THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF THE VOLTA RIVER AUTHORITY (VRA), GHANA.

BY

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THIS LONG ESSAY IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MA COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES DEGREE

JULY, 2016
DECLARATION

I declare that, except for references in other works cited and duly acknowledged, this dissertation is the result of my own research carried out at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. The research was ably supervised by Dr. Abena A. Yeboah-Banin.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first of all to God almighty for the strength and blessing throughout the course work. Secondly, to my wife Barikisu, and my two daughters, Nasara and Ameera for their prayers and support, especially when they had to cope without me most of the time when they needed me most.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The last 15 months or so has been a period of intense learning for me, not only theoretically, but also on a personal and practical level. This long essay almost brings to an end my long awaited dream of pursuing an MA in Communications Studies and writing my long essay in a subject I have always been passionate about, Knowledge Management.

It is now time to reflect on the people who have supported and encouraged me throughout this period. First of all to all my colleagues from the Master Class of 2016, I say a big thank you for their fun and teamwork. Secondly, I say thank you to the entire faculty at the school of communications studies for the 2015/16 academic year. I would particularly like say a big thank to my supervisor, Dr. Abena A. Yeboah-Banin.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of communication in knowledge management in Volta River Authority (VRA), one of the state own institutions in Ghana. The study sought to determine the communicative aspects used in the knowledge management process in VRA. The main challenge confronting the usage of communication in knowledge management in the VRA was examined. The qualitative research design approach was used in this study. The population of the study is comprised of senior, junior and middle level management at the knowledge management department. The respondents who participated in the study are two (2) Management, three (3) executives and directors, and fifteen (5) senior staff. In all ten (10) respondents were used for the study.

The study revealed that communication plays a pivotal role in knowledge management. Thus without communication, it will be very difficult if not impossible to handle Knowledge Management in organizations. Another important result of the study is about the importance of communication in revealing and sharing both the explicit and tacit knowledge.

Also, the findings of the study established that managers and employees at the VRA show interest in the usage of communication in the knowledge management processes. The study therefore recommends that there should be policies, framework, administration and processes to guide the implementation of Knowledge Management systems at VRA. Consciousness should be created by VRA Management to insure that staff is conversant with the Knowledge Management concept. The study recommends that with the rise of information age, electronic communication should be more employed in the VRA since electronic assumes an important role in sharing the recorded explicit knowledge.
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction/ Background

Like humans, organizations make and gather knowledge utilizing different components in achieving organizational excellence. Knowledge has become a strategically essential asset in many organizations. Knowledge management is playing a key role in accomplishing work excellence (Rowley and Hartley, 2008). Under increasing competitive pressure, organizations are looking at how they can better their intellectual capital and transfer knowledge more efficiently across their organizations. The emerging field of Knowledge Management addresses the broad processes of locating, organizing, transferring and using information and expertise efficiently within an organization. New market forces have prompted an interest for Knowledge Management (Randeree, 2006). This keen interest has risen following the loss of essential knowledge by many business forces as a result of down-sizing as well as losses resulting from the departure of long-serving employees (who have inside and out information that other staff could depend on). Due to this, it has become imperative for the acquisition, creation, storage and sharing of knowledge by organizations between the individuals and groups making it the ultimate goal of knowledge management which needs to be spearheaded by communication.

The communication’s role in the knowledge management is both normal and valuable, because the knowledge, which is a good value, must be transferred so it can be exploited to maximum, and the knowledge transfer is possible only through communication. The managerial decisions, strategies, plans, explanations must be communicated to the organization’s members so they know how, where and why it must be acted to assure its success. Despite these positive effects of communication in the management process, little has been written on. The significance of this
study is to fill this literature gap. The study also seeks to increase the interest of managers and top level officials in the research setting on the use of communication in the knowledge management process.

It must be noted that knowledge management, particularly knowledge creating and sharing activities, mostly depend on interaction and communication between individuals and groups and although many cases concerned with knowledge management are analyzed (not only in Ghanaian literature but also in international literature) communicative aspects of Knowledge Management have not been discussed widely enough.

Little attention has been provided or emphasized on communication’s role in KM unlike the ICT which is often seen as the medium in managing the acquisition, consolidation and the transfer of knowledge in an organization. As a result, some studies dominantly mention communication technologies (ICT) while others pay less attention to communication as a specific dimension of Knowledge Management activities in terms of knowledge management and communication relationship though in the current business environment, the implementation of Knowledge Management projects has become easier with the help of technological tools.

Hence, communication aside ICT also has a big potential in knowledge management in the public sector especially. The aim of this study is to fill the gap in literature on the role of communication in knowledge management at a Ghanaian national establishment called the Volta River Authority (VRA).
1.2 Problem Statement

The communication of professional knowledge has become crucial for the well functioning of any organization either through interpersonal communication or through group conversations. In emerging economies like Ghana, the infrastructure, hardware, software, people and communication networks are not well developed, shared, used and managed. There are also no proper communication policies, programs, strategies, governance and framework to make Knowledge Management effective (SFDIC, 2007). It must be noted that, though ICT usage in the production, processing, storage and diffusion of information and knowledge has brought a bunch of returns to organizations like the VRA, less attention has been paid to the communication aspect which can aid in knowledge management organizations as well. With the example of the VRA, it must be mentioned also that, though the organization creates lots of explicit knowledge, that knowledge is not properly managed for effective use (Ofori-Dwumfu and Kommey 2013). It can clearly be spelt out that long-serving employees usually have in-depth knowledge that may be relied upon by other staff. Since the commission of this state owned institution, VRA has, over the years, generated a lot of in-house intellectual capital which when effectively utilized and managed, would facilitate greater innovation, strategic planning and continuing learning for the achievement of its vision. The loss of these staff can have negative impact on the level of knowledge within the organization. In order to address this issue, ICT facilities have been put in place in VRA, but despite this the desired impact on Knowledge Management to achieve job efficiency is not felt and the role of communication has also not been spelt out in the knowledge management process. A study conducted by Ofori-Dwumfu and Kommey (2013) to investigate the use of ICT tools in Knowledge Management in the Ghanaian state organization, Volta River Authority (VRA) recommended that further study should concentrate on the use of
communication as a knowledge management tool in public institutions. This implies that communication cannot be relegated to the background as far as knowledge management is concerned. It is against this background that the above study seeks to ascertain the role of communication in Knowledge Management System in the Volta River Authority. Apart from the implementation of ICT in the knowledge management process, the study looks at the role communication also plays in the knowledge transfer, consolidation and acquisition process.

1.3 Research Objectives

The central theme underpinning this study is to ascertain the role of communication in the management system in the above research setting. Specifically, the study however seeks to determine;

1. To identify the role communication plays in the knowledge management process.
2. To determine whether managers and employees show interest in the usage of communication in the knowledge management process
3. To determine which communicative mode (verbal or written) is preferred in knowledge management process in the VRA.
4. The main challenges confronting the usage of communication as a tool in knowledge management

1.4 Research Questions

The central question guiding this Study is; what is the role of communication in the knowledge management process in the Volta River Authority-Ghana.

Secondary Question includes;
1. To what extent does communication help in the knowledge management process?

2. Which communicative mode (verbal or written) employees in VRA prefer in knowledge management process.

3. What are the main challenges confronting the usage of communication as a tool in knowledge management and how can those challenges be solved.

