THE GHANA NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY’S USE OF WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: A PUBLIC RELATIONS DIALOGIC PERSPECTIVE

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Harriet Ama Bampoe, hereby declare that, with the exception of references to other works which have been duly cited and acknowledged, this work is entirely mine and conducted under the supervision of Fr. Dominic Maximillian Ofori (Ph.D) of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. This piece of work, has neither been submitted in part nor in whole for any other degree from elsewhere.

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DEDICATION

To God be the glory! I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, for their immense encouragement and support throughout the years.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to specially thank Fr. Dominic Maximillian Ofori (Ph.D), for his remarkable supervision and assistance throughout my research. Special appreciation goes to my family and friends for cheering me on throughout the course of my study at the department of communication studies. Finally, Mr Kofi Antwi Asuman (D.Phil), your support has been invaluable. Thank you.
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ABSTRACT

Using Kent and Taylor’s five principles of dialogic communication, this study examined Ghana’s National Communications Authority’s (NCA) use of website and Facebook page to engage stakeholders. A content analysis of the website and Facebook page of the NCA was conducted for a period of three months. The study analysed indicators of the five dialogic principles namely, dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of returned visits, ease of interface, and conservation of visitors. The study found that the five dialogic principles were minimally manifested on the both website and Facebook page of the NCA as both platforms only employed principles such as ease of use and useful information adequately. Comparatively, posts made on the Facebook page and the website of the NCA were similar to an extent and the useful information principle scored the high points on both platforms. Finally, the study revealed that the website of the NCA did not allow two-way communication between the organisation and its publics. These findings may suggest that the NCA website did not foster direct feedback. These findings support existing literature and affirm what communication scholars have discovered on similar subject. Based on these findings, it was recommended that future studies could focus on a longitudinal study of the communication behaviour of the NCA’s online platforms using mixed methods.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Information and communication technology (ICT) plays an important role in the way an organisation interacts with its stakeholders to ensure high productivity. The advent and proliferation of new media has meant that organisations are moving towards interactive communication between themselves and their publics. Organisations now encourage more than ever their publics and the recipients of their messages to offer feedback, thereby initiating a two-way communication (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Jo & Kim, 2003). Avery, Lariscy, Amador, Ickowitz, Primm, and Taylor (2010), along with Kim, Chun, Kwak, and Nam (2014) also assert that new media, especially organisational websites as well as other social media platforms, generally provide a direct, valuable and integrated two-way means of communication between organisations and their publics. Organisations normally use new media platforms which include websites, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to provide their publics with information about themselves and their services or products. According to Bortree and Seltzer (2009), organisations are taking advantage of the opportunities new media offer to communicate with their diverse publics. However, some firms are still practicing a unidirectional form of communication on social media, thereby not maximising the potential of social media to effectively engage their publics. Key information usually identified on the websites and other social media platforms of companies includes identity, history, mission, vision, goals, promotions, news publications, as well as new products.

Indeed, information and communication technology has undeniably revolutionized the practice of public relations, making it easier, faster and convenient. The internet, a key part of the
ICT revolution, has become a medium for institutions and organisations to reach for their target publics, beat off competitors and also build their brands.

1.1.1 The Internet and Global Usage

According to Kemp (2018), there billions of active internet users and indicates a seven percent increase from the previous year. The research by Kemp (2018) also indicated that about 250 million users had their first internet experience in 2017, which shows that people are becoming more exposed and connected to the internet. A website is an internet platform that maintains one or more pages on the World Wide Web. An organisation’s website displays enough information about the organisation and is accessible beyond the national borders of a country. As websites gradually become the choice media for customer and stakeholders, it is important for institutions to use the new media (websites) as communication tools (Will & Callison, 2006). As Kent and Taylor (1998) noted, websites “are a primary means for communicating with and responding to publics” (p. 267). A website usually gives a pictorial impression of the organisation and forms the basis for assessing the organisation.

Apart from websites, organisations of the twenty-first century also employ social media to interact with their stakeholders. Social media is regarded as a new form of media that provides the platform for participants to engage each other (Manning, 2014). Social media continue to evolve and are able to spread across geographic boundaries (Esrock & Leichty, 1999). According to Kim et al. (2014), the high adoption rates of social media by organisations imply that organisations do not only identify the strategic potential of social media to communicate with stakeholders but also expect significant benefits from social media adoption and its usage. Social media also offers features that are missing in the traditional forms of media such as quantifying the number of people
receiving a message as well as instant conversations between an organisation and its stakeholders without the regulation of a third party. For public relations purposes, social media acts as an intermediary between an organisation and its stakeholders (Ayer, 2018). Social media presents popular sets of tools that allow public relations practitioners to effectively cultivate relationships with their publics (Sweetser and Lariscy, 2008). Unlike traditional media which is characterized by delayed feedbacks, social media is more participatory and interactive. The next section discusses the National Communications Authority of Ghana, its responsibilities and role as a regulatory body.

1.1.2 National Communications Authority

The National Communications Authority (NCA) of Ghana is a government agency responsible for licensing and regulating media frequencies and telecommunication organisations in Ghana. The vision of the NCA is to become a world-class communications regulator that facilitates innovative, reliable and sustainable communication solutions to meet stakeholders’ expectations (NCA, 2019). The NCA was established by the National Communications Act of 1996, Act 524, which was later repealed and replaced by the NCA Act of 2008, Act 769, to regulate communications by wire, cable, radio, television, satellite and similar means of technology to promote efficient communications services in Ghana. According NCA (2019), the Authority also seeks to become a vibrant communications authority in the West African sub-region to enable Ghana become the premier destination of ICT investment in West Africa. The NCA has a number of stakeholders, these stakeholders include the government, owners and operators of TV and radio stations, telecommunication companies and the general citizenry.
Some responsibilities of the NCA as mandated by the laws of Ghana include granting licenses and authorisations for the operation of communication systems and services in Ghana. The NCA is responsible for educating and protecting consumers by setting up safeguard mechanisms for seeking redress on telecommunication-related issues. Based on this education and protection responsibility, the NCA plays the role of a neutral arbitrator that examines and resolves complaints and disputes between subscribers, licensed operators or any other stakeholder involved in the communications industry. On the international level, the NCA, ensures effective International Frequency Management by collaborating with other countries. This international frequency coordination is done to ensure that telecommunications companies and media houses are not interfered by other transmitting signals from Ghana’s neighbouring countries.

