is characterized as an information technology age in which the means and process of communication are defined by the prevailing technology (Castells, 2009). With the advancement in technology, several ways of communication have emerged, making communication a global, dynamic and cross-cutting activity. Due to the ease and speed at which the new social media work, many people opt for it to the neglect of traditional forms of paper-based correspondence. As new technologies evolve in our society, people abandon old ways of doing things and adopt the new ones. Foster et al (2004) assert that since the inception of the internet, the cost of communicating within Africa and between Africa and the world has changed considerably.

Up until a decade ago, messages and or information transfer were mainly accomplished through the use of the mail system and or verbal messages through personal contacts or simultaneous telephone conversations (Fall, 1985). Letter writing was very popular as people frequently received and posted letters. This kept the traditional postal system very vibrant. Neither mobile phones nor the internet were widely available to consumers (Rasanen, 2008). There were fixed telephones but they were the reserve of the minority and government bureaucracy. Students in boarding schools especially communicated with friends and relatives outside the confines of their institutions via letters. Quaye (2011), in an article titled “Ghana Postal Service or Ghana Pilfering Service?” looked at how years ago the postal service of Ghana was at its peak as a result of the serious competition that existed among young pupils as to how many of pen pals
they could correspond with or bible study pamphlets one could receive per term. Teachers liked the idea and so encouraged such correspondence because it improved the students’ skills in letter writing.

Again, he explained that the introduction of the Internet came to reduce letter writing by 87 percent in schools throughout the country. This became possible as a result of the introduction of Information Communication Technology in schools. The dramatic reduction in traditional letter writing (referred to derisively as snail mail) became possible because, with the Internet, one can send a letter by email and get a reply within seconds. An article which was posted by Sciencelens in Special Days, reports that in this digital era, where instant connectivity is taken as a given, the traditional postal system is facing some of its biggest challenges in its long history.

One of the foremost countries to experience the internet in Sub-Saharan Africa was Ghana (Foster et al., 2004). They add that even though the growth of Internet Service Providers and Internet Cafés boomed between the year 1998 and 2000, it was in 1996 that three internet service providers began competing. This resulted in a number of Ghana’s population, especially in Accra and Kumasi getting access to the internet in order to send and receive e-mails to the neglect of the postal system. However, one must not be tempted to think that internet became a bane to the traditional post system. Foster et al.(2004) argue that while the introduction of internet made the traditional post systems in some countries less significant, in some other African countries, it was not so. This is because it was the postal system in these countries that acted as conduit for people to gain internet access. Thus, the postal services were not competing with the internet but were rather providing and connecting people to the internet.
However, this is not the case in Ghana. In Ghana internet access is not provided by the Ghana Post but by private entrepreneurs. In that instance, there is clear competition between the postal system and the internet, (World Bank & Universal Postal Union, 2001). Foster et al. (2004) assert that in a study of 100 people at the Busy Internet Café in Accra, majority of the respondents got online in order to check or send emails. The conclusion of the study was that Ghanaians perceive the internet as a way of communicating with friends, relatives, and organizations outside the country. With the proliferation of internet cafés and mobile telecommunication companies in Ghana, what is the fate or state of the Ghana Post Service? This study is an attempt to answer the question.

The International Telecommunication Union (2013), reports that there are 6.8 billion mobile subscribers globally. With the pervasiveness of mobile phones, e-mail and other media, the average person has less and less reason to interact with paper based hard copy post. The article further says that these changes have already resulted in announcements from the US Postal Services that more than 220 mail processing facilities would be closed or consolidated in 2012/13 as part of a 3 year $15 billion cost-cutting plan. However, the traditional postal system is still used by many people who do not have any other means of communicating with the outside world. Additionally, it is also very relevant to poverty reduction since it is not only universally available, but also economically accessible (World Bank & UPU, 2001).

It is against this backdrop that this research intends to investigate the state of affairs of the postal system in Ghana to know whether it is moving into extinction or otherwise and to predict the future of the postal system.
1.1 The History of postal services in Ghana

The idea to establish the first postal service in the then Gold Coast was promulgated in 1854. This was after the postmaster general of the United Kingdom had agreed to the request that communication through the mail be extended to the people in their colonies.

Before then however, there was some form of exchange of mails but it was exclusively between the secretary of state for the colonies who was based in London and the Government of the Gold Coast. These mails which came in occasionally were handled by a colonial secretary whose residence was in Cape Coast and any other commandants who were in Accra and other colonial outposts.

Six years later, in 1860, the legislative council of the then Gold Coast passed a law for the pre-payment of postage on specific groups of letters which would pass through the post. In 1873, the first post office was established at Cape Coast which was the capital of Gold Coast. A Sierra Leonean named Rowland Cole was appointed to take charge of the post office. In 1874, Cape Coast lost its status as capital city when the seat of government was moved to Accra. In view of that, a post office was built and was given to Pepple, an expatriate to take charge. For health reasons he had to be relieved of this position by one William Wilberforce, another expatriate. In 1879, Rowland Coleman was reposted to Accra to be in charge of postal duties. The same year witnessed another significant event. The Gold Coast was admitted as a member of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The UPU is an international regulatory body of all postal agencies. Following this was the creation of the post of Colonial Postmaster in 1887. The post was later changed to Postmaster-General. His responsibility was to co-ordinate postal services throughout

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1 History obtained from Ghana Post anniversary diary
the country. Following the enactment of the 1888 Post Office Ordinance, the telegraphs office in Gold Coast was transferred from the Public Works Department to the Post Office.

It was realized that new entrants into the postal services needed training to enable them work efficiently. Therefore, a postal school was established in Accra in 1912. The school offered training in all aspects of postal duties including morse and teleprinter operating. The training lasted for six months after which qualified persons were posted to offices in the districts to acquire further experience.

Up until 1972, all post offices operated a savings bank business until the National Redemption Council Decree (NRCD) transferred the operations of the savings bank to the Post Office Savings Bank. Reforms were made later and the name changed to National Savings & Credit Bank (NSCB) but the post offices served as agencies for bank business. However, in June 1986, the NSCB stopped doing business with the post offices.

The postal agency saw improvement with the passing on of time. In 1995, Ghana postal service was re-named Ghana Postal Services Corporation after it had been separated as a single entity from the Ghana Post and Telecommunication Company. It followed an act of parliament, Act 505, on August 1995.

Ghana Postal Services Corporation was given a limited liability company status in July 1999. The change in status placed the company in a situation where it could operate in the same legal and regulatory operating environment as other private organizations. Currently, the Postal
Service is still being operated by the government of Ghana under the Ministry of Communication.

What this historical account suggests is that the postal service has been a strong institution which has undergone reforms and these reforms are basically politically motivated. The postal service was used to generate income besides serving as the only institution in charge of sending mails within and outside the state. The question is, in this dispensation where other cheaper and faster ways through which people can send messages around, what is the state of the Postal services in Ghana?

1.2 Problem Statement

Currently, around the globe, the traditional postal system is assailed by competition from cheaper long distance email and powerful commercial carriers like courier and phone services (Pike, 2003). To some, the internet and email communication technology have gradually usurped the postal industry. This has made the traditional postal system unpopular as many people use other means of communication. Consequently, Asante et al (2011) point out that businesses transacted via the traditional post have reduced drastically. Similarly, the World Bank and Universal Postal Union (2001) comment that advances in information technology have made some observers to come to a conclusion that postal sector has come to its end. They argue that this assertion by some observers is a hasty and unproven theory. To them, the traditional postal system is of paramount value and relevance as part of the growing Knowledge Economy.

Pinstov and Vanstone (2001) also assert that even though the postal communication system is sometimes regarded as less efficient than other modern communication systems such as email or
fax, it remains the only universal system of message delivery. This assertion is grounded on the fact that not every geographical location has caught up with the internet, so some people still resort to the traditional postal system.

Amidst the competition from other means of communication and doubts about the fate of the traditional postal service, it is imperative to know the current state of the postal system in Ghana. In essence, therefore, this study is an attempt to ascertain whether the postal system in Ghana is still holding onto its traditional role of facilitating communication through hard copy mail or external factors such as advance in technology, the society and the communication media has compelled the institution to make changes in their operations to ensure that they still take their stand in the communication industry.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Technological advancement in the 21st century has rapidly changed the facets of many institutions, particularly those in relation to communication systems, such as shift in using the telecommunication system ahead of the postal system. In light of these shifts, this study sought to contribute to understanding how the postal system in Ghana was responding to the industry dynamics and leveraging the advantages and opportunities offered by these rapid technological changes.
1.4 Objectives of the Study

The foremost objective of this study was primarily to contribute to literature that has been explored on issues related to the postal systems around the world in an era of technological advancement in communication.

This study focused on providing evidence from the Ghana Postal system.

Other specific objectives of the study were aimed at accomplishing the following:

i. To highlight trends in the operations of Ghana Post and the phases it has gone through in response to the imperatives of technology.

ii. To examine the means by which Ghana Post is maintaining its relevance in the current era of technological advancement in communication.

iii. To indicate and evaluate the organizational change communication process (if any) that has taken place in Ghana Post owing to dynamism in technological advancement.

1.5 Research Questions

This research seeks to address the following questions related to the problem:

1. What is the present situation of the postal agency in Ghana?

2. How is the postal agency addressing the challenge to its future posed by competition from the internet and other technologically-driven means of communication?

3. What, if any, are the organizational change communication processes that have gone on in the postal agency in Ghana in response to the changing dynamics of the information and communication industry?
1.6 Significance of Study

The significance of this study is to ascertain the situation in which the postal system in Ghana is, in the era of technological advancement and also investigate measures that the Ghana Post has put in place to enable it survive on the market in these times when easier, cheaper and faster ways of communication have evolved. Also, findings from this research will confirm or refute the researcher’s perception that with the presence of social media, Ghanaians have nothing to do with the postal agencies.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The review is divided into two parts. The first part discusses a set of theories that underpin research in the field. The second part examines related studies on the concept, operations and state of postal services in different contexts.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by three interrelated change theories: The Organisational Change Theory, The Change Management Theory and The Communication in Organisational Change Theory. The application of these theories will give insight into how changes in the internal and external environment of organisations can affect the state of institutions and how strategically communicating change can avert the downsides of changes necessitated by changing technology.

2.1.1 Organisational Change Theory

Early theories on organisational change were premised on environmental factors that motivate organizations to change in response to external environmental threats and opportunities (Lawrence, 1990; Kotter, 1996). The most widely-stated drivers of change came from macro-environmental factors such as major economic and political changes, technological advances, rapid expansion in the global marketplace and altering demographic and social structures (George and Jones, 2002). This brings to the fore, the multiplicity of driving forces that trigger the need for change. However, the central theme in these theories has always been the fact that organizations face a dynamic and changing environment and as a result must adapt, change or in
some cases, totally transform in order to survive. The postal service provides a unique case study, given the dynamic and fast-changing information and communication technologies environment that defines its operations.

Some theories on organisational change classify change into planned and emergent change (Mintzberg, 1989 as cited in Iles & Sutherland, 2001). Planned change is seen as deliberate and is therefore a product of conscious reasoning and actions. In contrast, emergent change unfolds in an apparently spontaneous and unplanned way. Change can be emergent rather than planned in two ways. Managers make a number of decisions apparently unrelated to the change that emerges. These decisions may be based on unspoken, and sometimes unconscious, assumptions about the organisation, its environment and the future (Mintzberg, 1989 as cited in Iles & Sutherland, 2001). Such implicit assumptions dictate the direction of the seemingly disparate and unrelated decisions, thereby shaping the change process by ‘drift’ rather than by design. Further, external factors such as the economy, competitors’ behaviour, and technological advancement influence the change in directions outside the control of managers (Iles & Sutherland, 2001).

In the same breadth, the proliferation of technology-enabled media of communication can result in planned or emergent change in the postal services. With emergent change, managers of the postal service would be passive; they would let the changes in technology dictate the pace and direction of postal services. On the other hand, an adoption of a planned change process would involve a conscious and proactive effort by management to assess the current state of the postal service and put in place a plan of action that would ensure that the services of the postal service
remain relevant to the needs of customers in the era of alternative communication channels and advances in technology.

Other theories classify change based on the change process. Such classification has resulted in terms such as convergent, radical, revolutionary and evolutionary change. There are significant differences in the types of change in terms of convergent and radical change as well as revolutionary and evolutionary change. Greenwood and Hinings (1996) note that convergent change involves fine-tuning the existing orientation of the organisation. This means that the existing status quo of the organisation is maintained but little changes are made to make it relevant to current circumstances. Radical organizational change or frame bending on the other hand involves tearing loose from an existing orientation and transforming the organization (Cummings and Worley, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to describe change and organizational transformation in terms of the degree to which organizational change occurs as well as how rapidly the change occurs. Irrespective of its speed, organizational change is the movement of an organization from the existing terrain toward a desired future state in order to increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Cummings and Worley, 2005). Such changes may be sporadic or continuous improvement initiatives as a result of organizations reacting to external forces for change.

Revolutionary changes that are spearheaded by advances in technology involve reengineering, restructuring, and innovation (George, & Jones, 2002). Reengineering involves the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvement in critical, contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service, and speed.
(Hammer & Champy, 1993). When an organization experiences a rapid deterioration in performance, managers may try to turn things around by restructuring. In the case of Ghana Post, management can ensure that the company remains relevant and vibrant in the future by rethinking and redesigning of the postal services to achieve dramatic improvement in cost, quality, service, and speed of traditional mail postage. The company can also adopt current technology to innovate service delivery. Innovation is the successful use of skills and resources to create new technologies or new goods and services so that an organization can change and better respond to the needs of customers (Jones, 1988 as cited in Chen et al., 2010).