1.5 Significance of the Study

A research conducted by some staff of the Volta River Authority, G.O. Ofori-Dwumfu and R.E. Kommey titled “Utilization of ICT in Knowledge Management at the Ghana Volta River Authority” only sort to establish the importance of ICT in the knowledge management process. The research however fell short of establishing a clear distinction between the various elements of computer based technologies (ICT) and intellectual capital (information/data) and how they can be created and shared among workers thereby defining the importance of communication and its tools in KM processes. Like many existing Knowledge Management literatures, the research by G.O. Ofori-Dwumfu and R.E. Kommey fails to discuss adequately the communicative aspects of KM creating some gap in literature particularly for the case of Ghana. This is even more necessary in the case of tacit and explicit knowledge. The main difference between tacit and explicit knowledge is that it is more difficult and costly to access and transfer tacit knowledge than explicit one (Jasimuddin et al., 2005), and that tacit knowledge has some difficulty for imitating and diffusion of individual skills (Kogut and Zander, 1992), and this is where it transcends ICT to into the realm of communication.
Consequently, if communication process is designed very well within an organization, then people can put forward ideas and encourage response in a way that all team members are included in the communication (Mohamed et al., 2006).

This research paper would contribute significantly to already existing theoretical literature and hopefully fill the research gap by examining the critical role communication plays in the entire knowledge management value chain especially in public sectors in Ghana.

This research would also uplift the existing theoretical literatures and fills the research gap by assessing the role of communication and interpersonal knowledge sharing in the public sector. The study also facilitates as foundation for further research in the area by providing as source information to other researchers and student regarding personalization/interpersonal knowledge sharing process. The findings of the study underlines further factors like communication, trust and organizational cultures which determines the success of innovation supporting firms which could be a good theoretical contributions.

Knowledge Management helps in exploiting and realizing knowledge of the employees and building a culture where knowledge sharing can thrive. Knowledge Management is often facilitated by information technology (Jashapara, 2004).

Knowledge management as a subject area is not very popular in Ghana as such this work is significant to the extent that it would offer future researchers in the area with ready materials and guidelines.
The findings and recommendation is expected to contribute to the public sector reforms process in Ghana especially in the area of knowledge sharing and management among public sector workers.

1.6 Scope of the Study.

In this globalized world today, knowledge is viewed as most significant concept that adds value to organizations. People, institutions, and nations who make right use of knowledge strategically get a comparative advantage against the competitors. Most lately, many governing bodies and institutions have established systems in order to gain the benefits from the utilization of knowledge management approaches. A learning organization actively creates, captures, transfers and mobilizes knowledge to enable it adapt to a changing environment (Wellman, 2009).

It is worthy to establish that knowledge management, particularly knowledge creating and sharing activities, largely depend on interaction and communication between people and groups. This indicates that communication plays a pivotal role in knowledge management. Conceptually, this study therefore focuses on the role of communication in knowledge in public institutions in Ghana. The study is confined to VRA head office in the Accra in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

1.7 Organization of Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one of the study is the introduction, which describes the background of the study, statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, research question, methodology, significance of the study, research limitations, and organization of the
study. Chapter two on the other hand reviews related literature on the subject matter. Chapter three is also concerned with the methodology employed in carrying out the study which includes; research design, population, sample, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter four, deals with the presentation of results, interpretation of results, and other findings. Finally, chapter five presents a summary of the research findings, implications of the study, conclusions based on the study, and recommendations.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1.8.1 Knowledge Management (KM)

In the View of Newman (1991) Knowledge management (KM) is an assembly of processes that direct the creation, distribution, and use of knowledge in an organization. This encompasses the management of explicit knowledge (i.e. knowledge that has been writing down in documents, databases, web pages, etc.) and the provision of an enabling environment for the development, nurturing, utilization and sharing of employees’ tacit knowledge (i.e. know-how, skills, or expertise).

I would define knowledge management in relation to the subject and topic being discussed as a discipline that utilizes communication tools an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving, and sharing all of an organization’s information assets. These assets may include databases, documents, policies, procedures, and previously un-captured expertise and experience in individual workers.
1.8.2 Communication

Communication (from Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning "to share") refers to the process of transmission proposed meaning to another individual through the use of equally understood signs and semiotic rules. The elementary stages of communication are the creation of communicative intent, message composition, message encoding, and transmission of signal, reception of signal, message decoding and finally interpretation of the message by the recipient.

Communication is the base of knowledge creation. Tacit and Explicit knowledge will not be convert without communication. In relation to the subject matter communication can be defined as a human contact and interaction with the aim to agree on something.

The communication process is an integral part of knowledge management, as knowledge is encoded and sent through a channel or media to a receiver, where it must be decoded and understood. The more tacit the character of the knowledge to be communicated, the more difficult is it to codify this knowledge and to define a common code which the receiver of the message can understand.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of communication in knowledge management system among employers and employee in the Volta River Authority in Ghana. This chapter contains related literature in above-mentioned subject area using the objectives of the study as a base. The first section discusses the Systems Theory of Communication and reviews the knowledge management concept, thus the various opinions by scholars on the concept. The argument of whether or not it is an abstract concept falsely expounded will be briefly discussed. The preceding section will discuss the key components of the concept knowledge management. Communication and Communication Tools in Knowledge Creation and Sharing Process will be discussed in the penultimate section of this chapter. Finally a general conclusion of the chapter will occupy the final section of this chapter.

2.2 Systems Theory of Communication.

Systems theory focuses on the relationships between parts and the properties of a whole, rather than reducing a whole to its parts and studying their individual properties (Senge, 1990). Systems theory has been applied to a broad assortment of organizational and management topics including innovation, information systems change and supply chain management (Helou and Caddy, 2006). Recently researchers have suggested that business in general and knowledge management in particular could benefit from a systems perspective (Atwater et al, 2008). A system is defined as “an entity which maintains its existence through the mutual interaction of its parts” (von Bertalanffy, 1976, pg. 298). Ackoff (1971) translated von Bertalanffy’s original
definition of a system to the organizational context. He argues that a system is composed of at least two elements and a relation that holds between them. At any given time, a system or one of its elements exhibits a state, defined as its relevant properties, values or characteristics. In relation to knowledge, an important concept in systems theory is generative learning. Generative learning has been explained as the process of leveraging, integrating, and customizing existing knowledge for new uses (Senge, 1990). In generative learning the focus is not on storing and relisting information, but rather on generating relations and creating meanings that increase understanding (Wittrock, 1992). Generative learning enables innovative approaches to new problems rather than the mere reactionary, and often ill-suited, re-application of old ideas to new problems.

A systems approach to KM recognizes that each time one of the key knowledge processes is enacted, there may be a ripple effect of events and behaviors that may modify the state of other sub-systems.

Based on the review of systems theory literature, Ackoff (1971), proposed the following adaptation of systems theory to the KM context.

- **Knowledge Management system:** A system whose goal is to seek desirable states for knowledge creation, storage, transfer, or application.
- **Closed Knowledge Management system:** A KM system where knowledge flows only within the system.
- **Open Knowledge Management system:** A KM system where knowledge flows to and from its environment.
Dynamic Knowledge Management system: A KM system where respondents have influence over both the content and the flow of knowledge within the system.

One key impact of this theory is that, it has contributed to the elimination of knowledge silos, and the recognition of the dynamic and holistic nature of KM that is necessary to design KM systems appropriately. Another contribution is that systems theory offers a new perspective that addresses the often overlooked consequences of behaviors that tend to degrade KM implementations.