Traditionally, organisations in Ghana including state agencies normally communicated with their stakeholders through adverts in newspapers, announcements on TV and radio stations, and the Information Services Department (ISD) among others. An important realisation was that previous methods of communication did not allow for the timely reception of public feedback. New media, including social media present opportunities for agencies to directly communicate with their stakeholders and also to provide targeted and individualised responses to the problems or queries of the public. Such new media, from a strategic marketing perspective also improves communication, which in turn leads to agencies providing better services. According to Oliveira and Welch (2013), government and state agencies have adopted social media as tools that improve public service and engagement. The NCA is a regulator of communication technologies in Ghana, therefore communication and interaction with the public becomes key in the relationships the agency seeks to build its publics. Apart from its website, the NCA uses social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Facebook to communicate and engage its stakeholders.
For the purpose of this study however, the website and Facebook page of the NCA were analysed. The next section discusses the internet and Facebook usage in Ghana and how Facebook has been embraced by organisations over the past few years.

1.1.3 Internet and Facebook Usage in Ghana

In an analysis of internet usage in Ghana, Kemp (2018) noted that over ten million Ghanaians are currently using the internet which represents 35 percent of Ghana’s population. There is also a recurring trend of a rise in internet users in Ghana which corresponds to the increasing number of internet users across the continent and globally.

Facebook is an example of social networking sites and is increasingly becoming popular among organisations as public relations channel. Facebook is the second most patronized social media platform after WhatsApp and is enjoyed by about 5 million users which constitutes about 28 percent of the Ghanaian population (Kemp, 2018). Facebook allows users to create unique platform and their personal profiles for exchanging messages and interacting with other users. The next section discusses the research problem by identifying the gap in literature, the problem the study seeks to address and laying out the desired goal of the study.

1.2 The Research Problem

Findings from previous literature indicate that the dialogic strategy of inviting conversations and feedback, encourage relationship building (Yang, Kang & Johnson, 2010). Regulatory bodies, are usually in the spotlight as they license, monitor, identify future needs for regulations, formulate and enforce policies, impose sanctions, as well as inform, advice and engage
the public about industry conditions. It therefore suggests that regulatory agencies need to prioritise their communication and relational activities in order to effectively execute their mandate. The question therefore arises as to how regulatory bodies could communicate effectively and engage their publics in an increasingly ‘new media’ world. According to Avery et al. (2010) and Kim et al. (2014), institutions can provide a direct, valuable, cohesive, and economical two-way means of communication with their publics by using websites and social media.

Existing literature have discussed how organisations deploy new media as communication tools. Most of the reviewed literature have focused on single internet platforms; either websites or one social media platform, thereby not reflecting the modern organisational practice of using both websites and social media (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; McAllister, 2012, Hinson et al., 2013; Korkuvi, 2015; Ibrahim et al., 2015). It is therefore useful to undertake a study of the communication behaviour of an organisation’s multiple internet platforms particularly within the relatively unexplored field of regulators (Kim et al., 2014).

Using the NCA as a case study, the present study seeks to find out how effectively regulatory bodies are employing the interactive features of new media platforms in performing their duties and communicating with stakeholders. This study is concerned with the communication and interaction with stakeholders by Ghana’s NCA on its website and Facebook platforms, in other words; the study focuses on how the NCA relates with its stakeholders through its website and social media.

1.3 Research Objectives

The overarching objective of this thesis is to investigate the communication behaviour of the NCA’s official website and Facebook page using Kent and Taylor’s (1998) principles of dialogic
communication as a guide. Specifically, the study seeks to pursue the following research objectives:

- To examine the extent to which the NCA’s website and Facebook platforms encourage dialogic communication with its stakeholders.
- To undertake a comparative analysis of the NCA’s communication with stakeholders through its website and Facebook platforms.
- To investigate how the NCA uses its website and Facebook platforms to engage stakeholders.

By examining the way the NCA uses its websites and Facebook page to communicate with its stakeholders, the study seeks to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

1.4 Research Questions

Based upon the research objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent does the NCA’s website and Facebook platforms encourage dialogic communication with its stakeholders?
- What are the similarities and differences between the NCA’s communication with stakeholders through its website and Facebook platforms?
- How does the NCA use its website and Facebook platforms play to engage stakeholders?

1.5 Significance of Study

The study addresses the gap in research on regulatory bodies and the dialogic potentials of using multiple internet platforms. The research will serve as a resource material for future researchers and scholars on the dialogic capacities of regulatory agencies in Ghana. It will also
highlight the benefits of interactive internet platforms to organisations and the opportunities that
await public relations practitioners. Findings from this study would inform the National
Communications Authority about their current dialogic capacities and how to enhance them.

Furthermore, the present study may assist organisations planning social media and internet-based
campaigns on how to establish and sustain, long term, mutually beneficial relationships with
their stakeholders and the public using social media and websites.

Whereas other studies have strictly focused on the private sector and their adoption of
social media, this study takes a look at the practice of the dialogic communication by state agencies
and government institutions. This is particularly important in Ghana and Sub-saharan Africa,
where government institutions are known for their minimal use of the internet and social media.