Given the current slackening state of postal services coupled with the dwindling mail volumes (International Post Corporation, 2002), the sort of change that the postal service would require as identified by Anderson et al. (2008) is a total transformation of the postal service. Organizational transformation is a radical movement that reflects widespread revitalization throughout the entire organization. Instead of an incremental strategy, organizational leaders adopt a radical fundamental change strategy where continuous learning and rapid reinvention are an integral part of how they do business. They transform their respective organizations by developing and deploying new visions, missions, values, goals, strategies and structures that reflect a continuously-changing organization (Anderson et al., 2008). At the centre of this theory is the fact that the transformed organization proactively drives innovation to the extent that it becomes a major force for change within the macro-environment.

Current theories on organisational change have emphasised the role of changing technological environment as a driving force of change in most organisations. According to Burnes (2004),
given the current organisational background of rapid technological development, a growing knowledge workforce and the shifting of accepted work practices, technology is becoming an ever-present feature of organisational life.

The central argument in the technology driven organisational change theories is based on the premise that the basic criteria in achieving organisational competitiveness rest with harnessing the advantages of ICT. Indeed, ICT can make the realisation of specific organisational options easier, faster and/or cheaper. In advancing this theory, Dejonckheere and Van Hootegem (2001), cited several case studies where ICT had acted as a facilitator of organisational change. This was especially the case in the field of business development, product innovation and service improvement. This means that in the current era of technological advancement, sectors like the postal services can change and become more relevant by employing advances in technology to launch new services and products while improving upon their current services as well.

Additionally, innovation, flexibility and customer orientation can only be achieved through a thorough organisation restructuring and changes in the policy of labour deployment (Dejonckheere & Van Hootegem, 2001). Besides facilitating organisational change, proponents of the ICT enabled organisational change theory stress the impact of modern ICT on organisational renewal and modernisation. According to Flecker et al. (2000:4), “ICT is widely interpreted as an incentive for comprehensive changes in the organisation of companies and working processes”. It must however, be stressed that organisational change even within this era of technological advancement is not an easy path and therefore organisations such as the postal service must manage the change process in order to realize the benefits of such a process.
Importantly, it communicates such innovations with all its publics (internal and external) so as to ensure stakeholder buy-in and support for the process.

### 2.1.2 Change Management Theory

Most of the theories on organisational change give the idea that change is or can be a rational, controlled, and orderly process. In real life, however, Dawson (1996) posits that organisational change is chaotic, often involving shifting goals, discontinuous activities, surprising events, and unexpected combinations of changes and outcomes. Consequently, change cannot be understood when examined in isolation but rather in relation to the complex dynamic systems of the organisation within which change takes place.

In the view of Dawson (1996), the complexity of change management highlights two important aspects of managing change. First is the need to identify, explore and if necessary challenge the assumptions that underlie managerial decisions. The second aspect is the understanding that organisational change is a process that can be facilitated by perceptive and insightful planning and analysis of well crafted, sensitive implementation phases, while acknowledging that it can never be fully isolated from the effects of serendipity, uncertainty and chance (Dawson, 1996).

Mullins (2002) observed that although organizations have to adapt to their environments in order to survive, they tend to feel comfortable operating within the structure, policies and procedures that have been formulated, to deal with present situations. They therefore, set up resistance against change and prefer to concentrate on their routines. According to Nassejje (2001),
resistance to change may take a number of forms, including the citation of a host of reasons as to why the changes introduced are likely to fail.

This means that any changes within the postal service of Ghana can only be implemented if the organisation itself realises the need to change amidst the advancement in technology. Further, realising the need to change is only the first step as managers of the service would need to deal with any form of resistance to change that may come from the current staff, customers and service providers.

Based on the observation of real world organizational change, Lewin proposed a three-step process for successful organizational change: unfreezing, moving, freezing (as cited in George & Jones, 2002). Unfreezing starts from the members’ understanding of the organizational crisis or vision that motivates them to change. Normally, unfreezing will go through three stages. First of all, there must be enough information indicating that the current organizational condition is not ideal. Secondly, this information has to be related to the important goal of the organization; thus it must elicit members’ anxious feeling. Finally, a solution has to be proposed that will reduce the members’ insecure feeling and resistance to change (Schein, 1992).

In the postal sector, the unfreezing step in the organisation change process would involve members understanding that the advent of advance in technology has resulted in dwindling volumes of the traditional mail (Nader, 2004). Secondly, the plummeting mail volumes is resulting in the demise of the postal service (International Post Corporation, 2002) and the only
means of survival is the modernisation of the postal service to accommodate the competition in the current digital age (Asher, Callan & Marsh, 2010).

Moving is taking certain actions to transform the organization to an expected condition. The moving process is quite complicated; it involves goal setting, support seeking, resource finding, planning and execution (Chen et al., 2010). In the Ghana Post situation, the moving stage would involve a complete rethinking of the services of the post office. It would involve developing new products and services that make use of the modern communication technology available, retraining of employees to be able to work with the new technology as well as raising the needed capital to undertake these changes.

Freezing is to stabilize the change achieved in the moving stage. The individual, the department, and the organization, all have an inertial way of thinking. This means that there is the tendency for the organisation to return to the status quo if freezing is not done. The freezing stage in Ghana Post would involve forming new rules, regulating new behaviour of employees, reinforcing appropriate responses, all in an attempt to internalise the new values or current service approach into the organizational culture (Chen et al., 2010).

In the postal sector, the most common known targets of organizational change that should be managed to ensure success of the change programme in the era of technological advancement include vision, strategy, culture, structure, system, production technology, and leadership style (Yang, Zhuo, & Yu, 2009). Vision of organisations encompasses the core values which is adopted when the organisation is initially formed. When an organisation like the postal service
undergoes change, its core values need to be determined so that it can be preserved in the transformation process.

Strategy refers to the organization’s long term goals and the steps and resources needed to be considered in its decision-making (Chen et al., 2010). The long term goal of the postal service in this era should be to remain relevant by providing services and products that is driven by technology which is the resource that underpins the change process. The entire postal system which includes formal regulations, policies and procedures such as reward system, performance evaluation methods, goals and budget system that are used to operate the organization must be evaluated in the light of the changes that the organisation seeks to implement. Finally, the leadership style impacts the change process as young vibrant leaders are more likely to embrace technology driven change than their older counterparts (Chen et al., 2010).

Given the advancement in technology and communication, change is constant and organizational leaders who anticipate change and react rapidly and responsibly are successful. However, the organizational leaders who anticipate and invent the future are even more successful because those who invent the game are the leaders in their industry, other organizations become followers that adapt to change and the rest are the organizations that do not survive (Burnes, 2004).

There are many models that can be used for successful organizational change. Dynamic organisations respond to the pace and complexity of change, adapt, learn and act quickly. Static organisations on the other hand try to control and master change in the environment. It is important for managers in the postal sector to identify avenues that they can harness technology
to boost products and services so that their organizations can survive and be relevant in the next century and beyond (Anderson et al., 2008).

Finally, there will be the need for the management of Ghana Post to effectively communicate the change process to the employees as this to a large extent would determine the success or otherwise of the planned change process.

2.1.3 Communication in Organisational Change

According to Elving (2005), the relationship between communication and organizational change has attracted increased interest from diverse scholars and communication practitioners during the last decade. Most of the theories on communication in organisational change that have been advanced by these scholars and practitioners have emphasized the important role of communication in the change processes (Ford and Ford, 1995; Kotter, 1996; Elving, 2005). Another theorist, Lewis (2006) has advocated that communications and organizational change are intricately linked processes. Another theme that is evident in most theories on communication in organisational change is the fact that change implementation is primarily a communication problem (Lewis, 2006); thus change is a communicative challenge (Frahm & Brown, 2003).

Theorists on communication in organizational change like Elving (2005) argue that communication is the process on which the initiation and maintenance of organisational change depends. Ultimately, the success of any change effort depends on how effectively the strategy for, and the substance of, the change is communicated to those who are the targets of change.
(Witherspoon & Wohlert, 1996). Despite a common view that the solution to organisational change is communication, practitioners report that, success in communicating organisational change is limited (Doyle, Claydon, & Buchanon, 2000).

It is a widely held concept that communication is vital to the effective implementation of organisational change (Lewis and Seibold, 1998). The general importance of communication during planned change has already been empirically demonstrated and generally agreed among communication practitioners (Lewis, 1999). Poorly managed change communication results in rumours, exaggerating the negative aspects of the change and resistance to change (DiFonzo et al., 1994). This means that the success or otherwise of changes in the operations of Ghana Post in the era of technological advancement would invariably be affected by the way and manner in which the change is communicated to staff of the company. If the communication is not well carried out, it can result in serious resistance to the technology driven changes that can turn the fortunes of the company around.

Further, the benefit of effective communication during organisational change is also highlighted by the model of the dynamics of planned organisational change put forward by Robertson et al. (1993). Robertson et al. (1993) state that the change effort is dependent on the ability of the organisation to change the individual behaviour of individual employees. If organisational change is about changing the tasks or duties of individual employees, then a communication about the change to these employees is vital. The current trend of advancement in communication technology no doubt has had a great impact on the operations of postal services. A change in the modus operandi of Ghana Post may be required and this may result in changes to
the responsibilities and job description of some employees. Effective communication with these employees would be an important and integrative part of the change efforts and strategies to realign the services of the company.

Armenakis and Harris (2001) assert that the fundamental reason behind organisational change implementation failure is contended to be poor employee receptivity. The implied link between organisational change communication and change receptivity is often acknowledged, but not investigated empirically. For example, change communication has long been linked to resistance, as Kotter and Scheslinger’s (1979, cited in Frahm & Brown, 2003) stated that the primary tactic to overcome resistance is to communicate. However, within the implementation phases, communication is often a top down, sales pitch (Okumus & Hemmington, 1998) and this is argued to lead to cynicism about the reason for the change (Reichers, et al., 1997).

It is general knowledge that technology is continually changing the way we communicate and any organisation in the communication industry like the Ghana Post would be affected by these changing trends in communication. One purpose of communication during organisational change can be to prevent resistance to change, or at least try to reduce this. Within the context of Ghana Post and indeed most organisations, advancement in technology has necessitated changes in operations, products and services. Most often, organisations would need to change in order that their products and services would remain relevant and appealing to customers. However, the success or otherwise of the change process depends on how management and employees embrace the change. When resistance to change levels is low within an organisation, one could argue that the effectiveness of the change-effort will be higher. Since an organisation’s
functioning depends on the actions of its members, the organisation can change only when members’ behaviour change (Elving, 2005).

Uncertainty during change processes is typically about the aim, process and expected outcomes of the change and implications for the individual employees (Buono and Bowditch, 1993). Knowledge is not only a pre-requisite to the ability of influencing the outcomes (Terry and Jimmieson, 1999), but knowledge about the motives for change will also help in reducing uncertainty and creating readiness for change. In that sense, effective change communication can be viewed as a means to proper manage uncertainty (DiFonzo and Bordia, 1998). Uncertainty of employees of Ghana Post during this era of technology driven change processes will reflect on the individual employee, or the environment in which that employee is working. It comes with questions like “will I still have a job after this change”, “will I still have the same co-workers after the change”, and “can I still perform my tasks the same way I used to do them” (Elving, 2005).

The absence of answers to the questions lingering on the minds of employees lead to resistance to the change process. When this occurs, the changes cannot be implemented, an organisation like the Ghana Post would then be overtaken by issues in its external environment. Customers may switch to new technology driven communications. Competitors who have been able to adopt these changes become the market leader and eventually the postal service would collapse.

Communication has been recognized as a relevant dimension to the success of organizational change, and it is considered important in building change readiness, reducing uncertainty, and as
a key factor in gaining commitment (Armenakis, et al., 1993). The design and conduct of strategy communication in the change processes require decisions that integrate different perspectives of analysis and a relative effort, but that may be important to minimize the resistance to change (Frahm& Brown, 2003). According to Elving (2005), communication within the context of change has been seen as a way to inform, involve and even motivate collaborators to participate in the change process wholeheartedly.

2.2 Processes involved in communicating Organisational Change

In ensuring that collaborators participate wholeheartedly in an environment of organisational change, attention must be committed to designing the communication phases involved. This according to Weiss, (2001) begins the intention of preparing an organisation to be transformed from its current or past state, or practices, to a future and seemingly better state. Before an organisation gets to the stage of communicating organisational change, management needs to set the stage for behavioural and performance expectations. This core communication function in organisational change in the view of Armenakis and Bedeian, (1999) must satisfy the following processes:

- Discrepancy
- Self-efficacy
- Personal valence
- Principal support
- Appropriateness

Elaborating the stages in the processes listed above, the authors indicated that at the discrepancy stage, management of organisations should at the inception communicate the need to change to
the entire organisation. Importantly, management must emphasise the need to change to employees of the organisation in relation to the factors that necessitate the change.

Having communicated the essence of the discrepancy stage to the entire organisation, management must communicate the capabilities of the organisation and how it supports the change that has been suggested. This stage in the communication process is to reinforce the extent to which structures within the organisation are able to sustain the change process.

The personal valence stage in the communication process tries to orient the organisation in relation to the extent to which changes either resulting from external or internal factors highlight the overall interests of the organisation and the trickle down effects of the change in the interest of employees. After clearly illustrating the benefits of change to the organisation and how employees in the long-run are at an advantage, it is required of management to communicate principal support. This stage in the communication process is to ensure that those affected by the change do not become worse off, and so, they are adequately compensated within the change process thereby avoiding resistance and the case of sending wrong signals to those not affected by the change.