2.3 The Concept of Knowledge Management
Possibly the most widely studied concepts in management literature is the concept of Knowledge management. Yet, despite the ubiquity of opinions on this emerging field of study, there exits, no unanimity for the definition of ‘knowledge management’ (Tsui, 2000). It can be nevertheless ascertained that most of the definitions of this subject share some sort of a primal idea. Most of the definitions seem to match that ‘knowledge management’ is concerned with the aggregation and diffusion of knowledge of the benefits of organizations in question (Lueg, 2001). In the lens of the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC), knowledge management are “the strategies and processes of identifying, capturing and leveraging knowledge” to enhance competitiveness (Manasco, 1996). Schultze and Leidner (2002) also defines KM as “the generation, representation, memory, transport, translation, application, embedding, and security of organizational knowledge”. Alavi and Leidner (2001) also defines knowledge management as “a dynamic and continuous set of procedures and practices embedded in people, as considerably as in groups and physical structures where at any point in time in a given organization,
individuals and groups may be implied in different facets of knowledge management processes” (Martensson, 2000) looks at KM as an important and necessary component for organizations to exist and maintain competitive keenness and so it is necessary for managers and administrators to consider KM as a prerequisite for higher productivity and flexibility in both the individual and the public sectors.

There was an initial notion that KM is just another management fad and fashion that executives are eager to add to their assortment of boardroom lexicon to impress contemporaries and that with time, this will fade away (Scarborough and Swan, 2001; Ponzi and Koenig, 2002; Hislop, 2010; Serenko, Bontis, Booker, Sadeddin and Hardie, 2010; Oluikpe, 2012). However, this has been found by research evidences as not true because the number of academic publications on the management of knowledge within organizations has steadily increased since the late 1990s when the concept emerged. Spender (2008) also corroborate this fact stating that KM represents a potentially very important subject area which not only opens up new ways of theorizing about the nature of organizations, but also has the potential to be highly relevant to the interests of the business world in improving business performance.

According to Chang an d Lee (2007) the purpose of knowledge management “is to amend the sharing and exchange capabilities of organizational knowledge so as to compile and exert wisdoms with collective effort”. Wigg (1977) in another study in the subject area outlined the main objective if KM. To him the fundamental aim of KM is to establish the enterprise act as intelligently as possible to ensure its viability and overall success and to otherwise realize the best value of its knowledge assets (Wigg, 1997).
A critical perusal of the above brings home the idea that KM as a management practice shares some commonalities with communication. In other words, KM with an inference from the above can be viewed to include the collection and dissemination of knowledge among employer and employees in an organization.

Also, most literature on this subject justifies the categorization of the concept into ‘tacit’ (i.e. know-how, skills, or expertise) and ‘explicit’ (i.e. Knowledge that has been codified in documents, databases, web pages, and so on) knowledge. The primary difference between tacit and explicit knowledge is that it is a lot more challenging and expensive in transferring the former than the latter (Jasimuddin et al., 2005). Tacit knowledge in itself occupies difficulty in the imitation and diffusion of individual skills (Kogut and Zander, 1992). In contrast, explicit knowledge can be codified, documented and transmitted, making it easily and cheaply available to large numbers of people at little or no marginal cost (Jasimuddin et al., 2005). It must be noted that these types of knowledge mentioned-above are very important in assessing the role communication in the knowledge management systems.

Furthermore, as the focal point of this study most literature on the concept of knowledge management; dominantly mention communication technologies while little attention is paid to communication as a specific dimension of KM activities in terms of knowledge management and communication relationship. Mohr in the year 2007 conducted a study on the relationship between communication and KM. He reasoned that a broad sort of communication patterns was used by various teams to share and create knowledge, with person-to person discourse playing an important part in the initial phases of outsourcing engagements supporting the growth of shared
vocabularies by the respondents. Likewise, communication technologies played important enabling roles for these actions.

2.4 Key Components of Knowledge Management

Lately, many organizations have realized in-sustainability of use technology in maintaining competitive advantages over their competitors. The over reliance ICT have proven inadequate in the collection and dissemination of information in and out of a company. Recently organizations have concluded that the secret for competitive edge lies in their employees. And so to remain at the forefront and maintain a competitive edge organization must hold a full capacity to retain, develop, coordinate, and use their employee competencies (GroEnhaug and Nordhaug, 1992). The realization is that processes are not enough to drive an organization but its human force (staff) are very integral pivot in organization’s success. Therefore, in order to manage knowledge effectively, attention must be paid on to four key components: Knowledge, People, Processes and Technology (KP2T) (Desouza 2011). In crux, the focus of KM is to connect people, processes, and technology for the purpose of leveraging knowledge. Knowledge is described as an essential part of KM. According to Baloh, Desouza, and Paquette (2011), the absence of knowledge to manage, justifies the absence of knowledge management. Knowledge basically refers to a collection/or a body of information. This could mean that the information is embedded in the form of theories, processes, systems, or it could be voiced in form of opinions, theories, ideas and analysis.

Diverse typologies have been established but the only agreement is the view that knowledge is more than just mere data and information. Wang and Noe (2010, p117) define knowledge as
“information processed by individuals, including ideas, facts, expertise, and judgment relevant for individual, squad, and organizational performance. Davenport and Prusak (1998) define knowledge as “A liquid mixture of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that offers a framework for assessing and integrating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers”. Knowledge is not what is composed in a desktop computer or any storage device rather the insights, understandings, and practical know-how that people possess. It is the fundamental resource that allows people function intelligently. It can then be stated that knowledge is an invisible or intangible asset, in which its acquisition involves complex cognitive processes of perception, learning, communication, association and reasoning (Epetimehin and Ekundayo, 2011). Davenport, De Long and Beers (1998) define knowledge as information combined with experience, context, interpretation, reflection, and perspective that adds a new level of insight. In the view of Allee (1997) knowledge becomes meaningful when it is seen in the larger context of culture, which evolves out of beliefs and philosophy. Sveiby (1997) describes knowledge as the ability to act on information making it valuable to the organization. In short, an organization is said to have knowledge when it is not embedded in only in documents or repositories, but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, norms and cultures.

People occupy the second component. People are the sources of knowledge. The power of humans to think creatively and uniquely, coupled with experiences and natural endowments, make humans valuable sources of cognition. People are the creators and consumers of knowledge because individuals consume knowledge from various sources on a daily basis, in addition to creating knowledge. In essence, KM begins, rolls around, and ends, with people. It is
so apt to see people in KM strategy and execution. People face emergent knowledge needs as part of daily assignment or routine. And these demands should be met through tools, procedures, systems and protocols to seek integrate and apply relevant knowledge. As Drucker (1999) points out, workers (people) need to be able to seek out knowledge, experiment with it, learn from it, and even teach others as they innovate so as to promote new knowledge creation. Having a KM program that enables the sense of the importance of people is a very important to organizational success. Baloh et al. (2011) define processes, which is another KM component, as mechanical and logical artifacts that guide how work is conducted in organizations. Processes govern work in organization and so are critical to the functioning of organization. It is therefore pertinent for a KM program to recognize their importance. Processes might be made of, and executed by, humans, machines, or a combination of the two. A critical requirement for KM is to be able to understand work processes and how to map them. By so doing, inputs, outputs, personnel, resources and work being conducted in a given process can be easily described. Mapping of processes helps to depict what is really going on in the organization and how tasks are being accomplished. Knowledge needed to accomplish tasks can then be articulated and requisite technology or human intervention can be deployed to meet these needs with the goal of increasing effectiveness and efficiency in the organization.