As far as the dialogic communication theory goes, the findings of this study will help
strengthen the premise and assumptions made by the theorists or debunk and provide arguments
which can be used to critique the dialogic communication theory within the framework of online
Public Relations practice.

1.6 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study by first
discussing the background to the problem, and then later on clarifying the problem statement itself.
The chapter also includes the study’s research objectives, questions, and significance. Chapter
Two follows with an articulation of theoretical framework and review of relevant literature.
Chapter Three describes and justifies the methods of data collection and analysis used in the study.
The research approach, research design, sampling and protocols for data collection and analysis
are also discussed. Chapter Four present findings of the study and discussion. Finally, Chapter
Five summarises the whole work, draws conclusions, identifies limitations and makes recommendations.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the background to the study. It gave a broad description of the internet and global usage and narrowed in to the internet and Facebook usage in Ghana. It further gave an account of the National Comunications Authority and its duties, as well as the research problem, objectives and questions. Finally the significance and organisation of the study were discussed.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study and related literature. It first articulates the Kent and Taylor’s (1998; 2002) dialogic theory of communication by defining it and presenting its main tenets. Having articulated the theoretical framework underpinning the study, the chapter then goes on to review relevant literature. The chapter engages key ideas emerging from relevant literature and presents them in a coherent narrative.

2.2 The Dialogic Theory of Communication

The dialogic theory of communication was propounded by Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002). Kent and Taylor (1998) emphasised that “For a dialogic relationship to exist, parties must view communicating with each other as the goal of a relationship” (p. 324). In this theory, Kent and Taylor (1998) posit that dialogic communication is a product which results from relationship-building through the internet. They define dialogic communication as “any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions” (Kent & Taylor, 1998. p. 325). Therefore, when an organisation and its publics exchange ideas and discuss their needs, they engage in dialogic communication. The dialogic theory advocates that organisations and institutions ought to interact with their publics to be able to maintain an effective relationship. Organisational communication with publics should be done in honest and ethical ways.

Besides, dialogic theory requires that existing relationship between organisations and their publics must be mutual. Mutuality is critical because parties involved in relationships need each other. For example, an organisation cannot exist without its publics. In effect, the theory asserts
that an organisation’s effective collaboration with its publics through effective dialogue contributes towards successful relationship building. When an organisation engages in dialogue with its publics, it is willing to open up to them. By so doing it not only maintain its current publics, but it also grows the number of publics it has.

According to Kent and Taylor (1998), dialogic communication, particularly when it takes on the internet, is guided by five principles, namely, “dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of returned visits, ease of Interface, and conservation of visitors” (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 323). According to Kent and Taylor (1998), dialogic loop allows the public to question organisations about their concerns and offers the organisations the opportunity to respond to their reservations. This two-way question and feedback opportunity make the publics feel more appreciated and attached to the organisation. It also provides the platform for organisations to address the concerns and queries of their publics. This principle allows visitors to an organisation’s online platform to interact with it, thereby creating the environment for a mutually beneficial relationship. As Kent and Taylor (1998, p. 327) assert, “merely providing avenues for an organisation’s publics to send queries or share opinions is not enough; they should provide timely response to every single correspondence or query.” The principle thus implies that every single individual person is unique and important.

The second principle is usefulness of information. According to Kent and Taylor (1998), this principle of usefulness of information is very important for the website of an organisation. Usefulness of information refers to the logical and orderly nature of information provided on an organisations’ website. In other words, it is always prudent for institutions to consider presenting relevant information to their publics in a logical and orderly structure. This way the information provided is much more appreciated and easier to navigate by patrons of the website. Organisations
should provide materials and information that are useful and important to their stakeholders. Information put on the internet should be able to serve not just clients of the organisation but also the general public. Such a communicative approach makes it easy for customers to engage in dialogue with organisations.

The third principle, generation of return visits, focuses on creating the basis for long-term relationships by offering features that motivate visitors to an organisation’s websites to return often. The principle asserts that visitors are likely to visit the site again when they have a fulfilled or pleasant experience (Kent, Taylor & White, 2003, p. 66). Some features that reassure stakeholders to return to the site include “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs),” providing up-to-date information as well as features that explicitly ask visitors to return to the site (Brunig & Ledigham, 1999, p. 159).

The fourth principle, ease of interface of the website, makes it easier for customers to navigate the site and also have a pleasant experience. This principle is concerned with the manoeuvrability and ease with which the site visitors find their way around the website. For relationship-building to be possible through the internet, stakeholders of organisations should easily find and consume information (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Ease of interface can be identified by indicators such as the incorporation of search engines and availability of links to related sites (Brunig & Ledigham, 1999, p. 159).

Finally, the principle of conservation of visitors, requires an organisation’s website to provide features and links that assist easy navigation in order to increase satisfaction. The availability of easy navigation ensures that visitors to an organisation’s website are comfortable staying on the site for a long time. Organisations must, however, be careful not to direct users of
their sites to third party sites because the longer visitors are kept on their websites, the stronger the relationship between them their publics.

Kent and Taylor’s (1998) dialogic communication theory is the best fit theory for this study because it gave room for the researcher to adequately explore the research problem, review adequate literature and make critical assumptions, all of which helped to satisfactorily answer the research questions that inform the study. The use of the dialogic communication theory set a model and framework for the observation and understanding of the research problem. The study employed the five principles of dialogic communication proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998) to assess the website and Facebook page of the National Communications Authority. The indicators attained from these five principles served as pointers to the type of features available on these online platforms.