The last stage in the process of communicating organisation change as provided by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) is appropriateness. This stage according to the authors is for management to communicate the desired change to the members of the organisation. Owing to the importance of communication in overcoming fears and concerns aroused by change, it is critical to explain why change is happening or has happened and its effects on them. They need to know; is their job secure after the change, will they maintain their position, will they have an interesting role, what
will be their future? This helps to minimise uncertainty and resistance which consequently reduces productivity. It is important to communicate what is changing or what has changed and why. In the view of Dent and Goldberg (1999), being able to effectively communicate the phases of change in an organisation is core to the effective management, growth and development of every organisation, holding all other determinate factors constant. While there is no one perfect way to communicate change within an organisation; each organisation should plan and determine the approach that best suits its culture, structure and style.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

Despite the key role that the postal service has played in communication, it is currently faced with survival challenges the world over. The World Bank (2001) in a study carried out with the Universal Postal Union identified that the increasing competition, new customer expectations, technological advances and internationalization of business are creating enormous challenges for this essential service sector. They add that the winds of change that have significantly changed postal systems in many countries are now reaching less developed countries as the postal marketplace itself changes from a cooperative to a competitive environment.

The postal system has undergone several modernization processes since its inception (Carbaugh&Tenerelli, 2011) although it has come more slowly to the developing world. Even though the sector has undergone several changes, most postal services still lack the high quality postal systems that can take advantage of emerging opportunities and respond to future challenges. The World Bank (2001) has recognized that many cases of reform of the
telecommunications sector have come more swiftly, leaving behind a postal component that needs both strategic reorientation and corporate restructuring.

Moreover, the postal service can only survive in the technological era if significant progress in levels of autonomy, quality of service, productivity, business-focus, and financial viability are achieved since this is the only way that the postal services in developing countries can thrive and respond to evolving communications demands (World Bank, 2001). It is in the light of this that this study examines the current state of Ghana Post in the context of the new era of technological advancement.

The Internet and other advances in technology are profoundly changing the worlds of communications. Electronic substitution of traditional mail is accelerating as both consumers and businesses adopt electronic processes across multiple domains. Mail users are shifting from traditional hard copy distribution models to a variety of new ways to digitally communicate, advertise, or transact (Asher, Callan & Marsh, 2010).

The shift in the traditional paper mail service can be attributed to the greater convenience, faster service, and lower cost of the electronic delivery channels. The disruption of traditional mail system by the electronic media has not only impacted postal service in advanced nations but most of Africa as well. Christensen (1997) stated that the digital revolution has become the disruptive innovation to the traditional business of the U.S. Postal Service. This means that with several different communications channels competing for consumers, the Postal Service needs to
modernize its role to accommodate competition in the digital age (Asher, Callan & Marsh, 2010).

Early indication of a fall in postal volumes attributed to the emergence of technological innovations in communication can be traced to the early 1990s. Both the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the International Post Corporation (IPC) concur that traditional postal service particularly letter mail has considerably slackened over the past years (International Post Corporation, 2002).

The IPC in the year 2002 for instance, indicated that letter mail volume growth in the 1990s had significantly plummeted when compared to the volumes of growth in mails in the years preceding the 1990s. The dwindling volumes in traditional mail or postal service have been attributed to the substitution effect as a result of the emergent use of email and the internet by individuals and businesses (Nader, 2004).

In the current era of technological advancement in communication where almost any communication that was traditionally accomplished in a physical manner can be conducted electronically, the traditional postal service is threatened. The substitution of traditional mail with electronic mail is as a result of the numerous benefits that the electronic mail has. Asher, Callan and Marsh (2010) advocate that the transition to electronic mail has been particularly pervasive in the world of correspondence, where physical letter mail for both personal and business purposes is declining rapidly as electronic methods of communication become conventional. They added that the convergence of communications media formats, the increase
in collaborative sharing of consumer knowledge, and the growing importance of declaring, tracking, and managing preferences have also contributed to the electronic shift.

The changing trends in communication media fuelled by advancement in technology are directly felt by postal services around the world with substantial declines in mail volumes, and Ghana Post is no exception. According to Asher, Callan and Marsh (2010), the postal services’ role as a primary platform for exchanging communications has declined in parallel with the drop in mail volume. They add that whereas the volume and growth of First-Class Mail was traditionally linked to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, new technology has diminished that relationship. This means that although several countries such as Ghana have experienced a surge in GDP figures hence economic development over the years, there has not been any corresponding increase in mail volumes as alluded to in earlier studies. In this regard, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) has forecasted a substantial fall in total mail volume for the postal service across the world by the year 2020 (Boston Consulting Group, 2010).

Most postal services in advanced countries like the US are in a failed business state as losses continue to exacerbate over the years (IPC, 2002). In the view of Carbaugh and Tenerelli (2011), the recent decrease in postal revenue and the expected future trend of revenue losses has exposed the weaknesses in the business model of the postal service. They add that the traditional postal system has relied on growth in mail volume and the revenue that accompanies it to cover costs, but since the postal service has not been able to decrease costs fast enough to offset the accelerated decrease in mail volume and revenue, most service providers are experiencing huge losses.
In spite of the dwindling revenues of postal service operators, operational costs continue to shoot upwards, further eroding the already declining revenues. An essential component of the cost of delivering mail is the obligation to deliver to virtually every mailing address, regardless of volume, six days a week. Accomplishing this, coupled with the changing communication patterns, and the decline of mail volumes in many countries, create challenges for all postal operators (Carbaugh & Tenerelli, 2011).

In a study carried out on behalf of TNT UK, Dieke, Junk and Thiele (2011), observe that in all countries that the study was carried out, the loss of volume to competition had had some negative influence on the revenues and profits of universal services providers. However, they add that this competition appeared to be much less important than the decline of total market volume that resulted from changing demand behaviour and electronic substitution. They state that how postal operators meet these challenges appeared as the most important factor determining whether or not they could maintain financial success. This seems to highlight the far reaching impact of technology on postal services. It is in this regard that this study seeks to find out the state of postal services in Ghana amidst the advances in technology and electronic communication substitution effect.

Some researchers have predicted that the postal service in the midst of the ever-changing technology cannot survive since earlier forms of technology-enabled communication are already trailing new communications channels that continue to evolve. Asher, Callan and Marsh (2010) argue that the velocity of communications change with the launch of every new technology.
They add that when e-mail first moved to the mainstream in the mid-1990s, it was considered a very fast mode of communication, mirroring the speed of a fax at a much lower cost. However, in the span of just two decades, e-mail has begun to be perceived by younger generations as slow, mainly because more accessible and immediate methods of conversation have emerged like text messaging, instant messenger, and social networking. This reinforces the threat to the postal system if faster alternatives to it like emails are already facing challenges.

However, other researchers are of the opinion that postal services have not completely collapsed due to the time lag in adopting new forms of technology by individuals. Proponents of this argument are of the view that the use of communications technologies and media, including mail, correlate with socioeconomic characteristics such as age, race, sex, income, and educational attainment. Generally, new technologies tend to be adopted first by users who are younger, professional, or male, before spreading into other population groups, with some groups’ adoption rates and times lagging behind significantly (Pommerening, 2008). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), Internet-based communication for instance, has become a well-established practice and as much as 74 percent of all adult Americans had access to the Internet by the year 2008. This means that the end of the postal service is near as the rate of technology adoption continues to soar among the younger generations.

It must however be noted that not everyone agrees with the proposition that the internet and advancement in technology has negatively affected the postal sector. On the contrary, some people are of the view that advances in technology have rather boosted the operations of the
postal sector. This stems from the ability to harness several features of current technological innovations to improve the postal sector.

In terms of the operations of postal services, Finger, Alyanak, and Mollet (2005) argue that the active use of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) has already led to significant efficiency gains for most postal services operators. They added that the way the postal service operators have made use of the ICTs in areas such as tracking and tracing technologies, as well as other investments into improving speed and quality of the postal service such as high tech sorting centres have greatly improved service delivery in most advanced countries.

Those who hold the view that technology should not result in the extinction of the traditional postal system view ICT as complementary to the postal system. It is contended that by taking advantage of the power of ICTs, postal service operators can manage to concurrently achieve efficiency in mail sorting, faster delivery times as well as other significant quality improvements. This means that the postal sector can turn the ICTs into a competitive advantage in terms of service development and corresponding innovation in service delivery. Indeed, some postal operators have developed attractive new services which make much more active use of the ICTs (UPU, undated). The case of the postal system in Ghana is yet to be known through this research.

Finger, Alyanak, and Mollet, (2005) in their study on Postal Sector Overview and Dynamics in the European Union enumerated several ways through which the traditional postal service operators can stay competitive in the era of technological advancement. They are basically about
how best the same technology that threatens their very existence can be used to their advantage.

Notable among them are:

i. online application to design and send direct mailings (including the online sale of mailing addresses);

ii. online ordering of all kinds of material, including stamps with design and business logo of the customer;

iii. online shopping for stamps, envelopes, packaging materials, letter boxes, storage and forwarding of mail to different addresses and on different delivery days;

iv. Integration of physical and non-physical mail through a dedicated, customized web-site (e.g. the mail is presented electronically and the customer may choose what he wants with it: deliver, archive, print, delete. Also other services are possible here like payment of bills);

v. address changes (forwarding mail and also informing mailers about the address change);

and

vi. Instead of trying to deliver the parcel in a standard way (irrespective whether the customer is at home or not) the recipient receives a notification through email or SMS with several delivery options (e.g. to drop-off points with 24-hours availability).

Pommerening et al. (2008) stated that the advent of technology has rather increased all forms of communication. She stated that information and communication technologies have enabled a steep increase in the creation and dissemination of information across board, meaning that almost all means of communication (postal, email, SMS, instant messaging etc.) are used more. This view is collaborated by a study undertaken by the US Postal Service (USPS) which found out
that households with greater access to electronic communication also receive high volumes of mail and other forms of communication (USPS, 2007). This therefore reinforces the standpoint that technology can improve the postal service rather than destroy it.

Moreover, the pre-emptive and efficient use of the ICTs by postal service operators in both product and process improvement has enabled them to withstand the threat of substitution in the mail segment and to actually take advantage of the internet and corresponding customer behaviour in the parcels segment of the market of the postal service (Finger, Alyanak, & Mollet, 2005). Finger, Alyanak, and Mollet (2005) add that the postal industry has been able to realize substantial gains from the emergence of information technology by enhancing productivity, aiding the launch of new services and improving existing ones, improving customer relations, and lowering operational costs. This means that advancement in technology when adopted strategically would result in value addition to the traditional operations of any postal system.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of the methodology employed to arrive at the findings and conclusions of the study. The chapter examines the research design, sample and sampling technique, and the research instruments used. The procedures adopted for data collection and analysis are also discussed.

3.1 Research Design

Owing to the uniqueness of any research work, there is the need to have a well-designed approach to gathering data, and ultimately making meaning out of the data to address the stated purpose and objectives of the study. The research approach adopted in this study is qualitative research approach, entailing principally the administration of semi structured interview schedule (Seidman, 2013) to identified key informants at Ghana Post. The interview responses were also augmented by data from archival records and materials which the interviewees were kind to make available to the researcher.

By definition, a qualitative research approach is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Parkinson & Drislane, 2011). The goal of a qualitative research approach is to gain insight; explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In order to effectively unravel and reflect the depth and wealth evidence required for answering the research questions posed in chapter one, this study adopted the case study approach to qualitative enquiry.
A case study is an account of an activity, event or problem that contains a real or hypothetical situation and includes the complexities likely to be encountered at the workplace. Case studies are used to help see how the complexities of real life influence decisions (Hebert & Beardsley, 2001). The purpose of a case study is to describe in-depth the experience of a person, family, group, community or institution through an identified phenomenon (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) findings to the case study are presented using simple narrative (Khan, 2012).

In this study, Ghana Post was studied to observe how the corporation is faring in an era of technological advancement in communication systems.

In instances where there would be the need to buttress an assertion with facts from key informants responding to the study, the study employed the archival research approach to that effect. Corti (2004) defines archival research as locating, evaluating and systematically interpreting and analysing information found in archives. Archives contain official sources (such as government papers), organizational records, medical records, personal collections, and other contextual materials (Foster & Sheppard, 1995). In this study, archival materials such as memos, diaries, filed reports and related materials that contain pieces of information that amplify assertions or observations made are also discussed alongside responses gathered from key informants to the study. Where necessary, tables, charts and diagrams were used to report some of the findings made through the archival method.

3.2 Sample and sampling technique

The sample for the study was three officials of Ghana Post. Specifically, the Principal PR Officer, Head of Finance and the Head of Business Development at the head office of Ghana
Post Office, Accra, participated in the study. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting these management members for the study. The nature of the study and the information required necessitated the use of the purposive sampling technique for selecting respondents. The use of this technique has the advantage of enabling the researcher to identify and focus on information-rich subjects/respondents to produce a depth and quality of information that would otherwise be unavailable via random sampling technique.

The purposive sampling technique is usually ideal when the researcher wants to select a sample to achieve a particular objective. This technique was chosen because, there was a need to select individuals who had extensive knowledge, expertise and long association with the postal service and at the same time were very informed about the technological advancement in communication.