Another component of KM is technology. Technology is a critical enabler and foundational element of a KM plan. With the advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), KM can be gained through technological solutions. ICTs facilitate collaboration between people and teams which are geographically dispersed. ICTs also facilitate KM activities through the codification of knowledge as well as rich and interactive forms of communication through
the Internet. While technology is important and can significantly enable KM, it is pertinent to state that it is not a solution in and of itself. Technology does not make organization share knowledge, but if people want to share it, technology can increase the reach and scope of such exchanges. Putting an ICT-based KM system in place is not in and of itself going to make people utilize it, but the success of KM initiatives involves taking account of the socio-cultural factors which inhibit people’s willingness to share knowledge, such as conflict, trust, time or concerns about loss of power/status (Sun and Scott, 2005).

The final component which is the focus of this study is communication. Knowledge occupied in the minds of the people must be communicated across the organization. Hitherto, the process of communication in organization was considered to be just instrumental and functional. Currently it is now considered to be an important and sophisticated practice that contributes to knowledge management. Communication media such as verbal, written and electronic plays very key role in knowledge management however, recent studies turns to focus on ICT and its role in knowledge management. The communication process is an integral part of knowledge management, as knowledge is encoded and sent through a channel or media to a receiver, where it must be decoded and understood. The more tacit the character of the knowledge to be communicated, the more difficult is it to codify this knowledge and to define a common code which the receiver of the message can understand.

Knowledge to be “managed” effectively along the chain, must be identified, understood, made explicit and shared (communicated) with others in order to be useful and enhance learning processes. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the communication process depends on the
abilities of the receiver to select a relevant message, to codify it and to choose the right communication channel in order to address a selected receiver, as well as on the receivers’ ability to de-codify and understand the message. This learning process, based on the exchange of information and knowledge between different stakeholders of the chain, influences the decision-making process and insofar the underlying rules of the chain (the governance regime). In a nutshell, the process of communication and learning is part of effective knowledge management.

### 2.5 Communication and Communication Tools in Knowledge Creation and Sharing Process

Boyacı, (1996) sees communication as the transfer or exchange of information, thoughts and emotions between individuals of groups. Some organizations use communication as a medium in creating and transferring of polices and strategies to and from the workers. It is again used in transferring orders through the scalar chain of command. Communication is essential for all the groups, communities or organizations which come together for performing a main purpose. Despite the effectiveness of communication, if it is not properly done workers will not be ready to put forward their ideas and encourage response in a way that all team members are included in the communication (Mohamed et al., 2006).

Relatedly, Nonaka and Takeuchi’s (1995) coined the SECI model (socialization- externalization-combination-internalization). This model emphasizes that knowledge conversion is a ‘social process between individuals and not confined within an individual’. These four process begins with socialization where individuals share experiences and mental models to refine knowledge.
Tacit knowledge is converted into explicit knowledge through a process referred to as externalization by using some communication tools.

It can be noted that communication tools and phases are commonly used between individuals and groups at every phase. It is therefore important that one mode to another mode in knowledge conversion some communication tools should be used by individuals and groups. Like knowledge creation, knowledge sharing also occupies a key place in the area of knowledge management (Klein, 2008). It has a very close link to communication in data, information and knowledge exchange process. In this work, these communication tools are tested in three groups as verbal, written and electronic communication tools. Verbal communication is the most utilized tool in the organizational communication (Vural, 1998). The recipient can not only hear the message but also observe the aims, emotions and ideas of the sender from the motions of his face and body (Kutanis, 2003). A language is required for direct or indirect verbal communication (Erolu, 2004). Verbal communication tools provide the flowing of the verbal information so as to inform the workers about any subject. The most common samples for verbal communication are: conferences, seminars, face-to face/ telephone contacts and meetings.

On the other hand, written communication is also frequently used in the organizations. Especially in the growth process, organizations apply written communication for widening policies and standards. Also, in bureaucratic organizations orders and announcements are written usually. Top management orders, directions, policies and strategies are forwarded to the lower levels with up to down communication by internal correspondences. Similarly, the lower levels forward the facility reports and documents to top management by down to up communication.
The final group, electronic communication tools, is mostly related to computer and IT-based communication. Technology is mostly the obvious solution to assist communication (Mohamed et al., 2006).

These tools have common characteristics and their development process is based on developments of computer technologies. The most common and oldest one of these tools is electronic mail. E-mail and some other electronic message tools are widely used between employees in the organizations (Smith & Rupp, 2002). They are used not only for sharing the knowledge between departments by employees but also used for sharing the company policies, instructions and directions by the management. Groupware software is also one of the electronic communication tools which can be used in knowledge management processes. These are computer based applications which let people work synchronously (chat, video conference, messaging, etc.) or no synchronously (e-mail, forums, discuss groups, etc.) (Bellaver & Lusa, 2002). Based on the arguments about importance of communication in KM practices above, the model about the role of communication for KM practices is proposed in Figure 1.
Fig 1.1: The model for importance of communication in knowledge creation and sharing:


In every specific mode of the knowledge creation model of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), verbal, written and electronic communication tools are applied in the common manner. While individuals and groups perform knowledge flow within an organization, all types of communication are very important. For example, in externalization mode, from tacit to explicit knowledge, essentially verbal communication should be used. Likewise, in socialization mode, from tacit to tacit knowledge, generally face-to-face verbal communication is favored. Consequently, communication is vital in KM process; different types of communication could be used both for knowledge creation and knowledge sharing.

A study regarding the communicational abilities in managing knowledge revealed that to create knowing, much importance needs to be put in the attitude through which the experience is
communicated and the way it is shared (Treem, 2012). That is why the organization’s leaders must put themselves as partners of the organization, to be stimulated to use their aptitudes (Kalkan, 2008) to create and transfer the knowing. The relational aspects of the communication underlines even more the complexity of the making of the communication efficiency and of the knowledge transfer specific to a named context.

2.6 Conclusion

The importance of management of knowledge in organizations has been discussed. The effective management of knowledge has been described as a critical ingredient for organizations seeking to ensure sustainable strategic competitive advantage. It has been brought out that processes and technology alone are not enough to drive an organization, but its people (staff) and the knowledge that reside in the people are a very integral pivot in organization’s success. Therefore, in order for an organization to be successful, attention must be paid, not only on the processes and technology, but on knowledge and its workforce (which are people who are the sources of knowledge). It has been identified that communication is the acquisition and the dissemination of knowledge across an organization. It was also observed that hitherto, communication in the form of verbal, written and electronic tools have been over the years, relegated as an effective medium in knowledge management. It is therefore essential for management in organizations to look for means to gain, maintain, and leverage knowledge to achieve a lead to higher levels of success for organizations. It is for this reason that this study seeks to investigate the role of communication in the above research setting in the knowledge management process.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology. The research methodology involves the systemic rules and procedures upon which this research agenda is based and against which the data collected are interpreted and the findings evaluated. The methodology describes the procedures in conducting research. The main approaches needed for the research are identified. It also identifies the population and sample techniques used to achieve the purpose of the study. In addition, the procedure used in administering the questionnaires in the collection data and data analysis techniques will be explained. The chapter also provides the organization profile of the selected organization (Volta River Authority). The research will adopt the in-depth interview method as the objective is to assess the role to communication in knowledge management in public institutions in Ghana particularly VRA. Data collections will in the form of both primary and secondary data. One-on-one in-depth interviews will be conducted during the entire period of the study.