Though the work was purposed to examine the NCA online communication through the prism of Kent and Taylor’s dialogic principles, it did not employ the original five principles; rather, the work relied on the modifications made by Bortree and Seltzer (2009) and Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) to the Kent and Taylor’s five principles of dialogic communication. These modifications were intended to make the dialogic principles more applicable to social networking sites. The reason for choice was the inclusion of the NCA’s Facebook page in the study. In their modifications, the authors omitted “ease of interface” from the dialogic principles as that principle seems to be inherently present on every social networking site. In the present work, the modifications served as a guide in assessing the dialogic nature of only the NCA’s Facebook page.
2.3 Related Literature

This section reviews relevant literature and discusses key ideas from previous research which were focused on dialogic communication. It looks at works concerned with organisations use of the internet and other web-based platforms in communicating and building relationships with stakeholders. Based upon previous research, a number of key ideas emerged: regulatory bodies and public engagement, the internet as a public relations medium, public relations, internet and organisational relationships with publics, adoption of dialogic principles in stakeholder-relationship building, and dialoic communication and Facebook.

2.3.1 Regulatory Bodies and Public Engagement

Previous studies have established the importance and need for state agencies such as regulatory bodies to engage with their stakeholders. Davies (2007) revealed that such organisations engage multiple and diversified range of publics with various degree of needs. Public institutions also employ various tactics in enhancing their dialogic relationship with their stakeholders. This view is supported by a study by Mergel (2015). The study found that social media applications have been widely adopted in governance as state agencies use them to connect with citizens to inform them about mission-relevant updates (Mergel, 2015). According to Mergel (2015), information often created for e-government websites is reused for social media sites from where it is sent to a broader audience.

From both Davies (2001) and Mergel (2015), then, it can be deduced that public relations practice in governmental and regulatory institutions should not only be seen as a top-down relationship where publics only take and consume information provided by an organisation, but also as a process of horizontal communication where a relationship is built and maintained through
adequate engagement with targeted publics. This concept of public engagement supports the principle of dialogic loop, which suggests that through engagement, regulatory organisations are able to get public feedback on their programs and activities. Using such feedback, organisations provide adequate response to the queries and questions of publics (Pearson, 1989, p. 80).

2.3.2 The Internet as a Public Relations Medium

The internet provides the platform for swift and advanced interactions between organisations and their publics. The scope of the internet continues to evolve as a result of advancement in technology and has become a viable tool for public relation practitioners. The internet is a suitable channel for public relations because it has the ability to reach a mass audience irrespective of their geographical location (Hill & White, 2000; Wright, 2001). The internet as a new form of media offers numerous advantages making it superior and much more preferred to traditional media such as radio, television, and newspapers. One advantage of the internet over these traditional media forms is that it is not easily regulated by a gatekeeper thereby presenting a wide range of usage without limitations (Esrock & Leichty, 1998; Wright, 2001). This unique nature of the internet eliminates any form of interferences in communication. The two parties have the opportunity to communicate directly through their websites, Facebook, or Twitter accounts without any third-party.

Besides, the internet is the most economically viable medium of engagement between organisations and their publics. Specifically, the internet has impacted the cost of marketing and advertising by helping organisations reduce expenses and reach a multitude of people across different platforms at the same time. The internet has also consistently increased opportunities for public relations practitioners to attract, persuade, and motivate their targeted audience (Heath,
In addition, “The internet has become a major venue for emerging issues because it is a communication vehicle used by persons who are issues oriented” (Heath, 1998, p. 274).

Public relations practitioners now include the internet and its related platforms in their communication strategies because it is cost-effective and time-efficient in the long run (Sundar, 2000, p. 480). Practitioners use the internet to reach their potential clients as well as their publics from various backgrounds who have been assembled on a common platform by the benevolence of the internet. Sometimes practitioners use the internet for issues management, and, hence, do not necessarily come face to face with their publics. Through the internet, organisations are able to implement communication strategies and monitor feedback from stakeholders.

Organisations can also place news items and other information on online portals with huge patronage without enduring the censorship nature and gatekeeping roles of traditional forms of media (Porter & Sallot, 2003, p. 613). Due to the internet, public relations professionals can reach and communicate with more targeted audience than the traditional media. Wright (2001), however suggests that, public relations practitioners feel that these new media forms are yet to be used to their full potential. Public relation professionals have measured their level of success with their ability to send suitable messages over electronic media without leaving out any detail (Wright, 2001, p. 6).

2.3.3 Public Relations, Internet, and Organisational Relationships with Publics

Additionally, organisations use public relations create long-lasting corporate relationships with their customers and stakeholders. Ledingham and Bruning (2000) suggest that corporate relationships amongst organisations and their publics have become the unit of examining public relations practice thus serving as a standard for the practice. Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997)
define corporate relationships as “the properties of exchange, transactions, communications and other activities that connect the organisation to its public” (p.94). Going by Broom et al.’s (1997) initial explanation of corporate relationships, a model of corporate relationships that consists of three components was suggested by Grunig and Huang, (2000). The components of this model were “relationship antecedents, relationship cultivation strategies, and outcomes of the strategies” (Grunig & Huang, 2000. p. 25). In Grunig and Huang’s (2000) relationship model, corporate relationship cultivation strategies refer to an organisation’s communication processes to promote and preserve an excellent relationship with its public. Relationship cultivation strategies affect relationship cultivation outcomes. Hence, organisations with good relationship cultivation strategies see more positive and successful relationship cultivation outcomes.