The Principal PR Officer of the Ghana Post for instance participated in this study to provide in-depth information on the current operations of the Ghana Post and the measures taken by the organisation to remain vibrant and relevant in the society now and in the future given the alternative communication platforms available. The Head of Finance provided information on the consequences and effects on the finances of Ghana Post due to the changing nature of information needs and services traditionally provided by the Ghana Post.

The Head of Business Development provided information on new services and business lines introduced by Ghana Post. Collectively, therefore, they were able to provide the necessary information for an in-depth case study of the postal service in Ghana. The Principal PR Officer and the Head of Business Development were interviewed on 18th September, 2013 in their various offices while the Head of Finance was interviewed on 19th September, 2013 in his office.
3.3 Data Sources

The study made use of both primary and secondary data. The main sources of the primary data were the interview sessions with the three management members of Ghana Post. The secondary data was from archival material including, annual reports, operational statistics and market data that had already been compiled by the Ghana Post Postal Service and made available to the researcher in response to some of the interview questions.

3.4 Research instrument

The data collection instruments used for the study were an interview guide and a voice recorder. The exploratory nature of the study resulted in the extensive use of open-ended questions in the interview guide. Fink (2003) stated that open-ended questions give room for respondents to provide answers in a manner that suits their understanding of the issue being explored. The questions on the interview guide were formulated with the objectives of the study in mind. The questions explored the current state of the postal service in Ghana and examined the structures the postal system have put in place to ensure that they still remain vibrant and relevant in the society now and in the future.

3.5 Data collection

The data for the study was gathered using face-to-face interviews. Undertaking interviews are an indispensable part of qualitative and exploratory studies hence its use in this study. Although interviews take several forms, the semi-structured interview was used in this study. Merriam (1998) describes a semi-structured interview as an interview that involves a mix of more or less structured questions which guide the issues to be explored. The predetermined questions on the
interview guide would be posed to all categories of respondents in a similar manner to ensure consistency in the data collection process. Due to its conversational approach, the interview also can provide extended scope to the research problem from the interviewees as they are in the position to bring up issues overlooked by the researcher.

The interview dates and times were scheduled with the respondents and it was carried out in their offices. All the interviews were recorded with the participants’ permission. The recordings served as backup and reference points for responses that may have been missed in the writing process. Each interview session lasted an average of 45 minutes due to the fact that for some questions, the respondents chose to provide secondary data.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data obtained was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is defined as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (Braun and Clarke 2006:77). The initial stage involves familiarisation with the data by going through it several times. Themes will then be identified from the data. This involves identifying a feature of the data that appears to be recurring among most of the responses and significantly tied to the research questions. The themes are reviewed and compared between responses of the experts and those that are not common are further explored. The review of the responses several times in the initial stage of the data analysis provides significant benefits as it makes it possible for themes that may have been overlooked in the first review to be picked up in subsequent review. Further, relationships between themes as identified and where applicable are used in creating sub themes. Findings are then related to the literature for validation and conclusions and implications are
drawn. The responses obtained from the management members of Ghana Post were paralleled to the illustrative detail provided in the archival records. To illustrate, archival data such as historical mail volumes and revenues were analysed based on the percentage change in the values over a specific period. This was incorporated in the discussion to support statements made by interviewees.

3.7 Limitations to the Methodology

Limitations to the nature of such research work are inevitable. The research encountered such constraints as the unwillingness of respondents to disclose some information or answer some questions under the claim of confidentiality. For instance, on the issue about what is being done concerning the high number of employees at Ghana Post, the Principal PR officer declined talking about it.

Also, while a survey of employees would have augmented the balance of data, the nature of this study (as a case study) and the research objectives it set out to address (Chapter 1) did not warrant that perspective. Further future research may examine those dynamics.

Finally, the constraint of time needs mentioning since that considerably affected the type of research approach that was adopted.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the data obtained from the interview sessions with officials of Ghana Post. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed to make the analysis and presentation of findings easier (Appendix II presents a sample of the interview transcripts). An analysis of responses provided to the interview questions as well as other data from archival records which respondents provided to support certain assertions is presented under respective sub-headings.

4.1 Background Information

Given the nature and informational requirement of the study, three officials of Ghana Post who were in the position to provide the necessary information participated in the study. The Head of Finance and the Business Development Manager both provided financial and operational data that enabled a review and assessment of the changing fortunes of the postal service in the era of technologically driven alternatives. The Principal Public Relations (PR) Officer provided answers to the interview questions on how the postal service is responding to the changing ways in which the public is communicating and employing services traditionally provided by the postal services. These officers were in a good position to provide responses to the various questions since they had worked with Ghana Post for between 11 to 20 years. They had therefore experienced most of the evolution stages in the postal service in Ghana.
4.2 The current state of the Ghana Postal System

According to the Business Development Manager, Ghana Post currently has about 350 post offices nationwide. The services of these post offices are complemented by service from postal agencies which are estimated to be around 700 nationwide. These agencies provide basic postal service and are usually located in areas where there are no post offices to provide the full postal services. According to the Principal PR Officer of Ghana Post, these agencies do not operate the conventional post office service but rather provide postal services from their principal place of business such as a supermarket or shop and receive a commission for the service rendered on behalf of the Ghana Post.

In all, it is estimated that about 320 out the existing 350 are in full operation. Although there are several post offices in the country that cannot cover their fixed cost of operations, they have not been closed down due to government regulations and policies of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The UPU is an agency of the United Nations that coordinates postal policies among member nations. Ghana Post has to accept costs that most business ventures would not tolerate as it cannot close uneconomic post offices because government and UPU regulations prohibit such actions. Ghana Post is required to provide adequate, swift, reliable, and effective services to all communities including rural areas and small towns where post offices are not self-sustaining. The Principal PR officer reiterated this point by saying that “for some post offices in remote areas, what they sell for a year cannot even pay for their months’ salary”.

Before closing a post office, the Ghana Post is required to provide customers with at least 60-days’ notice prior to the proposed closing date, and any person served by the post office may
appeal its closure to the Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Commission as stipulated in the Postal and Courier Services Regulatory Commission Act 2003 (ACT 649). Based on these requirements, the about 30 post offices which are not currently operational have not been closed down entirely but current situations like lack of employment leading to rural-urban drift which persists in the communities where they are located have made full operation impossible. The Principal PR officer added that “sometimes, if you see a post office closed down, it may be due to the fact that the office has been relocated to a new premise in the community and this does not mean that it has been closed down.”

The UPU and Government of Ghana regulations require that post offices are setup in most districts, towns and villages to facilitate communication. Citing a recent incidence of setting up a non-sustaining post office, the Principal PR officer and the Head of Business Development respectively said that:

Based on these same requirements for instance, we went to commission a post office at Fante-Nyamkomase and although the place is remote there is a post office. The boxes are not even up to a hundred and not even half have been taken up so you ask yourself why?

They are spread all over the country. Every small village or settling is to have a Post Office.

The number of people employed by each post office is dependent on the location and volume of work associated with the office. The Principal PR officer indicated that a community based post office with low mail volume usually has only two employees made up of the Postmaster and a Counter Staff. High volume offices like the Accra North Post Office located close to the Kwame Nkrumah Circle for instance employ between 60 to 70 people with over 20 employees working
in the mail sorting room. The head office together with all its service lines employs over 400 people with most staff working in the sorting room.

Ghana Post has four main categories of service namely; financial, agency, courier and traditional mail service. Under each category of service are individual services. Ghana Post is empowered by law to be responsible for the routine acceptance, collection and safe delivery of ordinary and special mail items and non-priority mail items. The system of classification is based on the speed of treatment and the urgency attached to each mail item. Priority items are those mail items conveyed by the quickest route (air or surface) with priority and weighing up to 2 kilograms for letters and up to 5 kilograms for packages containing books and pamphlets and 7 kilograms for literature for the blind. Non-priority items on the other hand are those attracting lower rates and a longer delivery time with the same weight limits as the priority items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Category</th>
<th>Example of Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>Money transfer (Western Union, Express funds, CashPost) Micro-Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Services</td>
<td>Sales of forms of tertiary intuitions and application forms of security services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courier Services</td>
<td>Courier Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Mail Services</td>
<td>Stamp sales, Post and letter box rentals, EMS service, Parcel Post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, September 2013

Other services include Airmail items which are priority letter post conveyed by air and always stamped “airmail items” and Aerogramme which consists of a sheet of paper suitably folded and gummed on all sides; there are no enclosures in an aerogramme. Ghana Post also provides
Expedited Mail Service (EMS), an international courier network which provides the fastest physical door to door delivery service to domestic and foreign customers. All items posted by EMS have an insurance cover.

Ghana Post also operates a Swift Post system which is a domestic parcel collection and delivery service. It is a fast reliable physical delivery service available in all regional and other selected post offices in the country. Further, Ghana Post provides services like delivery of company newspapers for an annual fee with such delivery service enjoying reduced rates for postage, since large volumes may be mailed through the post.

Due to the widespread nature of Ghana Post offices, the service is able to provide money transfer service points for services like Western Union and Express funds in areas in Ghana where banks are non-existent. Over the years, Ghana Post has introduced several categories of services to augment revenue from the dwindling volumes of traditional mail. Ghana Post has for instance increased its revenue from agency services by expanding the number of institutions whose forms are offered for sale in its nationwide offices. Hitherto the main forms being sold by Ghana Post were Government of Ghana Passport forms but the services have now been increased to cover application forms for all public universities and some private universities as well as entry forms for the various security services like Ghana Police and Ghana Fire Service.

Table 2.0 Average mail volumes over the past five years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mail Volume</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, September 2013
In terms of the general operations of Ghana Post, the Business Development Manager indicated that the company is making strides in its mail delivery service. He indicated for instance that a normal letter postage from Accra with Kumasi as the destination would take on average, two working days. The same can be said of registered mail. However, registered letters are documented and given preferential treatment to ensure that the mail is never lost in transit.

On the issue of service patronage, it became evident from the interview that the traditional mail still enjoys the highest patronage and is undoubtedly the highest revenue earner for the postal services. The Principal PR Officer attributed the high patronage of the traditional mail service to the surge in business correspondence. Company mails comprising of bills, statement of accounts, notices to shareholders and general business correspondence are the current drivers of traditional mail volumes. He however, conceded the falling trends in traditional mail volume stating that “mails in general have declined in volume the world over because of the availability of the internet.” It can be seen from Table 2.0 that using the year 2007 as the base year, mail volumes have declined over the years and by the year 2009 it had declined to almost half of the base year. The year 2012 experienced the highest fall as mails volumes of that year fell to 18% of the base year.

One component of traditional mail that has not experienced any decline in patronage and revenue as per the data provided by the Head of Finance is parcel services. Over the years, this service line under the traditional mail services continues to experience systematic growth in terms of patronage and revenue. The Head of Finance attributed the robustness of this service line to the inability to substitute this service line with internet services in Ghana. He reiterated this by
saying that “you can send mail from the internet but can you send a parcel through the same means? No you can’t, so we still have the advantage.” He added that currently, courier services have the lowest patronage whereas agency services bring in the lowest revenue since agencies are cited in small communities.

In terms of demand for post boxes, the Principal PR Officer indicated that demand for post boxes in Accra and most regional capitals far outweigh the supply. He stated that Ghana Post increasingly receive request for allocation of post boxes in most city centres. He added that over the past ten years, Ghana post has almost doubled the number of post boxes in the regional capitals, especially Accra. He ascribed the increasing demand for post boxes to companies and organisations who are increasingly requesting for post boxes or mail bags. He said that “almost any company that completes its incorporation process wants a letter box as part of its address system and in Accra, the demand for letter boxes from companies is very high”.

Further, the study sought to assess the contribution in percentage terms of each service line to the total revenue of Ghana Post for the past ten years. However, the data that was obtained from the Finance Department covered only three years. This was the only data readily available as data beyond the fourth year had been archived and could not be retrieved within the data collection period. This means that the analysis and discussion would be based on the data for the year 2010 to 2012. It can be seen from Table 3.0 that in aggregate, total revenue of Ghana Post fell by almost five percent (4.91%) in the year 2011 when compared to revenues of the year 2010. Total revenue however increased by about eight percent (8.25%) in the year 2012 when compared with that of 2011.
It can be seen from Table 3.0 that the contribution of stamp sales to total revenue has declined over the years although it still remains as the highest income earner for Ghana Post. As at the year 2010, stamp sales contributed to almost fifty percent (49.6%) of total revenue of the postal service but had declined to about thirty-one percent (31%) in the spate of only two years.

### Table 3.0 Service lines contribution to total revenue for the years 2010-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Year</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stamp Sales</td>
<td>13,280,191</td>
<td>10,147,123</td>
<td>8,530,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMS Revenue</td>
<td>5,446,425</td>
<td>5,956,823</td>
<td>6,808,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLB Rentals</td>
<td>3,571,403</td>
<td>3,954,957</td>
<td>4,395,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel Post</td>
<td>2,312,270</td>
<td>2,478,546</td>
<td>2,964,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>1,680,510</td>
<td>2,379,973</td>
<td>4,376,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency Services</td>
<td>485,298</td>
<td>544,213</td>
<td>484,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26,776,097</td>
<td>25,461,635</td>
<td>27,561,077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, September 2013

Revenue from EMS services and financial services are the only services lines that have seen an optimal growth in their total contribution to revenue. Financial services in the year 2010 contributed to about six percent (6.3%) of total revenue but increased to nine percent (9.3%) in 2011 and further appreciated to almost 16 percent (15.9%) in the year 2012.