3.2 Profile of Volta River Authority

The Volta River Authority (VRA) is a wholly owned Ghanaian statutory public institution established by an Act of Parliament, Act 46 on April 26th 1961, with a primary objective to generate and supply electrical energy for industrial, commercial and domestic use in Ghana. VRA started with the development of the hydroelectric potentials of the Volta River and the construction and maintenance of a nation-wide grid transmission system. Today, it has expanded into thermal generation to complement inadequate supply from hydro generation. In 2005, following the promulgation of a major amendment to the VRA Act in the context of the Ghana
Government Power Sector Reforms, the Authority has now been restricted to generation of electricity. Consequently, the Government has divorced the transmission system to form an independent transmission company, Ghana Grid Company (GRIDCO), separate from the VRA’s power generation mandate, and thereby set the stage for private sector participation in the energy market. VRA has other responsibilities in furtherance of its corporate mandate. These include Lake Transportation, Tourism, Maritime administration of the Volta Lake, Lakeside Health and Management of the Akosombo Township. The Volta River Authority seeks to be the power utility of excellence in the West African Sub-region. The mission of the Volta River Authority is to produce and supply reliable electricity to meet customer demand and stakeholders' expectations for the socio-economic development of Ghana and the West African sub-region whilst maintaining the highest standard of safety and sustainability of the environment. As clearly stated in its KM strategy document, the Volta River Authority (VRA) is one of the very few public institutions in Ghana using the KM processes. The document reveals significant loss of knowledge as a result of separation of current and retired employees as the major reasons for the adoption of the KM processes by the VRA. The approach of solving the problem of knowledge loss through writing it down has never been suitable for retaining all types of knowledge to employees both new and old, hence the KM approach involving the use of a blend of tools including document management repository, use of retirees, organizational learning, mentoring and training.

3.3 Research Design
The in-depth interview design approach will be used in this project. Kumekpor (2002), asserts that a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach includes measures and procedures of
enquiry usually based on intensive interviewing. This allows researchers to get an understanding of an issue in order to take decisions. These decisions usually take into consideration the special circumstances surrounding the case investigated. Thus particularly, an in-depth interview as well as documentary or textual analysis was used for this study. This project will be carried out on the Volta River Authority of Ghana as a study.

3.4 Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data sources were used in the study. The primary data was collected from two main sources, interviews and questionnaires. The secondary data included VRA documents, books, the Internet and academic journals.

3.5 Primary Data

A semi structured questionnaire was developed as the tool for the study. Respondents were selected through appropriate sampling method to allow expediency and a chance of getting rights answers from respondents. Also an in-depth interview as well as documentary and textual analysis was employed to obtain the primary data for the study. Senior junior and middle level management were sampled in VRA for the purpose of this study.

3.6 Secondary Data

Secondary data for the study included training manuals and reports, company websites, newspapers, magazine and other journal contents would be employed in this study. Sometimes subtle meanings, or implied or connotative meanings, are what you want to understand, hence the use of textual analysis. It must be noted that apart from primary data which would be heavily

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used in this study secondary data would also be used in tandem, which gave insight into the location and the various sectors within the VRA as well as the population of the current employees at the VRA.

3.7 Population of the Study.

All workers from the top management, middle to the junior level staff of VRA makeup the population of the research. The target population for the study will be the management and senior staff of VRA who make up a total of 266, (VRA, 2015).

3.8 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The study adopts the purposive sampling technique. Aina (2004) sees purposive sampling as a situation where the researcher will depend on his knowledge of the population and handpick certain members who possess relevant data on the subject being considered. One major advantage of purposive sampling is that, it ensures that the researcher gets at least, some information from respondents who are knowledgeable and crucial to the study (Pickard, 2007). In this current research, selections will be made by management and senior staff. This is to help the researcher obtain an acceptable degree of trust and accuracy. The sample for the study included two (2) Management, three (3) executives and directors, and five (5) senior staff. In all ten (10) respondents were sampled for the study. The justification for this sample is that, since the research is qualitative in nature requiring interview ten (10) respondents were considered as an appropriate for the study.
3.9 Data Collection Tools

In an effort to collect credible information to provide answers to research questions raised, a research semi-structured questionnaire, interview will be used to solicit for the needed information from the respondents.

3.10 In-Depth Interview

As indicated earlier, data for this study will be gathered by way of interviews, thus with open-ended questions. In order to get the general view of the role of communication in Knowledge Management Practice in VRA, the qualitative method such as in-depth interview will be conducted. The format for the interview is the general interview guide approach which is intended to ensure that the same information is collected from each interviewee to focus on the study. During the interview, the researcher will ask one question at a time and remain neutral as possible. Personal interviews were conducted with five top management officers who, the researcher believe, would implement the Knowledge Management function in the strategic plan of VRA; the Chief Executive Officer and his three deputies for Engineering, Services and Finance, as well as the Head, Document Management. All interviews will be conducted privately and tape-recorded with permission.

3.11 Qualitative data analysis

After empirical data has been collected, the qualitative data analysis will be carried out following the procedures shown in Figure 2.1
Figure 2.1: The procedure for analyzing the interview data

- Preliminary indexing system
- Search for key words
- Code the key words
- Sort the text
- Match the pattern
- Review and extend

Source: Authors construct.

Data will be transcribed after collection for the analysis. A preliminary indexing system will be recognized based on the research questions. Then from the text of empirical materials, searches of key words or phrases will be directed, and coded according to the preliminary indexing system. This will be done according to themes. Particular pieces of text and associated ideas will be sorted using the preliminary indexing system. Therefore, the results of the study will be presented using thematic analysis approach where all the transcribed interviews will be grouped into themes based on the objectives and research questions.
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data that was collected from the respondents of the study. Since the data was a qualitative in nature, it will be analyzed thematically based on the aims and objectives of the study. The study sought to ascertain the role of communication in the management system in the institutions across the country. It again tried to identify the important role communication play in the knowledge management process and also to determine whether managers and employees show interest in the usage of communication in the knowledge management process. It further tried to determine which communicative mode (verbal or written) is preferred in knowledge management process in the VRA and also, the main challenges confronting the usage of communication as a tool in knowledge management. In this regard, the respondents of the study were first identified and assigned alphabetical values and their responses analyzed in conjunction with the aims and objectives of the study.

4.2 Analyses of Data

In order to protect the identity of the respondents and also to avoid confusion and ambiguity, the respondents will be identified and assigned with numerical values as has already been stated above. The respondents of the study are as follows;

**Respondent(INT 1)** = fifty-five years (55) years old male who works at the Technical Services Department of the institution and has been at post for 33 years and is in charge of operations in the company.
Respondent (INT 2) = thirty-two (32) year old male. Works at the Technical Services Department of the company and has been at post for 3.5 years. He holds a First Degree and is a Content Management Specialist in the company.

Respondent (INT 3) = thirty (30) years old male. Works as Information and Publicity Assistant and also holds a First Degree. Been at post for 3 years now.

Respondent (INT 4) = thirty three (33) years old male. He has been at post for 4 years and is a Web Master. Also holds a First Degree.