In another study, Hon and Grunig (1999) proposed a number of organisational relationship cultivation strategies that should bring about “satisfaction, commitment, trust, and control mutuality” (p. 209). These organisational relationship building strategies are “access, openness, positivity, networking, task sharing and assurances” (Hon & Grunig, 1999. p. 209). Access means how accessible an organisation is to its public. Openness or disclosure denotes the degree to which an organisation reveals information about the organisation to its public. Positivity is the strategy employed by an organisation in making the online relationship enjoyable for its publics. Networking is concerned with how an organisation builds efforts in maintaining the social links to the groups which its publics belong to including trade unions and community groups. Task-sharing refers to the extent which an organisation and its publics work together for mutual benefit. Finally, assurance means the point to which the organisation assures its publics that their concerns are valid and the organisation is devoted to preserving the relationship (Hon & Grunig, 1999).
In maintaining a corporate relationship with publics online, Ki and Hon (2006) suggest corporate websites must use openness and access strategies. Openness simply means disclosure of all information which may help the public at a given time. Information on websites should be obvious, easily accessible, easily understood and placed in a location a user will normally pay attention. The openness strategy to building corporate relationships online is graded as having the utmost valued results compared to other relationship-cultivating strategies. Finally, Waters, Friedman, Mills and Zend (2011), found in a study that openness and positivity are the most commonly utilised strategies in online corporate relationship building whilst, networking and assurances had minimum use.

These studies show that openness and access are the strategies utmost utilised by organisations in maintaining corporate relationships with their stakeholders online. What is missing is research that focuses on the latest of online media and how websites and other forms of social media platforms encourage the practice of dialogic communications between organisations and their publics.

2.3.4 Adoption of Dialogic Principles in Stakeholder-Relationship Building

In recent times, organisations such as higher education institutions, financial institutions, and government agencies have made conscious efforts to adopt Kent and Taylor’s (1998; 2002) dialogic principles in designing their websites to build good relationships with their publics. Seltzer and Mitrook (2007), proposed that organisation-stakeholder relationships can be enhanced with the successful incorporation of the five dialogic principles proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998) in organisations’ online platforms. However, studies indicate that the disposition to using the five principles vary. Korkuvi (2015), for example, found that most institutions are
underutilizing the dialogic principles, though they are still learning to maximize the dialogic potential of their websites beyond just providing useful information to their stakeholders. On the other hand, Thelen (2018) found useful information to be the most employed principle, as posts including information stakeholders find interesting, caused an increase in engagement levels. Ibrahim, Adam, and De Heer (2013) likewise, found that universities tend to provide relevant information on their websites, such as their brand logos, entry requirements, and other audience-specific information that are useful to stakeholders.

Taylor et al. (2001) suggest that even when an organisation’s website adopts all the dialogic principles, “it cannot be fully dialogic if it does not offer and follow through on two-way communication” (p. 271). Hence, there is a need to provide an avenue for response to queries and customer feedback in order for a website to be considered as fully dialogic. Hinson, van Zyl and Agbleze (2014) indicated that many insurance companies failed to incorporate most of the five dialogic principles in their websites. Low points were scored for usefulness of information and the return visits principle as none of these companies’ websites categorically invited visitors to return to the sites again. Toledano (2017) examined the level of dialogic communication by some companies and their publics on the internet. The study showed that the dialogic level of the use of social media was higher in majority of the companies which openly respond to the comments and queries of their customers and stakeholders.

The adoption of the five dialogic principles proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998) have created an avenue for interactivity between organisations and their stakeholders, thereby facilitating the formation of long-standing mutually beneficial relationships. The incorporation of the dialogic loop in an organisation’s online platforms, for example, facilitates stakeholder-relationship building through interactivity (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Various studies have revealed useful
information and conversation of visitors to be the most adopted principles whereas generation of returned visits and dialogic loop are the least utilised principles on organisations online platforms (Thelen, 2018; Korkuvi, 2015; Toledano, 2017; Ibrahim, Adam & De Heer, 2013; Madichie & Hinson, 2014).

2.3.5 Dialogic Communication and Facebook

The application of the dialogic principles of communication on Facebook has only been minimally studied. Adhering to the dialogic principles is more likely to increase online interactions between organisations and their publics and in the long run produce positive results which enhance communication with stakeholders (Bortee & Seltzer, 2009). Weblogs and personalised social media platforms such as Facebook have proven to be beneficial in building online relationships through dialogue with stakeholders as compared to organisational websites (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007). Facebook allows organisations to measure and provide real time responses to the needs and queries of stakeholders through features such as Like, Share and Comment (Saxton & Waters, 2014). Organisations that are active on Facebook are deemed welcoming by their audience than organisations that are less active on Facebook (Sweetser & Lariscy, 2008).

Sweetser and Lariscy (2008), recognise that many organisations do not use Facebook in a dialogic way. Consequently, the interactivity level between such organisations and their publics on the internet is reduced. Bortee and Seltzer (2009) observed that a lot of educational institutions are under utilizing the potential of Facebook as a means engaging customers and publics. Sweetser and Lariscy (2008) agree that some organisations rarely participate in conversations on their Facebook pages and are therefore only pretending to be facilitating dialogic communication through the internet just by having a Facebook page. According to Luca (2011), most of the
companies with a Facebook account did not demonstrate enough commitment interacting with their audience since it was observed that they seldom responded to the posts from their audiences.

Furthermore, studies have found that a significant number of organisations do not have a presence on social media, and, of those that have social media accounts, just a few of them actually have frequently updated Facebook accounts. Bortee and Seltzer (2009), Luca (2011), and Sweetser and Lariscy (2008) suggest that, although some leading companies have a presence on Facebook, their pages are not dialogic in nature, and, hence, do not encourage interactivity. This observation therefore means Facebook as a platform is under-utilized in public relations practice and organisations which adopt it do not make it dialogic enough in engaging with their customers.