Apart from the contribution of the various service lines to the total revenue of Ghana Post, the study also sought to establish the cost composition of the postal service. It became evident from the data obtained and as shown in Figure 1.0 that employee wages and benefits constituted seventy percent (70%) of the entire cost of Ghana Post.
Transportation and delivery cost as well as administrative expenses also constituted ten percent (10%) each of the cost composition of the postal service. The labour intensive nature of the Ghana postal service and the high number of employees to a large extent contributed to the high labour cost constituent of the service’s operations.

Apart from the declining revenues and escalating costs of Ghana Post, the Principal PR Officer outlined several challenges that are militating against the successful operations of Ghana’s postal service. Notable among the challenges facing the institution is the ability of management to bring out reforms. The advent of technologically-enabled communication channels has heightened the need for Ghana Post to make several changes in order to improve business performance but due to the calibre of staff, the change management process is becoming a huge hurdle to scale for the
organisation. The educational level, skill and experience of the current labour force are impeding
the smooth roll-out of several changes in the operation of the postal service.

The problem of effecting changes in operations as a result of the calibre of staff working for
Ghana Post is best expressed in the words of the Principal PR Officer who stated that:

We have a lot of employees from the old system… effecting change is very
difficult since they have been in the system for a very long time and are also
in the majority. It poses a challenge since if you bring something new they
resist it with all their might because they think this is not how we have been
doing it. Change is difficult but we must embrace change and this is one
major challenge we have.

Another labour related operational problem has to do with the high number of people employed
by the Ghana Post. Although the volumes of mail have reduced over the years, the organisation
has maintained the same number of staff and this has resulted in a lot of idleness among staff.
The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that responsibilities are not well defined hence
one category of employees assume the work would be done by the other and vice versa and this
results in the work not getting done at all.

Logistics to work with also hamper the operations of Ghana Post. Simple operational equipment
are not available. New vehicles are needed to replace the broken down ones which were once
used for distribution. Sometimes lack of fuel prevents those in good condition from being used
for the purposes for which they were purchased. As echoed by the Principal PR Officer:
“…getting vehicles to work with is difficult, our job is basically run on vehicles and if you don’t
have vehicles to run or fuel, the work doesn’t get done.”
The study further examined the effect of private delivery companies like DHL, TNT and FedEx on the operations of Ghana Post. It became evident from the interview that although these companies have reduced the market share of the Ghana Post and introduced competition in the postal delivery sector, their entry into the Ghanaian market has enhanced service delivery in the postal sector. The Principal PR officer and the Head of Business Development of Ghana Post both indicated that these companies have enhanced the effectiveness of service delivery of Ghana Post since the competition introduced by them has resulted in venturing into other service delivery. He added that competition results in thinking outside the box when your survival is threatened.

Moreover, Ghana Post has partnered DHL and TNT in improving its service delivery outside Ghana. The collaborative effort between Ghana Post and the private delivery service and the benefits accruing to Ghana Post from such collaboration can be summed up in the words of the Principal PR Officer who stated that:

DHL, TNT, they are in partnership with us. DHL especially has a good relation with us to the extent that areas that they cannot reach here in Ghana, they fall on us to help them and we also fall on them abroad so they have come to enhance the delivery of service.

The presence of these foreign delivery service companies in Ghana has also improved the revenue earned by Ghana Post from postal administration. Ghana being a member of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) collaborates with all member states in the postal administration process. All other countries that send mails to Ghana for delivery purposes pay for the service using a centralized account at the UPU and Ghana Post does the same when it sends mails to foreign countries.
Finally, on the effect of the rise in the use of other technology enabled communication media like mobile phones, internet (social media, email, instant messenger) on the operations of Ghana Post, the Principal PR officer conceded that it had tremendously reduced mail volumes over the years. He however, reiterated that “mail volumes the world over has declined”. He also indicated that although there is a downside to the influx of technology, Ghana Post has also positioned itself well to enjoy the benefits of the brighter side of technology in their service delivery. Most of these issues are discussed in subsequent sections of this study under the response of Ghana Post to current industry dynamics.

4.3 Ghana Posts response to industry dynamics

In a technology driven sector like the communication industry, traditional postal service providers over the years have been introducing new products and services in response to the changing demands of consumers. This section highlights how Ghana Post is also responding to these changing dynamics and the technological advancement in communication.

The Head of Business Development indicated that Ghana Post is also tapping into the benefits of technology to roll out more services. Among the services that have been introduced by Ghana Post to remain competitive in the industry are SpeedLink, ‘Abusuankyenfa’, and Door-to-Door mail delivery. Ghana Post is also partnering other companies to replicate their products on its nationwide platform having already partnered some telecom companies and the Metro Mass Transport.
The SpeedLink is a high speed courier service that is being piloted by Ghana Post. It involves same day pick and delivery of items within a specified geographical location.

‘Abusuankyenfa’ is a micro-insurance service that is geared towards low income earners in Ghana. The service was developed by Ghana Post in collaboration with Star Assurance to provide insurance cover for Ghanaians who are in the low income bracket and can therefore not afford the high premiums associated with the normal insurance. The nationwide outreach of the Ghana Post has enabled it to roll out these micro-insurance services in communities and villages where most insurance companies have no presence. The micro nature of the policy also makes it suitable for individuals in these communities, as premiums are paid in instalments that match their low income and individuals can insure against very small losses that are unattractive to general insurance companies.

Door-to-Door (DTD) mail delivery service is currently operational in Kumasi and Accra. It is a mails service from Ghana Post that allows individuals who patronize the service to have the convenience of receiving their mails at their door step. In Accra, the Legon Post Office has rolled out this service in several locations in East Legon. The service involves fixing mail receptacles at the entrance of homes and businesses that sign up for the service. The DTD number is provided to the business or households and it works in the same way as the post box number. When mails are received by these DTD service users, they are dispatched from the Post Office and placed in the receptacles. This means that users of the service do not have to come to the Post Office to retrieve their mails.
Ghana Post is also using the Txt-n-Pay platform to provide an environmentally friendly way of recharging mobile phone credits of prepaid users since it does not involve the printing of scratch cards. In areas or communities where most mobile phone scratch card sellers are not present, this service provides an exceptional alternative. Prepaid users of the various mobile telecommunication services can walk into any of the Post Offices which are in operation to purchase talk-time by just providing their mobile phone numbers. Upon payment and entry by the counter staff, the user gets an immediate or instant text notification of the amount purchased and has their mobile account topped up with the units. This is a win-win situation for the telecommunication company, the environment, mobile subscriber and Ghana Post. Mobile companies save on the cost of printing scratch cards and the environment also gains from less demand on trees for paper production. Subscribers, especially those in the small communities stand the chance of recharging their phones conveniently from widespread reach of Ghana Post while the Post Office also gains from the commission earned on each service provided.

Apart from the Swift Post courier services being provided by Ghana Post, the company is collaborating with the Metro Mass Transport to provide bulk courier services to destinations that are not covered by almost all the courier companies in Ghana. The inherent advantage in this service is that weight which is the main determinant of price paid in courier service is overlooked allowing customers to transport bulky items at an affordable price. The reach of the service is also nationwide as the Metro Mass Transport services cover the entire nation. The registration and documentation of the items being transported provides a means of tracking and insurance for items in transit.
Amidst all these services that Ghana Post has introduced, the company is not resting on its laurels. The company is in the process of introducing five additional service lines in the Agency and Financial Services category of the company’s services. Most of these services are premised on the established competitive advantage that Ghana Post has in terms of nationwide coverage of its offices and agencies. The company is in discussion with MTN and Airtel to roll out the mobile money transfer services in all its nationwide offices. The presence of these offices in most communities would make it convenient for most Ghanaians to use the mobile money transfer services since they can retrieve their money at any nearby Post Office.

Further, one niche that the company has also identified is in the area of pension receipts by retirees. Most pensioners rely on banks for their pension payment. The sparse nature of bank branches means that most of these individuals in their old age would have to travel long distances to receive their pension benefits. Ghana Post is making a case for pension benefits to be payable through the post offices which are present in most communities as this would curb the hustle of commuting by pensioners to banks to access their pension benefits, besides saving these senior citizens the agony of joining long queues at banking halls.

According to the Principal PR Officer, Ghana Post continues to take advantage of the current improvement in technology to improve their services. He added that currently, Ghana Post uses their access to the UPU platform to help reduce the incidence of returned letters for clients who send mails with incorrect addresses to other countries. Most counter staff in District and Regional Post offices can use the foreign address verification system to check whether or not the addresses provided by customers are correct. Customers whose destination addresses are found
to be contradictory to what exist on the database or with unreachable address in the United States, United Kingdom and other foreign destinations are advised to recheck the address and correct them to avoid the incidence of returned mails.

Going forward, all three management officials envisage that Ghana Post would still be relevant five to twenty years to come. The Head of Business Development on his part stated that, “...Ghana Post has a bright future. Brighter than what we see now. The current management is full of ideas which when rolled out will help better the fortunes of Ghana Post”. As part of the process of reinventing the postal service, the company is currently undergoing a rebranding exercise. The Principal PR Officer said, “in a few months, most post offices would receive a facelift with counters which look more modern than that of even the banks.”

4.4 Processes involved in communicating Change at Ghana Post

To observe if the process entailed in communicating change within organisations was effectively considered by Ghana Post, the study enquired from respondents, how the process was carried out in their organisation. First, to the question of ‘how change was communicated to employees of Ghana Post?’ all the respondents stated that, they used several ways such as departmental meetings, staff durbars and notices to discuss the emergence of change to the operational setup of Ghana Post. In their view, communicating change within the organisation was adequately done. Additionally, respondents indicated that discussions were made during departmental and staff meetings to also discuss the change, in addition to the informal conversations that went on among employees. Commenting on this, the Principal PR officer stated that:

“..... During that durbar, employees pointed out drops in stamp sales volumes and other related services. Management on the other hand too
commented on how elements such as the internet and electronic gadgets are reducing the essence of using postal systems. During those gatherings management pointed out clearly the need to implement some changes to prevent Ghana Post from folding up. Aside the durbars, departmental meetings had the need for change on their agenda. Even fliers specially prepared on our new services have been made available to the employees....”

On the same issue, the Head of Finance had this to say:

“... during meetings we try to explain new changes to them. Then at staff durbars too and even face-to-face or one on one depending upon the situation. Departmental meetings are held regularly so anytime there is the need to communicate something of that sort, we do it there.

The Head of Business Development on his part stated that:

“In one of our staff meetings at the departmental levels, we discussed how it was imperative for management to swiftly make alterations to some of our procedures in the organisation. For instance, in one of our departmental meetings, I remember we discussed how Ghana Post could still make post mails necessary and important for the general public even though emails and for that matter the social media might have taken over.”

From the responses, it could be seen that, communicating the discrepancy in the operations of Ghana Post owing to technological factors was adequately identified and communicated to employees. Additionally, the awareness levels of the employees to emerging trends in operations was also highlighted by responses that indicated that staff members even discussed possible lines of actions that could be taken within the organisation.

The study also discovered that management communicated the capabilities of the organisation in the face of change at both the organisational and individual employee levels adequately just as the need was done. Furthermore, all the managers also indicated that most of the changes that were necessary involved the use of technology, and therefore employees were to be trained to that effect.
From the responses, it was observed that management communicated the capabilities of the organisation and how such capabilities support the need for the change that was seen to be adequately discussed in the first stage of the communication process. This means that management was able to sufficiently and adequately reinforce the extent to which assets and employee strengths of the organisation could be employed to carry out the change process. Hence, communicating the self-efficacy of the organisation and its employees to elements within the change process was done effectively.

Having the knowledge that capabilities were well communicated, the study went further to ask respondents issues relating to ‘if employees were oriented on how changes were in the utmost interest of Ghana Post’. Answering this, all the managers pointed out that it was not done adequately. Gathering from the responses, it was noticed that communications to that effect was done using inappropriate channels and in some departments like Finance and Transport, it was not done at all. For instance, the Head of Finance had this to say, “I must confess, the department had to meet to discuss this as pertained in other departments but other engagements prevented us from meeting. Same goes to the Transport department too.”

There was also the indication from respondents that, just as the need to change was adequately discussed during durbars and departmental meetings, issues relating to the benefits of all parties to the change were not adequately and sufficiently discussed. There again, it was also observed from the responses that most of the discussions were done on the informal levels where, it was likely some key factors were omitted.
Regarding how principal support systems consequent to the change process was also communicated, the respondents pointed out that nothing of that sought happened. Before employees in the organisation realised, certain aspects of their job schedules had been changed, and this gave rise to a display of displeasure from employees. The Head of Business Development stated that, “whoever was to be affected by the change found out that his or her daily duties had been changed and they were not comfortable with that”.

Lastly, it was gathered that management was silent on making employees aware of their job security and the fate of their positions in the organisation after having systems and operations of Ghana Post changed.

4.5 Discussion of findings

The study as part of its objectives sought to assess the current state of the postal service in Ghana and examine the structures the postal system has put in place to ensure that it remains vibrant and relevant in the society now and in the future. The study achieved the objectives set. First, the findings bring to fore the current state of the postal service in Ghana. Further, management of the company provided a roadmap on the technology driven services that the company has introduced or seeks to introduce to ensure that the company remains competitive and relevant given the advances in technology. That answered the second research question.

It became evident from the study that the current state of Ghana Post can be compared to the state of some postal services in developing countries. Management of Ghana Post conceded that there is a falling trend in traditional mail volume in Ghana. Using the year 2007 as the base year, mail volumes have declined over the years and by the year 2009 it had declined to almost half of
the base year. The year 2012 experienced the highest fall as mails volumes of that year fell to 18% of the base year.