Respondent (INT 5) = thirty (30) years old female. Works as an Information Officer and has been at post for 2 years. A First Degree holder.

Respondent (INT 6) = twenty four (24) years old male. Holds a First Degree and has also been at post for 2 months.

Respondent (INT 7) = thirty five (35) years old female. Works at Information and Publicity Department. Holds a First Degree and have been at post for 7 years.

Respondent (INT 8) = forty two (42) years old male. Works at the Technical Services Department and has been at post for 18 years. Holds a Master Degree.

Respondent (INT 9) = fifty (50) years old female. Works as Information and publicity Officer. Holds a Master’s Degree and have been at post for 10 years.

Respondent (INT 10) = twenty seven (27) years old male and works at the Technical Services Department and also holds a First Degree. Been at post for 4 years.

a. To What Extent Does Communication Help In The Knowledge Management Process?

When the respondents were asked as to what extent are communication tools and models used in the knowledge management process in their institution. All ten interviewees responded in the
affirmative, an indication that all the respondents know, use and acknowledge the important role of communication KM process. Mohr (2007) held a study about relationship between communication and KM, and according to results of this study, a wide variety of communication practices were used by the teams to share and create knowledge, with person-to person discourse playing an important role at the initial stages of outsourcing engagements supporting the development of shared vocabularies by the participants.

In response to the question above, one respondent (Respondent INT 2) only said “To a very wide extent”. Respondent INT 2 also added that:

“Management has the interest because they help in the transmitting of information, ideas, thoughts and plans and opinions in various parts of the organization”.

Respondent INT 1 responded that:

“Information and knowledge are communicated through publications, databases, multimedia, and web content, all of which are available globally online-VRA Workplace Portal”.

Respondents INT 4 reiterated that:

“It helps to meet corporate objectives and goals”.

The responses by the respondents buttress the point that that communication is the central vector in every organization’s KM system. Organizational decisions, strategies, plans, explanations, must be communicated to the organization’s members so they can know how, where and why it must be acted to assure its success, and all these are probable through communication and dialog.

Respondent INT 9 also said:
“We usually communicate by calling on phones, by meeting with staff one on one, by sending mails and by the use of a discussion forum on the knowledge management portal”.

From the responses provided above by the respondents, it is very clear that the management of VRA as an institution have much interest in the usage of communication as a medium in the knowledge management processes and therefore, gives it a top priority in sensitizing and making their staff aware of it. All the respondents shared the view that management of the institutions have a very keen interest in communication as a key component of knowledge management in the organization.

b. To What Extent Do Managers And Employees Show Interest In The Use Of Communication In Knowledge Management.

The question went further to ask whether employees have interest in the usage of communication as a medium of knowledge management process and if Yes, how? The trend in the response indicates the there is a high degree of interest on the part of both managers and employees in the use of communication in KM process.

A study regarding the communicational abilities in managing the knowledge revealed that to create knowing, extremely important is the attitude through which the experience is communicated and the way it is shared (Treem*, 2012). That is why the organization’s leaders must put themselves as partners of the organization, to be stimulated to use their aptitudes (Kalkan, 2008) to create and transfer the knowing.

On that question, respondent INT 1 responded in the positive and said

“Statistics show staff use the E-Resources effectively and are able to share, collaborate and learn through the Communities of Practice. For email purposes, for
exchange of ideas. Communication improves collaboration, locates knowledge sources, mines repositories for hidden knowledge, captures and uses knowledge, or in some other way enhances the KM process”.

Respondent INT 2 also responded that:

“Yes. Usually they communicate by calling on phones, by meeting with staff one on one, by sending mails and by the use of a discussion forum on the knowledge management portal”.

Respondent INT 3 responded in the positive and was of the view that:

“It serves as a virtual classroom where you can have access to a wide range of information to enhance efficiency and productivity”.

Respondent INT 8 said:

“Yes because it improves productivity and also increases information sharing among the staff”. Respondent INT 6 also added that “Communication is the most vital way to share information so it is very important in terms of knowledge management and is of great interest to employees”.

From all these responses, it is obvious that employees just like management take the usage of communication in knowledge management very serious and attach great importance to it. This is very positive since it shows that the employees have a greater understanding on the relevance of communication as a medium of knowledge management and therefore, will treat any program that management rolls out to enhance this with great importance.

c. Which Communicative Mode Do Employees In VRA Prefer In Knowledge Management Process?
The questionnaire went on to ask what the communicative aspect of VRA’s KM and the role it plays in the knowledge management process. Responses by six of the respondents to this question indicated that they all employ various communication modes as available in their institution in the sharing and creation of knowledge. On that also, respondent INT 6 responded that:

“Verbal communication, electronic communication (E-mail, Internet application)”.  

Respondent INT 4 responded that:

“Verbal and electronic”.

Respondent INT 3 said:

“Verbal, Internet applications, face-to-face meetings, electronic document sharing, E-mail. It increases value and productivity and reduces costs and losses”.

Respondent INT 1 also added that:

“VRA strategy is to harness and share knowledge throughout operated areas, has developed a VRA KM Portal”.

From the analyses of the respondents’ responses, it shows that the main communicative aspect of VRA’s KM is through verbal as well as electronic communications and that this is to reduce costs and enhance efficiency in terms of KM in the organization.

d. Challenges Facing Employees in Using Communication in Knowledge Management.

The interview guidewent on to ask the respondents the main challenges confronting communication in KM and how they think can be curbed. From the responses given it was established that though there were some communication tools available not all the members utilized it for various reasons. On that also, respondent INT 1 said:
“No System for identifying and cultivating Experts in Ghana, no knowledge sharing culture, no knowledge assets and mapping techniques, organizational eLearning are not well established in Ghana, no Knowledge Management Systems, such as Expertise Locator, poor Information Infrastructure and insufficient resources are available to structure and update the content in repositories”.

Respondent INT 2 was also of the view that the main challenges confronting communication in KM are “Staff not checking their mails regularly, staff absenting themselves from meetings and telecommunications network problems”. Respondent INT 3 also said to curb this, the organization as well as the staff must “Regularly update information, keep track with users of the KM system and proper technology must be adopted for regular update and tracking of users to be able to measure progress”.

Respondent INT 4 said:

“willingness to share knowledge and that those who share must be rewarded”.

Respondent INT 5 also said “lack of awareness of the availability of communication tool. This can be curbed through training and sensitization”.

Respondents INT 9, INT 7 and INT 8 all shared similar views suggesting that the unwillingness of people to share information and the reluctant attitude of individuals to apply rules and utilize information is a challenge.

All the above stated reasons have been cited as the main challenges that confront communication in KM system and some of the remedies have also been stated by the respondents.
e. Evaluation of the Role of Communication in Knowledge Management.

On how they will evaluate the perceptions of the role of communication in the knowledge management process in their organization. The response showed the workers where very much aware of the important role communication plays in KM in their organization. Respondent INT 6 said “Without communication of information, knowledge is not obtained or recorded so communication is most important in our organization”. Respondent INT 5 also added that “We perceive the role of communication in KM to be very important”. Respondent INT 8 also said “Communication plays a very special role in KM in the organization since it is only through communication that information is shared”. Respondent INT 1 also said “Communication helps in knowledge sharing, learning and collaboration within the organization to enhance operations”. Respondents INT 1 and INT 2 were also of the view that “VRA uses communication process intensively in creating and transferring policies and strategies to the workers. Also, the process is used for transferring the orders or tasks to the employees. Communication is essential for all the groups, communities or organizations which come together for performing a main purpose. Also it is used to access the Authority’s E-Resources”. All these shows that the respondents and by extension the staff at VRA all have a very good perception of the role of communication in the KM process in the organization.

f. Importance of Communication in Knowledge Management.