2.4 Gaps in Literature

According to reviewed literature, the principles of dialogic communication were widely adopted by organisational internet platforms but principles were not fully utilised. It was also found that the dialogic loop principle was one of the least utilised principles, a situation that has led to the poor relationship between organisations and their stakeholders. The reviewed literature showed that, scholars focused on organsational use of single internet platforms for stakeholder engagement. What is lacking in existing scholarship therefore, is organisational use of internet platforms and how they inform communications and affect relationships with stakeholders. It is for this reason that the present study is relevant.
2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the dialogic communication theory, its tenets, assumptions, and relevance to this study. It further went on to explicate the five dialogic principles that should guide dialogic communication on the internet as proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002). The chapter further reviewed existing literature on organisational use of internet platforms to promote dialogic communication and stakeholder engagement. The following key ideas emerged from reviewing existing literature: regulatory bodies and public engagement, the internet as a public relations medium, public relations, internet and organisational relationships with publics, adoption of dialogic principles in stakeholder-relationship building, and dialogic communication and Facebook.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to collect data for the study. The chapter further describes the methods of data collection used, as well as the unit of analysis which are text, graphics and audio and video files. The chapter gives more information about the research design and approach, as well as content categories.

3.2 Research Design and Approach

The study adopted content analysis as its data collection and analytical tool. Krippendorff (2004) defined content analysis as “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use” (p. 18). Content analysis as a methodological approach could be used for both quantitative and qualitative research. A quantitative content analysis method was used to analyse the NCA website and Facebook page using the five dialogic principles of Kent and Taylor (1998). The choice of content analysis was informed by its practicality in the examination of mass media content (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998). Through content analysis, the researcher was able to properly audit the indicators of the five dialogic principles and adequately answer the study’s research questions.

The study was conducted for a period of three months. The researcher specifically monitored the NCA website and Facebook page from 5th June to 5th September 2019. Three months was enough time to get adequate information to answer research objectives properly and achieve tenable recommendations. Also, due to financial constraint, the researcher found this period to be enough time to study. During the three-month period, the researcher examined how the indicators
of the five dialogic principles manifested in the communication that took place on the NCA online platforms. Activities of the online platforms of the National Communications Authority were carefully tallied to reflect the quality of dialogic properties. These observations were further used to discuss the findings reported in Chapter Four.

3.2.1 Population, Sampling and Unit of Analysis

The population for this study was all online platforms of the National Communications Authority, namely; official website, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. For the research questions of this study to be adequately answered, the researcher conveniently sampled the official website and Facebook page of the NCA because information contained on these platforms was readily available. The convenience sampling technique focuses on selection of members of the population that are easy to reach. The official website and Facebook page of the NCA are the most active among the online platforms of the organisation with the greatest number of queries. Both online platforms were found to be official and their authenticity was confirmed. The website and Facebook page of the NCA were easily accessible with over 9000 followers and active users.

Wimmer and Dominick (2003) observe that a unit of analysis in written content could be a single word or symbol, a theme or an entire story or article. Therefore, this study’s unit of analysis was both the interface and all content on website and Facebook page of the National Communications Authority.
3.3 Data Collection Sources, Instruments and Analysis

The instrument for data collection was coding guide which was developed based on the objectives of the study and previous literature. A coding guide was used to code the theme of the dialogic potential of the NCA website and Facebook page resulting from prescribed indicators. The coding guide was also developed with the consideration of key indicators that demonstrate the level of dialogic relationship between an organisation and its publics according to McAllister-Spooner (2009). Thirty-three indicators were generated from the five dialogic principles to serve as pointers to dialogic features on the organisation’s website, while twenty-eight indicators were generated for evaluating the dialogic potential of the NCA’s Facebook page. These indicators were adapted from McAllister-Spooner (2009) and designed to fit the current study. The absence or availability of the indicators on both platforms were coded respectively on the coding sheet which is provided in the appendix.

3.3.1 Content Categories

The content categories are made up of the five dialogic principles proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998). The five dialogic principles are: dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of returned visits, ease of interface and conservation of visitors. Using the coding sheet designed for the study, the website and Facebook page of the NCA were examined within the study period for:

- **Dialogic loop.** The purpose of this principle is to find out whether the NCA online platforms allow queries from publics. And also find out if the organisation responds to questions from the public and give feedback to concerns. The dialogic loop has a number of indicators, namely:
  
  - Existence of opportunities for visitors to the website to send emails and requests
Links to contacting staff directly

Opportunity for e-mail response

Presence of online survey forms for expressing opinions on issues

Online feedback options

Opportunities to contribute on issues

Links for contacting governing body directly

Speed of response to emails

**Usefulness of Information.** This principle focuses on whether the NCA online platforms generally post valuable information to all its publics. Indicators under this principle are:

- The availability of the NCA’s vision, mission statement, philosophy and history on the website
- Employment opportunities
- Annual reports
- Logo display
- Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section
- Calendar of events
- Downloadable media files
- Public involvement
- The availability of press releases in a chronological manner
- Use of photos and videos
- Provide contact information and location of the NCA
• **Generation of Return Visits.** Online platforms should include features such as updated information, changing issues, and special forums, that visitors find attractive enough to encourage them revisit the platforms. The indicators for this principle are:
  
  o The availability of news items posted within last 30 days
  o Links to related websites
  o Statement of return (Explicit statements asking visitors to return)
  o The availability of discussion forums/sessions on the website.
  o Opportunity to sign up for newsletters

• **Ease of using the website:** This category refers to whether the website makes it convenient for visitors and patrons to understand its content and manoeuvre the site easily. It will also look out for whether the website is well organized. Indicators under this principle are:
  
  o The availability of site maps/major links on the home page to the rest of the website.
  o The ease of identifying major links to other sites on the NCA’s home page.
  o Menu links on home page
  o Low reliance on graphics
  o The incorporation of search engines on the home page.

• **Conservation of Visitors:** This principle refers to whether the website and Facebook contain essential links with clearly marked paths for visitors to return to the sites in the future. Indicators under this principle are:
  
  o Important information available on the home (first) page.
  o Outside links (other Platforms of the NCA)
  o Loading time (>4 secs)
Evidence of a clear posting of the last update date and time.