This declining volume in traditional mail is not peculiar to Ghana Post alone. In fact, the World Bank (2001) in a study carried out with the Universal Postal Union identified that the increasing competition, new customer expectations, technological advances and internationalization of business are creating enormous challenges for the postal service the world over. They added that the winds of change that have significantly changed postal systems in many countries are now reaching less developed countries as the postal marketplace itself changes from a cooperative to a competitive environment.

Stamp sales is an objective indicator of the volume of mail service transactions within the postal service system. It was evident from the financial results of Ghana Post that the contribution of stamp sales to total revenue has declined over the years although it still remains as the highest income earner for the postal service. As at the year 2010, stamp sales contributed to almost half (49.6%) of total revenue of the postal service but had declined to less than one-third (31%) in the spate of only two years. This fall in sales confirms assertions in the literature that the electronic mail has resulted in dwindling volumes of the traditional letters. The main cause of this decline in the extant literature is the electronic substitution effect. Mail users are shifting from traditional hard copy distribution models to a variety of new ways to digitally communicate, advertise, or transact business (Asher, Callan&Marsh, 2010).
In addition, the fall in the mail volumes as indicated by the Principal PR officer of Ghana Post confirms earlier predictions by the IPC and UPU that postal volumes the world over would dwindle in the coming years. Early indication of a fall in postal volumes attributed to the emergence of technological innovations in communication can be traced to the early 1990s. Both the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the International Post Corporation (IPC) concur that traditional postal service particularly letter mail will considerably slacken in the coming years (International Post Corporation, 2002).

Further, it was identified from the study that there is a changing landscape in the postal service. Management of the Ghana Post indicated that the current business model of the company is being altered by adapting to the changing communication channels driven by technology and the changing preferences of consumers. This is similar to what was found in the literature. George and Jones (2002) found that the most widely-stated drivers of change in postal service came from macro-environmental factors such as major economic and political changes, technological advances, rapid expansion in the global marketplace and altering demographic and social structures.

Change can be emergent rather than planned in two ways. Managers make a number of decisions apparently unrelated to the change that emerges. Such implicit assumptions dictate the direction of the seemingly disparate and unrelated decisions, thereby shaping the change process by ‘drift’ rather than by design. Further, external factors such as the economy, competitors’ behaviour, and technological advancement influence the change in directions outside the control of managers (Iles & Sutherland, 2001). Management of Ghana Post indicated that the company
has come to embrace the changes in service offering that is being dictated by technological innovation. These changes in the operations of the postal service when compared to the theories on organizational change can be termed as emergent as they were not planned by management but a necessary response to the dictates of technology.

Although management of Ghana Post has embraced the fact that some changes need to be effected in the operations of the postal service, implementing this change remains a challenge. Notable among the challenges facing the institution is the inability of management to bring out reforms. The advent of technologically-enabled communication channels has heightened the need for Ghana Post to make several changes in order to improve business performance but due to the calibre of staff, the change management process is becoming a huge hurdle to scale for the organization.

The main inhibitors of change as indicated by management are the current staff of the service who has been with the organization for several years. As identified in the theoretical framework, Mullins (2002) observed that although organizations have to adapt to their environments in order to survive, they tend to feel comfortable operating within the structure, policies and procedures that have been formulated to deal with present situations. They, therefore, set up resistance against change and prefer to concentrate on their routines. According to Nassejje (2001), resistance to change may take a number of forms, including the citation of a host of reasons as to why the changes introduced are likely to fail.
The situation in Ghana Post is no different, the Principal PR Officer reiterated that effecting change is very difficult since most employees have been in the system for a very long time and are also in the majority. He indicated that this poses a challenge since these employees resist any changes with their might because it involves doing things differently from the way they have been used to doing them.

Ultimately the success of any change effort depends on how effectively the strategy for and the substance of the change is communicated to those who are the targets of change (Witherspoon & Wohlert, 1996). Despite a common view that the solution to organizational change is to communicate, practitioners change report that success in communicating organizational change is limited (Doyle, Claydon, & Buchanon, 2000). The huge resistance to change among the employees to a large extent can be attributed to how the change process has been communicated to employees. From all indications of management of the postal service, most avenues for effective communication of the process and the need to embrace these changes have not been effectively managed.

Although management on their part have embraced the change process and are keen on changing some aspects of the business, the success or otherwise of changes in the operations of Ghana Post in the era of technological advancement would invariably be affected by the way and manner in which the change is communicated to the staff of the company. Poorly managed change communication results in rumours, exaggerating the negative aspects of the change and resistance to change (DiFonzo et al., 1994). The current strong opposition raised by employees to the change process as indicated by the three management officials who responded to the study,
and answers the third research question is a sign that the communication of the need for the changes in the company’s operations was not well articulated to the employees especially in assessing the communication processes as viewed by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999). Robertson et al. (1993) stated that the change effort is dependent on the ability of the organization to change the individual behaviour of individual employees. If organizational change is about how to change the individual tasks of individual employees, communication about the change and information to these employees is vital.

The Principal PR officer of Ghana Post indicated that the current employees are not very receptive to the changes that management wants to implement with regards to the operations of the postal services. He added that this is hampering the change process and affecting the current fortunes of the postal service. This supports the proposition of Armenakis and Harris (2001) that the fundamental reason behind organizational change implementation failure is contended to be poor employee receptivity. However, theorists on communication in organizational change have long advocated that resistance to change can be reduced through communication. As Kotter and Scheslinger (1979, cited in Frahm & Brown, 2003) stated, the primary tactic to overcoming resistance is to communicate. This means that management of Ghana Post can reduce resistance to the ICT driven changes in the organization by communicating the benefits of the changes to employees.

In terms of the second objective of the study which sought to examine the structures the postal system has put in place to ensure that they still remain vibrant and relevant, it was found out that the postal service has adopted some revolutionary changes to secure the future of the company.
Revolutionary changes that are spearheaded by advances in technology involve reengineering, restructuring, and innovation (George, & Jones, 2002). Reengineering involves the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvement in critical, contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service, and speed (Hammer & Champy, 1993).

As part of the revolutionary changes in Ghana Post, management indicated that Ghana Post is also tapping into the benefits of technology to roll out more services. New services like SpeedLink, ‘Abusuankyenfa’, and Door-to-Door mail delivery are some of the revolutionary products. Ghana Post is also partnering other companies to replicate their products on its nationwide platform having already partnered some telecom companies and the Metro Mass Transport.

Dejonckheere and Van Hootegem (2001) cites several case studies where ICT had acted as a facilitator of organizational change and resulted in the repositioning of companies to face future challenges. In most instances, the affected areas are business development, product innovation and service improvement. In the Ghana Post, the company is relying on technology to improve the services rendered to customers. Currently, Ghana Post uses their access to the UPU platform to help reduce the incidence of returned letters for clients who send mails with incorrect addresses to other countries. Customers whose destination addresses are found to be contradictory to what exist on the database or with unreachable address in the United States, United Kingdom and other foreign destinations are advised to recheck the address and correct them to avoid the incidence of returned mails.
Finally, management of the company has acknowledged that the success or otherwise of the technology driven changes depends to a large extent on the people that implement the changes. This resolve by management is in line with Elving’s (2005) proposition on change management. Elving posits that the success or otherwise of the change process depends on how management and employees embrace the change. When resistance to change levels is low within an organization, one could argue that the effectiveness of the change-effort will be higher. Since an organization’s functioning depends on the actions of its members, the organisation can change only when members’ behaviour change (Elving, 2005).
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study sought to examine the postal system in the era of technological advancement in communication using Ghana Post as a case study. The main objective of the study was to assess how the current technological advancement in communication has affected the traditional postal system and what structures Ghana Post has put in place to ensure that they still remain vibrant and relevant in the society now and in the future. This chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study, drawing out in particular the issues that most address the research questions and objectives of the study as expressed earlier in chapter one.

The research design adopted for the study was a qualitative research approach in which a semi-structured interview schedule was administered. Data from archival records which was made available was also used. The nature of the study necessitated the use of this approach. Although the qualitative research method has been criticized by some writers due to the subjective nature of conclusions drawn from such studies, it is ideal in researches that seek to explore and have comprehensive understanding of a problem. Given that the study sought to unearth the current state of postal services in Ghana, the qualitative approach helped to explore and have a comprehensive understanding of the state of affairs. The interview sessions were recorded and transcribed afterwards to aid in the analysis of the information obtained.
5.1 Summary of Findings

Notable among the significant findings of the study is the fact that globally, traditional mails have declined with the advent of the internet and the same can be said of mail volumes in Ghana. Using the year 2007 as the base year, mail volumes have declined over the years and by the year 2009 it had declined to almost half of that of the year 2007. The year 2012 experienced the highest fall as mails volumes of that year fell to 18% of that of the base year.

If the pattern continues, or, if mail volumes continue to decline, it is likely that there will come a time when the Ghana Post will cease to be a viable or significant player in the information and communication / media industry in Ghana.

However, Ghana Post continues to operate most of its branches across the nation with more than 320 operational post offices and over 700 agencies. Ghana Post continues to operate post offices that are not necessarily economically viable. At the same time, it continues to open new post offices in areas where the service is not commercially sustainable because of the governmental and Universal Postal Union (UPU) requirements of maintaining post offices in communities and villages as means of communication for people in such deprived areas.

Ghana Post is also one of the government owned companies that provide significant employment to Ghanaians. Ghana Post employs between two to three people at low mail volumes offices, sixty to seventy people at high volume mail offices and over four hundred people in the head office of the company. This is a very significant number of employees given the number of branches. Therefore, any collapse of the service would add onto the problem of unemployment in Ghana.
Over the years Ghana Post has introduced several categories of services to augment revenue from the dwindling volumes of traditional mail. Ghana Post has for instance increased its revenue from agency services by expanding the number of institutions whose forms are offered for sale in its nationwide offices. Previously, the main forms which were sold by Ghana Post were Government of Ghana Passport forms but the services have now been increased to cover application forms for all public universities and some private universities as well as entry forms for the various security services like Ghana Police and Ghana Fire Service. Due to the wide-reaching nature of Ghana Post offices, the service is able to provide money transfer service receipt points for services like Western Union and Express Funds in areas in Ghana where banks are non-existent.

The fall in mail volumes has had significant impact on the revenues of Ghana Post since the company experienced only a three percent (2.93%) increase in revenue between the year 2010 and 2012 after introducing several service lines. The little growth in revenue was spear-headed by financial services and parcel post. Stamp sales which was contributing to about half of total revenue of Ghana Post has dwindled to about a third of total revenue. This, according to the Principal PR officer can be attributed to the use of internet to send mails. A great percentage of mails being posted today are mostly from businesses like banks who post statement of accounts to clients, schools which send reports to parents and other companies that send their bills by post or send periodicals by post.

Apart from the dwindling revenue, the company is facing a financial challenge of having to maintain its cost base. Staff cost constitute over seventy percent of the cost component of Ghana
post and since there has been no redundancies, covering such a cost has become a great challenge for the company.

As the company realigns itself to face the challenges of advances in technology, one major challenge facing the company as stated by the Principal PR officer is change management. The current employees are very resistant to change in the operations of the business and this is one of the major hurdles in the way of the current management of the company. Other challenges are labour related such as the high number of employees and lack of the requisite logistics to operate with.

It is however, comforting to note that the advent of private courier companies like DHL, FedEx and TNT have rather brought about an improvement in the service delivery of Ghana Post than ran them out of business. The collaboration between these private companies and Ghana Post with its nationwide coverage has opened up new avenues for Ghana Post to earn some additional revenue.

On the Ghana Post response to the changing dynamics in the postal service and delivery industry, officials of the company indicated they are tapping into the benefits of technology to roll out more products and services. Ghana Post has positioned itself well to take advantage of the development of technology in their service delivery and product development.

Some of the measures taken by the company to ensure that they remain relevant and survive the technological age are the introduction of new services namely; SpeedLink, ‘Abusuankyenfa’,
and Door-to-Door mail delivery. Ghana Post is also partnering other companies to replicate their products on its nationwide platform having already partnered some telecom companies for ‘Txt-n-Pay’ and the Metro Mass Transport. ‘Abusuankyenfa’ is a micro-insurance service that is geared towards low income earners in Ghana. The service was developed by Ghana Post in collaboration with Star Assurance to provide insurance cover for Ghanaians who are in the low income bracket and can therefore not afford the high premiums associated with the normal insurance.

Door-to-Door (DTD) mail delivery service is currently operational in Kumasi and Accra. It is a mails service from Ghana Post that allows beneficiaries or patrons of the service of having the convenience of receiving their mails at their door step. When mails are received by these DTD service users they are dispatched from the Post Office and placed in the receptacles. This means that users of the service do not have to come to the Post Office to retrieve their mails. Ghana Post is also using the Txt-n-Pay platform to provide environmentally friendly way of recharging mobile phone credits of prepaid users since it does not involve the printing of scratch cards. Mobile companies save on the cost of printing scratch cards and the environment also gains from less demand on trees for paper production. Subscribers get access to credits for their networks from the post office which is widespread in the nation while the Post Office also gains from the commission earned on each service provided.

All these products and other new services and products being introduced by Ghana Post is made possible due to the presence of post offices in most communities and villages nationwide. The company plans to roll out other financial services like mobile money on the platform of MTN.
and Airtel Ghana in most of the post offices nationwide. The company continues to explore new ways of being relevant by harnessing the power of technology and the internet. Currently, Ghana Post uses their access to the UPU platform to help reduce the incidence of returned mail by crosschecking the address on the database for clients to ensure that those addresses are reachable.