The respondents were again asked if communication has a big importance in knowledge management concept and if Yes, How and why? On that also, respondents INT 1 answered in the affirmative and said “Communication has played an active role in information access. It is used
for the exchange of information, thoughts and emotions between individuals of groups or communities”. Respondent INT 2 also had this to say:

“Yes because it is used to exchange knowledge between staff”. Respondents INT 3 also said that “Yes because it combines the usage of relevant database through which users can search and find relevant information”.

Respondent INT 4 was also of the view that “Communication provides the requisite platform and tools for giving and receiving knowledge”. Respondents INT 9, INT 8, INT 6 and INT 5 all shared similar sentiments. This means that all respondents view communication as a very vital tool in KM concepts.

The respondents were again asked if creating a verbal communication between professional employees is important for knowledge creation. On that, respondent INT 1 said:

“Verbal communications are so effective for knowledge creation, storage and distribution because it helps in information flow, learning and to get right information at right time”.

Respondent INT 2 also said:

“Yes. This is because when the employees interact verbally they are able to explain and demonstrate adequately for the colleagues to understand”. Respondent C said “It must be able to inform and impart knowledge. It must have clarity and must be made understandable and effective”.

Respondent INT 4 also added that “Yes, verbal communication enhances social interaction among colleagues and they share knowledge”. Respondents INT 4, INT 5, INT 6 and I all
answered in the positive. This means that the respondents all agree that creating a verbal communication between professional employees is important for knowledge creation.

On the assertion that electronic communication is more important than verbal communication in sharing the knowledge assets and the extent to which they evaluate this assertion, respondent INT 5 said “electronic communication is very efficient in KM”. Respondent INT 6 agreed with the assertion and said that “Electronic communicated information can be stored, verbally communicated information cannot be stored and even be forgotten”. On the same issue, respondent INT 3 also added that “The electronic medium helps to access electronic resources and a virtual pool of information as well as knowledge on best standard practices whereas the verbal communication does not”. From these responses, it is very obvious and clear that all the respondents in the study show preference for electronic communication over verbal communication due to the ease with which electronic information can be stored and accessed as and when it becomes necessary.

The respondents were finally asked some of the communication tools their organization employs in knowledge management. On that, respondent INT 1 answered that the organization uses “VRA workplace Portal is to collect, organize and disseminate knowledge across Departments; Email, Discussion Forum/chat; Expertise Locator to identify experts in VRA”. Respondent INT 2 also added that:

“Email, Discussion Forum, Meetings and Via Telephone”. Respondent INT 9, said “Emails, Meetings, Phone communications and Forums”. Respondent INT 8 also said that “VRA makes use of an electronic portal where can access knowledge resources. There are also electronic chat room and electronic newsletters platform available”. 

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Respondent INT 6 also reiterated that “Newsletters, chat rooms, verbal and electronic”. All these shows that VRA as an organization have a lot of communication tools they use in engaging their staff in KM in the organization.

4.3 Discussion of Results

Due to increasing competitive pressure, organizations are looking at how they can better their intellectual capital and transfer knowledge more efficiently across their organizations and therefore, Knowledge management and advancements are becoming key roles to accomplishing these roles (Rowley and Hartley, 2008). In that regard, the emerging field of Knowledge Management addresses the broad processes of locating, organizing, transferring and using information and expertise efficiently within an organization. New market forces have prompted an interest for Knowledge Management and these keen interest has resulted from the reason that business forces knowledge lost from down-sizing as well as lost from the departure of long-serving employees (Randeree, 2006). Martensson (2000) looks at KM as an important and necessary component for organizations to exist and maintain competitive keenness and so it is necessary for managers and administrators to consider KM as a prerequisite for higher productivity and flexibility in both the individual and the public sectors.

Although the importance of communication is always mentioned in knowledge management literature, it is not placed as a basic component in many studies. However, when we place communication as one of basic components in knowledge management process, it is accepted as the secondary most important component of knowledge management. In that regard, the study sought to ascertain the role of communication in the management system at VRA. At the end of the study, it was established that communication plays a very vital role in the knowledge
management system in VRA. When asked whether employees have interest in the usage of communication as a medium of knowledge management process and if Yes, how? On that, respondents INT 1 responded in the positive and said “Statistics show staff use the E-Resources effectively and are able to share, collaborate and learning through the Communities of Practice. For email purposes, for exchange of ideas. Communication improves collaboration, locates knowledge sources, mines repositories for hidden knowledge, captures and uses knowledge, or in some other way enhances the KM process”. This shows that employees just like management takes the usage of communication in knowledge management very serious and attach great importance to it. This is one of the important findings of this study. The conspicuous point in this section of the result is that communication is much more important in sharing knowledge and this confirm the study conducted by Boyacı, (1996) who sees communication as very important in the transfer or exchange of information and that of Ofori-Dwumfuo and Kommey (2013) who also established that communication is used as a knowledge management tool in public institutions (Ofori-Dwumfo&Kommey, 2013).

On the important role communication play in the knowledge management process, it has been established that communication plays a pivotal role in knowledge management and without which it will be very difficult if not impossible to handle KM in organizations. On how they will evaluate the perceptions of the role of communication in the knowledge management process in their organization, respondent INT 7 said “Without communication of information, knowledge is not obtained or recorded so communication is most important in our organization”. From the illustrations above, it was duly established that all the respondents and by extension the staff at VRA all have a very good perception of the role of communication in the KM process in the
organization. Also, when asked if communication has a big importance in knowledge management concept and if Yes, How and why? On that, respondents INT 1 answered in the affirmative and said “The need for a Knowledge Management process and database due to the risk of losing information and knowledge as people transition from one role to the and/or leave the Authority. Communication has played an active role in information access. It is used for the exchange of information, thoughts and emotions between individuals of groups or communities”. Thus from all these explanations, there is no longer room for doubt that all respondents view communication as a very vital tool in KM concepts. This supports the findings of earlier studies conducted on the same topic for example Baloh et al. (2011) who established a positive relationship between communication and knowledge management.

Also according to the results of the study almost all the employees consented that communication plays an important role in particularly acquiring the tacit knowledge. This finding supports the findings of Tingoy, & Kurt, (2009) who indicated in his study that “communication has serious importance for KM”. Employees also clarify that knowledge can be used more effectively with the support of communication. They also state that, knowledge management process cannot be realized without communication technology. These results confirm the findings of Chang and Lee (2007) who also found the importance of communication for knowledge management.

Again, on whether managers and employees show interest in the usage of communication in the knowledge management process, the study found out that they do. It was found out that managers and employees’ alike show a lot of interest in the usage of communication in the
knowledge management and these same findings supports that of earlier studies. Mohamed et al, 2006 found out that despite the effectiveness of communication, if it is not properly done workers will not be ready to put forward their ideas and encourage response in a way that all team members are included in the communication (Mohamed et al., 2006).