3.4 Research Validity and Reliability

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) define validity as the degree to which a data collection approach correctly captures what it was proposed to measure. In this study, the researcher went directly to the website and Facebook page of the NCA to collect first hand data to ensure that the data analysed for the compilation of this thesis was valid and reliable. Lombard, Synder-Duch and Bracken (2010) suggest that data are considered valid when inter-coder reliability is properly used.

Reliability is vital in analysing data that has been generated through content analysis. Each of the indicators generated from previous studies were discussed with one coding assistant who was recruited for the purpose of the study, to ensure inter-coder reliability. The coders assessed the NCA website and Facebook independently with the indicators and results were compared. Only five items were coded differently, in which case coders discussed until a consensus was reached. Lombard et al. (2010) also suggest the use of an already existent index and having multiple researchers test its reliability. Adapting McAllister-Spooner’s (2008) approach, a three-point Likert-scale was then adopted on the coding scheme to measure each of the indicators under the five dialogic principles as follows: 0 = Not Available; 1 = Available, Low; 2 = Available, High. No privacy laws or regulations were broken in gathering information from these online platforms.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology, as well as the research and design approaches employed in this study. A description of the research design and data collection method
were given along with the justification for these choices. The unit of analysis, data collection sources, instruments and mode of analysis were also discussed in this chapter. The outcomes of these methods are reported and discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

The purpose of this research was to study the website and Facebook page of the National Communications Authority of Ghana to determine how interactive they are, using the dialogic principles propounded by Kent and Taylor (1998). This study examined the two online platforms of the NCA through a content analysis. This chapter provides the findings and analysis of the data collected.

4.2 Research Findings

The website and Facebook page of the National Communications Authority are public relations tools employed by the organisation. Organisations rely these public relations tools to build relationships with their publics (Esrock & Leichty, 1998). The NCA, just like every other government agency, needs to build strong relationship with the people they serve otherwise their mandate as a regulatory body may be difficult to accomplish. This is because the public wields the power to ensure the success of the organisation (Grunig, 1997). The NCA provides more than just a service to the public, they represent the government in its dealings within the telecommunications industry. Thus, the NCA has motivation and reasons to be dialogic. Based on its core mandate, each of the dialogic principles (Kent & Taylor, 1998) is essential to the NCA in creating and maintaining relationships with its stakeholders. This thesis examined the official Facebook page and website of the NCA to investigate its communication behaviour and as well as measure the extent to which these platforms reflect Kent and Taylor’s (1998) five dialogic principles.
The presentation and findings from the analysis of data acquired for the study were coded both in line with the five dialogic principles of relationship building propounded by Kent and Taylor (1998) and the modification by Bortree and Seltzer (2009) and Rybalko and Seltzer (2010), specifically for the NCA’s Facebook page. Kent and Taylor (1998) categorized the principles of dialogic relationship into five main categories namely, “Ease of interface, Usefulness of Information, Conservation of Visitors, Generation of Return Visits and the Dialogic Loop.” (p. 212). The process of measuring the presence or absence of these principles was further broken down into a total of 61 indicators according to McAllister-Spooner (2008). The indicators were tallied according to a three-point Likert scale categorized as: 0 (= attribute not available), 1 (= attribute available, but low) and 2 (= attribute available, and high).

4.2.1 Ease of (Interface) Use

Based on the dialogic principle ease of interface, the study examined the facility with which visitors navigated the NCA website. As clear from Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002), ease of interface is a precondition for website dialogue. The interface must give room for convenience in accessing information. Some features of websites that facilitate ease of interface include having site maps clearly identifiable on the homepage, ensuring that major links to the rest of the site are clearly identified on the home page, incorporating a search engine box on home pages and creating image maps that are self-explanatory (Taylor, Kent & White, 2001).
Table 4.1: “Ease of Interface” rating of NCA website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of site maps/major links on the home page to the rest of the website.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ease of identifying major links to other sites on the NCA’s home page.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menu links on home page</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low reliance on graphics</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The incorporation of search engines on the home page.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=5)</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s field data, 2019

Content analysis of the NCA’s website as clear from Table 4.1 indicated that the platform followed the principle of ease of use. In other words, the homepage of the NCA’s website had major links to the rest of the website. At the time of study, the website was found to have over one hundred and twenty (120) pages of major links on the homepage leading to the rest of the website although there was no image map. As Korkuvi (2015, p.43) argues, “A sitemap is essential on a website because it makes it easy for visitors to know the exact location, or where they can find specific information.” Thelwall (2009, p. 23) defined a site map as a “visually or textually organized template of a website’s content that allows the users to surf through the site to find the information they are looking for.” Thus, the absence of sitemap on the NCA website could definitely affect visitor navigation.

Additionally, the NCA website had major links that made it easy for users to navigate pages. These major links could be found on the home page of the site. There were also sections signifying what information was available on each of the menu tabs which were clearly marked.
on the home page. The website has a search window which make it easy to navigate to other parts of the 120-page website. The fifth item (see Table 4.1), incorporation of search engines on the home page, was found to be available as it made it easy move across the other webpages of the site. The fourth item (see Table 4.1), which is low reliance on graphics, scored high on availability as the NCA site has many graphics mainly on the homepage where there was a slide show of photos that spoke to the kind of services provided by the organisation. There was less graphic displayed on the website, although the texts coded gave useful information.