Management of the company have a positive outlook for the future of Ghana Post. The appointment of young and innovative management members is seen by them as the first step towards turning the fortunes of the company around.

5.2 Conclusions

Ghana Post is at a critical juncture with the advent of new ways of communicating spearheaded by the internet. Revenues of the company have been dwindling while costs are escalating due to the labour intensive nature of the company’s operations. Although the company is taking advantage of technology and other industry players to reposition itself, the process has been slow. It is interesting to note that due to the advancement in technology, the company is forced to take on other businesses like insurance which was not in the original intent for establishing post offices. Initially, the aim of setting up a post office in the colonial era was solely to cater for communication through mail but the situation has taken on a different face. It has become imperative for the company to take on other measures to ensure the survival of the institution.

There are early signs of an attempt by the company to embrace change given the new products and services the company has launched or intend to roll-out. The change process is not going to be an easy path as officials have already experienced the resistance to change among its current
employees. However, management have seen the benefits of the new products launched as their revenues are already compensating for the decline in revenues from the traditional mail services.

In the short-term, the main challenge of Ghana Post is to reduce its operation cost to compensate for the declines in mail volume and revenue, so that it can cover its operating costs and continue as a self-sustaining government owned Limited Liability Company. In the long term, however, the challenge would be to restructure Ghana Post operations, networks, and labour force to reflect fundamental changes in mail volume and revenue and to better exploit opportunities presented by information communication technology for revenue growth.

5.3 Recommendation

While many of the challenges facing Ghana Post are labour related and technological in nature, these same technologies also present substantial opportunities to deliver the nation’s mail more efficiently. It is contended that by harnessing the power of ICTs, postal service operators can manage to concurrently achieve efficiency and speed in the mail sorting and delivery times as well as other significant quality improvements.

For instance, Ghana Post can improve the mail service by introducing bar coding and barcode scanners in the mail sorting and distribution service. A unique barcode can be placed on every piece of mail in order to enhance customer service and reduce cost. Ghana Post can build an online network that links postal facilities, vehicles, partners and employees not only to each other, but also via the internet to customers.
Further, by making use of advances in the electronic technologies, Ghana Post can develop a new postal proposition for Ghanaians which is already predominant in advanced countries and being used by DHL, TNT and other partners of Ghana Post. This postal system which is known as Intelligent Mail among some users makes use of the internet as a platform to create a virtual 24 hour postal service. Intelligent Mail could allow the Ghana Post to permit mail-tracking and other in-demand services via a robust website that ultimately becomes the equivalent of an always open, full service post office.

Another area that Ghana Post can cut down on cost is in the area of stamp printing. This involves a switch from the traditional printed stamps to digital stamps. Countries such as Germany, Denmark and Sweden have all tried the idea of digital stamps, where a user can text a pre-set number to a short-code and receive a code to write on their envelope in place of a physical stamp. If Ghana Post tries to adopt this innovation, it will save on the cost of printing adhesive paper stamps and also enjoy some commission from the mobile telecommunications companies for the additional business provided to them.

Also, Government can either pursue a full privatisation or partial privatisation of Ghana Post. Privatisation of Ghana Post would create shareholders who will exert pressure on executives to perform. Whereas full privatization is the ideal way to approach the problems of Ghana Post, an initial partial privatization can also be undertaken under the public private partnership initiative of government. The main reason for partial privatisation is that it is likely to be politically more acceptable and therefore has a greater probability of gaining the support of parliamentarians from all sides of the political divide. Furthermore, partial privatisation would chart the course for an
eventual privatisation of Ghana Post as the electorate and politicians increasingly realize that the benefits of privatisation outweigh the costs in terms price and/or universality of service.

Finally, Ghana Post will have to reconsider the way it communicates change to its employees to avoid resistance. Management has a duty to effectively communicate all the changes that have been brought on board since the success of change in every organization is largely dependent on effective communication.
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APPENDIX I

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for a study: the postal system in the era of technological advancement using Ghana Post as a case study. The data being collected for this study would be used solely for academic purposes. You are assured that strict confidentiality would be observed in handling any information you provide.

Section I: General Information
1. Briefly tell me something about your association with Ghana Post and what you currently do.

SECTION II: Current State of the Ghana Postal System
2. Give me a sense of your size and national presence as a public postal service provider.
3. May I know from your experiences, how current developments in the information and telecommunication industry have affected the scope and nature of operations of Ghana Post?
4. In the light of these developments in ICTs, and the evolving nature of your traditional operations, how are your human resources needs being met across the network of offices operated by your outfit?
5. What are the main service lines of Ghana Post?
6. I’m interested, how long will it take a letter posted through ordinary mail in Accra take to reach Kumasi and how long will it take the same letter if it goes through special or registered service?
7. How has been the demand for post boxes by individuals and organisations for the past 10 years?
8. How has mail volume been over the past five years?
9. Which of these services being provided by your organisation are:
   i. yielding the most patronage and most revenue?
   ii. yielding the least patronage and least revenue?

10. How has been the contribution of these service lines to the revenue base of Ghana post for the past ten years?

11. What are some of the major operational challenges facing the Ghana Post?

12. What has been the effect of private delivery companies like DHL, TNT and FedEx on the operations of Ghana Post?

13. What has been the effect of the rise in the use of other technology-enabled communication media like mobile phones, internet (social media, email Instant Messenger) on the operations of Ghana Post?

SECTION III: Response to industry dynamics

14. What recent service lines, if any, that have been introduced by the Ghana Post in response to the industry dynamics?

15. What are the inherent features of these services that would ensure that Ghana Post remains relevant and competitive?

16. In what ways has the Ghana Post employed advances in technology to bring out services that are relevant to the current trends in communication?

SECTION IV: Response to communicating change in Ghana Post

17. How was change communicated to employees within the organisation?
18. How were the overall interests of change to the organisation and stakeholders communicated to employees?

19. Were support systems for the change communicated to employees and how?

20. What means were used in the process and what would be your assessment of their medium and long term effects on your corporate fortunes?

21. How do you envisage Ghana Post in the next five years?

Section IV: Background information
Now I will appreciate your responses to the following questions. They are intended to enable me aggregate my findings according to the role and status of respondents.

I. Please may I know your first name?
II. What is your academic qualification?
III. Please state your responsibilities in this institution.
APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Transcription of an interview with the Principal Public Relations Officer of Ghana Post, Accra Main held on 18th September, 2013 in his office.

(I represents interviewer and R represents respondent)

R-I am the principal public relations officer and I have worked for this company for 11 years.

I – Please give me a sense of your size and national presence as a public postal service provider.

R-We have over 350 offices nationwide and we are adding agencies, we have about 700 agencies.

I – And the agencies, what do you mean by agencies?

R – Agencies are post offices in particular communities which are not fully managed by us, we pay them on commission bases.

I – So they do the work of a post office?

R- They don’t have the full service as we do have, but basic postal responsibilities, they do. We pay them on commission basis. There are places where we go and the people desire to post letters and they don’t have any post office there. So we can talk to a person who has a provision store, if the person says okay I want to work as an agent. He comes and go through the agreement and we issue him stamps. This is how much we are selling and they sell it as normal but we give them the commission. Just to provide the service.

I – How many of these post offices are fully operational because I have heard there are some that are closed down.

R – Which one?

I – Kasoa for instance. I hear it is not working anymore.

R- I have a document concerning it but before you go, I will find it so let’s go on.

Out of the over 350 post offices, about 320 in all the regional and district post offices are functioning, fully operational. For some post offices in remote areas, what they sell for a year can’t even pay for their month’s salary, you understand. To us they are not in full operation but we cannot, close them down. I can tell you for a fact that about 320 are fully operational. The universal regulations does not permit outright close of a post office. Maybe the Kasoa thing you are talking about, it may be as a result of re-location, but not closing down because per the international rules, every corner of the country, even the remote areas should be served with postal services and so government would ensure that every corner of the country has the facility.
I - Then it’s likely that the Kasoa post office exists somewhere else.

R - Sometimes, if you see a post office closed down, it may be due to the fact that the office has been relocated to a new premise in the community and this does not mean that it has been closed down.

I – In every village or area in Ghana here, is there supposed to be a post office?

R – There is a post office, but reason of you not having a post office there could be because government has not extended it there. This HIPC project that we are doing, it is helping us to build certain places for the people. Based on these same requirements for instance, we went to commission a post office at FanteNyankumase, if you go there, although the place is remote, there is a post office. The boxes are not even up to a hundred and not even half have been taken up so you ask yourself why? Why do we do that? But it’s because it’s part of the region. It needs to be there.

I – So you are following the regulations of U.P.E

R – The U.P.E and government as well.

I – Is it that the community is a small one or they are not seeing the essence of acquiring their own boxes?

R - Let me throw it back to you, if you live in a community where business activities are booming, like Swedru, if individuals are not going for boxes, won’t the companies go for them? The family of the officials too will learn to post and have their letters through these boxes. But if you go to a village where there are no jobs, how do you sustain the post office?

I - I understand. So on the average, how many people are employed by each post office?

R - Averagely, 2. The postmaster and the counter staff, if it’s a big place like the Head office, we have about 400-500 workforce because we do administrative work here, if you go to Accra North, we would have between 60-70 workers.

I - I want to know the main services I know you have a lot, special mail service, ordinary etc.

R - Financial services, traditional mail services, agency,

I - How has been the demand for post boxes by individuals and organisation over the past 10 years?

R - People still apply for boxes, day in and day out. Over the past 10 years, the demand has doubled. The demand for letter boxes is very high because, almost any company that completes its incorporation process wants a letter box as part of its address system and in Accra, the demand for letter boxes from companies is very high.
I-What are some of the major challenges facing the Ghana Post?

R-It has to do with labour and logistics

I-Can you please talk more about what you mean by labour?

R- We have a lot of employees from the old system, majority are form four leavers. Effecting change is very difficult since they have been in the system for a very long time and are also in the majority, it poses a challenge since if you bring something new, they resist it with all their might because they think this is not how we have been doing it. Change is difficult but we must embrace change and this is one major challenge we have. Also in terms of labour, I mean we are many compared to the work we have to do. So if you do not provide the work well, this one will say this one will do it, this other person too will say someone will do it. But truly speaking....

I – Work for everybody is work for nobody

R- It’s like a man with many wives, you will go hungry

I- So what is being done about it?

R- A lot is going on about it.

I-Can you throw more light on it?

R-Errm No. I would rather be silent on that.

I – What has been the effect of private delivery, like DHL, TNT, Fedex on your operation?

R- It has come to enhance the effectiveness of our work. DHL, TNT, they are in partnership with us, DHL especially has a good relation with us to the extent that areas that they cannot reach here in Ghana, they fall on us to help them and we also fall on them abroad so they have come to enhance the delivery.

I – That is revealing.

R – Even the internet even though the volume of mails has gone down, it has given us more innovative skills otherwise we wouldn’t think of going outside our normal traditional business, but now we are doing far more than we were doing. We no longer see it as a threat but we see it as a competition so the strongest stay above. If you care to know, this DHL, TNT, Fedex, they are in partnership with us.

I – Are they foreign companies?

R - They are foreign companies especially DHL. They have good relationship with us to the extent that areas they can’t reach here in Ghana, they fall on us to help them. And even in abroad we also fall on them to help us. So it has come to enhance the delivery of service.
I – Which means that when you help them at least you get your revenue or commission

R - Of course. When U.S people bring their mails here and we deliver it for them, they pay us. We have a central account with the universal postal union. They operate it. They do the deductions and all that. If we also send our mails there and they deliver it, it is a work we have given them. We pay them. There is always check and balances, add ups, deductions here and there.

I – So they are not a threat, I see

R – No, No. We have added one service to our courier, what we call speed link. It is a local courier delivery service. What we do is, we pick deliveries and send it to you in the shortest possible time. You have gone to school and realise you have left your lesson book at home but where you are, you cannot go back for it. Just call speed link. Direct us to whom we should pick it from, a rider goes there, picks it and deliver it to you in the closest time possible.

I – Has it been introduced for long because I have not heard about it.

R – No, it has not been for long. It hasn’t been launched. It is on a pilot phase. I am sure you have seen the posters around and have not given it attention.

I – What has been the effect of the rise in the use of other technology enabled communication devices like mobile phones, internet

R – You have the answer. Mail volumes have gone down but it has come to make us more innovative.

I – At least if you have lost in the mail section, it is helping in another area.

R – We are using technology platform with our financial services, now even when you go to Cantonments, stamp sales, sale of passport forms are automated. So you go there and you see a lady behind the computer, you are buying stamps, it’s going to U.S, okay U.S and punches. Your transaction is documented and this is given instruction as to what exactly should be done, the destination, if they keyed in your address and they can’t locate it, the system will tell that your address is wrong, so go back and re-write your address.

I – I see

R – If I take you down to the E.M.S counter, registered mails, that is exactly what happens. So technology has also come to enhance the quality of our work, not just to shut us up.

I – From afar you will think it has come to put you into extinction.

R – That is not the case here.
I – It’s good to know. We are moving to the response to industry dynamics. I think you have answered some but what are some of the recent service lines that have been introduced by the Ghana Post to remain competitive.

R – Speed link, AbusuaNkyenfa. It is a micro insurance service. It is geared towards the low income earners in our society. Recently, we went paying compensation to somebody who lost his item. And we have TXT N PAY services. This has to do with mobile top-ups.