The study again sought to determine which communicative mode (verbal or written) is preferred in knowledge management process in the VRA. From the analysis of the data, it was established that the respondents prefer the written mode of communicative tool since you can keep a record for reference as against verbal which you will not get to keep any for future references. In his study, Vural, (1998) found out that verbal communication is the most utilized tool in the organizational communication (Vural, 1998). This is because verbal communication tools provide the flowing of the verbal information so as to inform the workers about any subject. The most common samples for verbal communication are: conferences, seminars, face-to face/telephone contacts and meetings (Kutanis, 2003; Erolu, 2004). It was also discovered that electronic communication tools, is mostly related to computer and IT-based communication. Technology is mostly the obvious solution to assist communication (Mohamed et al., 2006). The most common and oldest one of these tools is electronic mail, e-mail. E-mail and some other electronic message tools are widely used between employees in the organizations (Smith & Rupp, 2002). Nonetheless, Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995) postulated that in every specific mode of the knowledge creation, verbal, written and electronic communication tools are applied in the common manner. The findings of this current study is in line with the above study conducted by Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995) since this current study also established e-mail, internet, verbal communications are mostly employed by the workers in VRA.
This findings of the current study also confirms Tingoy, & Kurt, (2009) who identified e-mail, internet applications, intranet, electronic document sharing and face-to-face meetings are mostly used communication tools in knowledge management process.

Finally, on the main challenges confronting the usage of communication as a tool in knowledge management, it was found out that; No System for identifying and cultivating experts in the country was in place. Additionally there was no knowledge sharing culture in place, no knowledge assets and no mapping techniques. Again organizational eLearning are not well established in Ghana and for that matter the VRA. It is also instructive to note that one other challenge confronting the usage of communication as a tool in KM as established in the findings is the apparent lack of Knowledge Management Systems, such as Expertise Locator and poor Information Infrastructure and insufficient resources needed to structure and update the content in repositories of the KM system in VRA and the nation as a whole.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents the conclusion of the study as well as the recommendations to VRA in particular and all public institutions in Ghana in order to enhance communication in knowledge creation, sharing and management.

5.1 Conclusion

This study focused on the importance of communication in knowledge management in organizations. According to the findings, it has been established although the employees clarified that they have knowledge management practices, it is found that, some of the employees do not use electronic communication tools widely which are developed based on knowledge management. This finding shows that, knowledge management has not been broadened adequate yet with its specific applications in VRA. From the findings, we have established that Knowledge management is so vital to organizational success in these modern era such that managers and employees alike need to pay so much attention to it all their activities. Again from the findings of the study, it can be stated that the management at VRA are aware of the importance of knowledge management process and therefore, try to form a knowledge management strategy, although the concept is quite new for developing economies such as Ghana. Also, the study established that managers and employees show interest in the usage of

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communication in the knowledge management process and that knowledge creates added value and they accept knowledge as an important source for the organizations. The study also revealed that respondents acknowledge communication as most important dimension of KM and they also emphasize that organizational success cannot be gained in knowledge management process without communication. This findings further establishes that the success of knowledge management depends heavily communication and that communication is the most singular factor that enhances KM in organizations. The study again established that management and employees at VRA prefers the written communicative mode to the verbal communicative mode in knowledge management process in the organization.

At the end of the study, it was again established that there are many challenges confronting the usage of communication as a tool in knowledge management in the organization. Some of the challenges identified include:

1. No System for identifying and cultivating Experts in Ghana
2. No knowledge sharing culture
3. No knowledge assets and mapping techniques
4. Organizational eLearning are not well established in Ghana
5. No Knowledge Management Systems, such as Expertise Locator
6. Poor Information Infrastructure
7. Insufficient resources are available to structure and update the content in repositories
Although the employees clarified that they use communication in knowledge management practices in VRA, it is found that communication has not been broadened adequately despite its widespread applications in Ghana.

5.2 Recommendations

The study puts forward a few recommendations for Communication use in Knowledge Management at VRA and Ghana:

- There should be policies, framework, administration and processes to guide the implementation of communication systems in order to foster the implementation of Knowledge Management systems at VRA. Consciousness should be created by VRA Management to insure that staff is conversant with the Knowledge Management concept. In this regard, communication can be an effective tool through which knowledge management can be well or effectively implemented in the VRA. It was established that communication is very significant in Knowledge management, however, it was seen not to be well utilized in VRA hence this study recommends an effective usage of communication in the attempt of the staff in managing knowledge.

- Information and tacit knowledge that is documented or captured using communication should be maintained and made usable. There should be a section in VRA to manage knowledge assets and capabilities. Employees at all tiers should be encouraged to utilize Knowledge Management tools such as communication and schemes for efficient and effective decision making and they should inculcate the habits of sharing knowledge so as to achieve business efficiency.

- The rich experience of the staff above forty years of age who have served VRA for more than twenty years should be retained, tapped, managed and shared via a Knowledge

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Management system as a means of knowledge retention. This can be done through the application of communication tools be it verbal or electronic. Verbal communication can be done through interview sections.

- There should be adequate provision of communication facilities and tools for use at VRA. Finally, VRA should intermittently organize training programs to train staff on the role of communication in Knowledge Management.
Reference:


Treem Jeffrey W., (2012), Communicating expertise: Performing Knowledge at Work, Communication Currents, online web magazine, vol. 7, issue 2


APPENDIX A.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I want to thank you first of all for taking the time to answer the following questions.

My name is Nurudeen Mohammed, a graduating student from the University of Ghana, Legon, and Department of Communication Studies.

I would like to seek your opinion about your experiences in the use of the Knowledge Management (KM) system in your outfit and the role communication plays in its operation.

Specifically, as one of the key components in ensuring a successful KM system I am assessing the utilization and appreciation of communication and its tools and models by their managers to ensure a better understanding of the need and ways to share knowledge within the setup. This exercise would also allow me to capture lessons that can be used in future interventions within the KM system in VRA and other government institutions.

The interview should take less than fifteen minutes. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your responses will only be shared with research team members and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent.

INTERVIEW GUIDE.

1. Age groups. ..............................................................

2. Gender ...............................................................

3. How long have you worked in this current position ......................

4. What is your educational status ........................................

5. What is your position ..................................................
6. To what extent do you think managers have interest in the usage of communication as a medium in the knowledge management process in your institution.

7. To what extent do you think employees have interest in the usage of communication as a medium of knowledge management process.

8. What is/are the communicative aspect/media of KM and the role it plays in the management process.

9. What are the main challenges confronting communication in KM system and how do you think they can be curbed?

10. Are there formal tasks for knowledge management in your organization and if yes how are the task been carried out.

11. How do you evaluate/examine your Perception of the role of communication in the knowledge management process in your organization.

12. Communication has a big importance in knowledge management concept. How do you see its importance and why do you think it is important?

13. Electronic communication assumes an important role in sharing the recorded explicit knowledge. Do you agree with this statement?

14. Do you agree that Communication plays an important role in acquiring the tacit knowledge and how?

15. Creating a verbal communication between professional employees is important for knowledge creation. Do you agree with this statement? If Yes how can it be done and why should it be done and if No why?

16. Verbal communication spaces are being designed/used for employees in your organization. How do you evaluate this statement?
17. Electronic communications is more important than verbal communication in sharing the knowledge assets. How do you evaluate this assertion and how do you see this to be true?

18. To what extent do you agree that routine written communication is essential for knowledge management?

19. What are some of the Communication tools your organization employs in knowledge management and how are they employed?