I – I don’t get it

R - I work with Ecobank just across. I need credit. Unfortunately there is no credit seller around. You get to the counter, you go to TXT N PAY services. How much credit do you want, I want 500 cedis. Okay what is your number and on your phone is the credit.

I – I see. Sold at the counter at the post office and you get it instantly.

R – You get it instantly. There are other businesses we want to roll but because we have not, I will not tell you about. There are other five businesses coming up.

I – The abusuankyenfa. I want us to go back to it. How does it work? Are people to contribute?

R – It is a micro insurance, so you pay a premium. It is in collaboration with Star Assurance. You may have this document, everything about it is there. We have a Collaboration with metro mass transit for parcel delivery, that is one, door to door mail delivery, two; we have abusuankyenfa micro insurance and we have speed link.

I – The door to door delivery is different from the metro mass.

R – The door to door has to do with, look at this. We install a receptacle at your post and then when you get letters instead of you coming to the post office, we will bring the letters to your home.

I – As it is done outside?

R- Yes, at the comfort of your home you get served.

I – And the metro mass one?

R – The metro mass one, it is in partnership with metro mass to send parcels out, the collaboration brings about documentation of parcels, we receive the parcels and document them with insurance of course and give them to metro mass, and they carry them from one destination to the other. They would go and send it to the nearest post office. So the post office takes charge, that is, the destination point takes charge and calls the one whose parcel has been delivered to come and identify. Which is more trusted and credible.
I – What are the inherent features of these services lines that will ensure that Ghana Post remains relevant and competitive? Do they have some advantages that make Ghana Post service still relevant and will be able to compete?

R – Ghana Postal Service is still a strong entity. It’s become more friendly to everybody than say, the banks so whatever service we come out, with, if only it is trumpeted enough for people to know, people are more comfortable coming to our door steps than going to the banks because the perception has been created that if you are not an elite, going to the bank is not for you. The post office is for everybody.

I – The post office is friendlier, and that’s the advantage you have?

R – So that advantage in itself sustains the kind of business we do. With the AbusuaNkyenfa it’s a micro insurance, if you pay a premium, trust me, people will hold onto it. Last week Monday, we paid a premium to someone. So when people get to know that these services are rendered by Ghana Post, which they have known and have identified with.....

I – And I think Ghana Post has been with us since the time of Adam

R- So post office is known. I am more comfortable going to the post office than to Barclays bank, you get it. When somebody is going somewhere and gets missing, if there is a post office nearby and there is a bank nearby, trust me, they will walk to the post office to ask to be shown or directed than going to the bank. Why?

I – At least your doors are always open.

R – Exactly! We are upgrading or face lifting our premises, very soon if you come here you will realise that our frontage has been upgraded.

I-How does management communicate these new services to the staff?

R-Usually, after management has met over a new development, memos are sent to the heads of the various departments informing them of the new thing that has come on board and for them to meet their members. They schedule meetings and relay the information to their members. Sometimes, at a staff meeting, the information is given to them.

I-What are the main communication channels you make use of and what would be your assessment of the medium and long-term effects on your corporate fortunes?

R-Well, we mainly make use of meetings, memos, notices, durbars, internet and even interpersonal or face-to-face. I think they are ideal means because they help in reaching employees fast. You know these means are very effective in communicating in organizations...yes likewise, it will help Ghana Post.

I-What are the challenges you face in communicating new services or changes to the staff?
R- As I’ve said before, it’s not easy here. Anything concerning change, our people won’t take it easily. They will resist because, they are used to the old ways of doing things, and meanwhile, things have changed. All the same, it shall be well, you know people naturally don’t like change.

I-What are some of the reasons they give for the resistance?

R-Some say, it’s an attempt to lay some workers off. Others complain that they can’t undergo any new training, some just don’t get the need to change, a whole lot.

I-What process do you follow in communicating such changes?

R- We tell them about the need to try something new in order to sustain the company, then we tell them what the change is about and when it is to be rolled out.

I-What does the future look like?

R- Very soon, Ghana Post would be one of the flagship enterprises in the country in the near future. With innovative thinkers, the fortunes of the service can be turned around. In a few months, most post offices would receive a facelift with counters which look more modern than that of even banks.

Transcription of an interview with the Head of Business Development of Ghana Post, Accra Main held on 18th September, 2013 in his office.

(‘I’ represents interviewer and ‘R’ represents respondent)

I-I want to know your position at Ghana Post and how long you have been working here.

R-I am the Head of Business Development here. We are in charge of the daily operations, talking about seeing to the services offered by Ghana Post and I have worked here for almost 16 years now.

I-Sir, kindly give me a sense of your size and national presence as a postal service provider in Ghana?

R-Currently, there are 350 post offices and out of these, 320 are being operated fully. They are spread all over the country. Every small village or settling is to have a Post Office.

I-About how many people are employed by each Post office with high mail volumes?
R-Well, it depends, averagely, 65 at places who work with high volume mail. In the small offices, at least we should have 2. At the Head office, we have about 400-500 because much goes on at the head office. You can have between 60 to 70 workers at Accra North.

I-Where is Accra North?

R-Circle, it’s a big office so we can have about 65 staff members. 20 at the counter, the district manager, postmasters with their assistants, drivers and others

I-Have you closed down some of your offices?

R-We haven’t closed down per se. If you see an office closed down, then we may have moved to a better place, yes, for one reason or another, it becomes necessary for us to move from one place to another.

I-Reasons like?

R-oh, it can be because of rent issues or the nature of the place

I-What are the main service lines of Ghana Post?

R- We have four main categories, financial services, traditional mail services, agency and courier services

I-I am interested in the traditional mail services. If a letter is posted through ordinary mail from Accra to Kumasi, how long will it take?

R-It should take of 2 days....minimum of 2, maximum of 3 days

I-And if it is registered or special service?

R-It goes the same as the ordinary mail. It is registered to be treated with more attention and security. If an ordinary mail gets missing, you cannot hold us responsible but if a registered mail gets missing, of course, it’s a big deal to us.

I-I thought that we register so it goes faster.

R-That is express service. If you post a letter this morning and they are bagging mails this afternoon, they will come for express mails and add it to the afternoon mails and then they dispatch. It comes with additional cost.

I-What service fetches much income?

R-It’s the traditional mail. Under the traditional mail, we have what is called the corporate mails or business mails. Business mail deals in large volumes of mails coming from banks and other
big companies and it attracts quite a huge amount of cash. Also, we have parcel post. So the traditional service is what fetches us much of the money we raise.

I-Which one is yielding the least patronage?

R-As it is now, the courier service is not moving. The courier services have the lowest patronage.

I-What has been the average mail volume over the past five years?

R-Let me give you a document, it’s clearly spelt out.

I-What effect does private delivery companies like DHL, TNT and FedEx have on the operations of Ghana Post?

R-We partner these foreign companies, we help them with delivery here in Ghana, and they also help us with delivery elsewhere abroad. They are not a threat so at the long run, they make our work effective and we get a commission from the service we render to them.

I-Sir, so what are the current services that Ghana Post has introduced?

R- We have gone into insurance, telecommunication, transport, all in a way to keep our heads up as an organization.

I-So what really are they?

R-We’ve introduced AbusuaNkyenfa, that’s the insurance aspect and it’s meant for those with low income. Then we have Speed link, that one is a very fast courier service. It’s currently being piloted and we are taking advantage of technology to improve upon our work.DTD or Door to-Door too is a special delivery service in which those who patronize have their mails right at their door step. At Kumasi and in Legon Post office in Accra, it’s in full operation. Txt-N-Pay is also an alternative way for mobile phone users to recharge their mobile phones with credit. This one does not deal with scratch cards. You just walk into a post office, pay, provide your phone number and you get your credit right on your phone.

I-I see, this is quite new from the traditional duties of a post office.

R- Yes, we are also partnering Metro Mass Transport to roll out bulk courier services to remote places at an affordable price. You know MMT have destinations in the entire nation. So, we are not resting at all. Very soon, we shall introduce five additional service lines.

I-In what ways have you used advances in technology to bring out services that are relevant to the current trends in communication?

R- Several ways, you see, all the services mentioned is thriving on the wings of technology. The Txt-N-Pay for instance, it’s technology which enables the credit to be sent to your phone. In some post offices, the sale of stamps is automated and also, now, there is software. If you key in
the address on an envelope, it will tell you whether the destination exists or not. Previously, was it so? No, so even though advance in technology has affected us negatively in one way, it’s helping us in several ways.

I-Then that means the post office is still strong

R-Exactly!

I-How was change communicated to the staff within the organisation?

R-We usually hold meetings with the staff and tell them or at a staff durbar, we explain anything new to them. Sometimes, we make and share fliers to them. In one of our staff meetings at the departmental levels, we discussed how it was imperative for management to swiftly make alterations to some of our procedures in the organisation. For instance, in one of our departmental meetings, I remember we discussed how Ghana Post could still make post mails necessary and important for the general public even though emails and for that matter the social media might have taken over. You know, it’s important you communicate anything new to the staff so that they get ready to change their way of doing things. And when it comes to change, it’s not easy.

I-How? Please explain

R- I just want to say that it’s not easy communicating new services to the staff. You have to explain and explain and talk. Because they are used to the old ways like sale of stamps, sorting, bagging etc., they tend to kick against new ideas, but gradually, we are on it. And one thing is that, whoever was to be affected by the change found out that his or her daily duties had been changed and they were not comfortable with that.

I-What are the major challenges you face in your operations?

R-Logistics to work with. We need new computers and accessories, most of what you find in our offices are broken down. That one you see isn’t working. We also need new vehicles to work with and fuel as well. Some policies too aren’t helping.

I-Is there any problem with labour?

R-Hmmm, why not? It is. The number of people working here is a bit on the high side considering the fact that things have changed. And the younger and vibrant people too, like you, are not finding this place attractive to come and work so we are left with the same old staff who also are not comfortable with change.

I-How do you see Ghana Post in the next five years?

R-Oh, all things being equal, Ghana Post has a bright future. Brighter than what we see now. The current management is full of ideas which when rolled out will help better the fortunes of Ghana Post. We are on course.
Transcription of an interview with the Head of Finance of Ghana Post, Accra Main held on 19th September, 2013 in his office.

R-I have been with Ghana Post and worked for 17 years now. Currently, I am the Head of Finance

I-Has the advance in technology, like the internet and mobile phones affected Ghana Post in terms of revenue?

R-Sure, it has. People have resorted to quick and easier ways to communicate and you know communicating through letter writing is not that fast, so yes, we have been affected in terms of revenue derived from sale of stamps. But don’t forget that it’s worldwide, mail volumes have gone down due to the existence of the internet.

I-Please, how is the finances of Ghana Post now, especially when mails volumes have gone down and you are therefore not getting much from that?

R-Hmmm it’s not in the best of shape but very soon, things will improve.

I-How will things improve?

R-through strategic planning, there will be a complete turn around

I-Which service line is yielding much revenue?

R-It’s the mail service. Though volumes have gone down, it yields us the highest revenue. One thing is that the parcel delivery aspect helps a lot. You can send mail from the internet but can you send a parcel through the same means? No you can’t, so we still have the advantage.

I-Which of the services is yielding the most patronage?

R-in terms of patronage too, it’s the traditional mail. Individuals don’t write letters any longer but businesses do. They write to their shareholders, banks send their customers statements, schools post reports, and these are referred to as corporate mails or business mails. Business mail is about large volumes of mails coming from banks and other big companies and it brings in enough money. Also, we have parcel post.

I-Which one is yielding the least revenue?

R- What is yielding the lowest revenue is agency service. You know agencies are found in small communities where the population is small. What we derive from them is just peanuts.

I-How has been the contribution of your various services to the revenue base of Ghana Post for the past ten years? In percentages, please
I have a document on that but unfortunately, it covers 2010-2012, which is three years. I can’t readily or easily get what you are requesting for so make do with this.

I—Thank you. May I know the cost composition of the postal services, what goes into salaries, administrative work etc. in percentage terms?

R—Ok, you can have this too, the information can be found in it. But much go into payment of wages.

I—What accounts for that?

R—We have a great number of employees. Remember that there are post offices scattered all over the nation and in every office, there are people working there who need to be paid, regardless of what they bring in.

I—What challenges are you facing talking from the finance perspective of Ghana Post?

R—We need money, if you can supply. On a serious note, as I said, the bulk of money we get goes into the payment of wages and salaries and it’s because we have a large staff. So yes, the large labour force is a challenge. Technology too has affected revenue from mails but, we are taking advantage of it to change our way of doing things and improve our services.

I—I know Ghana Post have introduced entirely new services, how are the changes communicated to the staff?

R—During meetings we try to explain new changes to them. Then at staff durbars too and even face-to-face or one on one depending upon the situation departmental meetings are held regularly so anytime there is the need to communicate something of that sort, we do it there.

I—How does the staff react to news on changes in operations?

R—Well, over here, news about change is usually not welcome. Some people simply object to anything different from what they are used to. Do you know that some people just don’t want change? But that does not deter us from moving forward.

I—Don’t you think it’s because the mode or the procedure you follow in communicating isn’t right?

R—I don’t think so. Look, we take time to explain new services to them. We assure them that they will be training in order to acquire the skills and also give reasons for the change. So I don’t see any problem with this.

I—How was the orientation for employees on the benefits of implementing change carried out in the organisation
R- I must confess, the department had to meet to discuss this as pertained in other departments but other engagements prevented us from meeting. Same goes to the Transport department too.

I-How do you envisage Ghana Post in the next five years?

R-I envisage, better and improved services, quality and dedicated staff, high rise in revenue and a completely changed Ghana Post.

I-Thank you.