4.2.2 Usefulness of Information

Usefulness refers to the importance of the website to visitors. The National Communications Authority’s work as a regulatory body involves various duties. To effectively perform its duty and be accountable to its publics, the NCA must cooperate with them. It must also be transparent in its communicative engagement with stakeholder publics. Accordingly, it is important to have a platform where publics can reach the NCA without having to go through the excessive bureaucracy that encumbers public sector agencies. The website of the NCA, a regulatory body, offers a good platform for the delivery and acquisition of useful information.
A dialogic potential assessment of usefulness of information was done with 11 indicators. As Table 4.2 shows, all items were available for the website of the NCA. The website provided useful information on the NCA and its obligations to publics. Yet, two items, although present were low, that is, employment opportunities and calendar of events (see Table 4.2 above). When the employment opportunities menu was clicked on, the interface provided was empty, with the text “content coming soon.” The calendar of events, while present, did not have any information on upcoming events. There was an option also for past events, but that option had information on

### Table 4.2: “Useful Information” rating of NCA website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of the NCA’s vision, mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statement, philosophy and history on the website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo display</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar of events</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloadable media files</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of press releases in a chronological manner</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of photos and videos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide contact information and location of the NCA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=11)</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author’s field data, 2019
an event from 2016 titled “Symposium 2016.” The other nine indicators recorded high availability (see Table 4.2 above). For instance, the site provided contact information of the NCA, including e-mail address ‘info@nca.org.gh’ and phone numbers ‘+233(0)30276621/771701’ as well as contacts for the various regional offices.

The website also provided press releases in chronological manner. The current press release at the time of study was dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} September, 2019 – “Participants of Girls-In-ICT 2019 visit NCA”, followed by another publication dated 30\textsuperscript{th} August, 2019, in that manner. The indicator, level of public involvement by the NCA on their website, was visible as the organisation created the opportunity for the public to get involved through audience specific links and portals. These features provided audience the avenue to make complaints and request for information from the organisation through their website. The NCA website also allowed publics to download media file. There was also available on the site a frequently asked question (FAQ) section that covered subjects such as consumer complaint, quality of service, National Communications Authority, and the like. In the case where the questions answered were unexhausted, provision was made for the user to seek additional information through various contacts provided in each section. The logo of the National Communication Authority was displayed on the top left corner of the homepage of the site alongside the national flag with its bright colours as well as two swords. The NCA site also had available a menu that provided the organisation’s mission statement, vision and history.
Table 4. 3: “Useful Information” rating of NCA Facebook page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of the NCA’s vision, mission statement, philosophy and history on the website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo display</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar of events</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloadable media files</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public involvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of press releases in a chronological manner</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of photos and videos</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide contact information and location of the NCA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=11)</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s field data, 2019

The Facebook page of the NCA also displayed the dialogic potential of usefulness of information. Similar to the website, the Facebook page had six of the 11 items in the principle of useful information available. The Facebook page had no links for employment opportunities, Frequently Asked Questions, annual reports and downloadable media files available (see Table 4.3 above). The remaining six items were found to be highly available and similar in presentation to the website. However, the Facebook page contained more videos and photographs than the website. The contact information, logo display and press releases in a chronological manner were
all present on the Facebook page just as they were on the website. The Facebook page showed the vision, mission statement and history of the NCA as well. Calendar of events although present, only had more information about past events than upcoming ones. Information coded showed that NCA encouraged public involvement. The NCA created opportunity for the public to get involved through audience specific links and portals and also provided avenues for the public to lodge complaints.

4.2.3 Conservation (Maintenance) of Visitors

According to previous studies, organisations must try and keep visitors on their own website rather than give them a reason to patronize other competitive sites (Esrock & Leichty, 2000). This principle, according to Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002), refers to how organisations are able to “bond” with their site visitors, encouraging them to spend time on their sites without switching to other sites. Conservation of visitors seeks to find out whether or not websites have the tendency to keep visitors browsing the site for long. This section focused primarily on the presence of important information on the home page, the loading time of the site, presence of external links and a clear evidence of the date and time of the last uploaded.
Table 4.4: “Conservation of Visitors” rating of NCA website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important information available on the home (first) page.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside links (other Platforms of the NCA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading time (&gt;4 secs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of a clear posting of the last update date and time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Author’s field data, 2019*

As Table 4.4 shows, the indicator, “important information available on the home (first) page of the website”, was assessed by checking the extent to which all thirty-three (Thirty-three) indicators of the five principles could be found, directly or indirectly (through links) on the homepage. Over 60% of the indicators were found on the homepage. Outside links were also available on the homepage of the site. These links included Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube handles all of which took the user to the other social networking sites of the NCA. That way visitors did not necessarily get distracted from the NCA website but were redirected to other sites with important information concerning the NCA. According to Kent and Taylor (1998), websites should take an average of four (4) seconds to load. However, loading time is mostly dependent on the Internet Service Providers (ISP)/mobile networks as well as the user’s browsing device. At the time of study, the average time for the website content to load upon entering the URL for the website was six (6) seconds. Further assessment of the NCA website showed that, press releases and news stories had clear dates of publication, although the exact time these publications were posted or uploaded was not available. Other publications available had no time or date of publication.
Table 4.5: “Conservation of Visitors” rating of NCA Facebook page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS: ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important information available on the home (first) page.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside links (other Platforms of the NCA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading time (&gt;4 secs)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of a clear posting of the last update date and time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=4)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s field data, 2019

With reference to the Facebook page of the NCA, most of the indicators were found on the first page which allowed visitors to access all relevant important information. There were links connecting to other sites such as YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter and the official website of the organisation. The same principle was applied here when it came to the loading time. The same ISPs were used and the average loading time realized was six (6) seconds. The item “evidence of a clear posting of the last update date and time” on Facebook was highly available as the page allowed for record of time as well as date (see Table 4.5 above).

4.2.4 Generation of Return Visits

The principle generation of returned visits, focuses on a website’s ability to get visitors to return to the site. According to Madichie and Hinson (2013. p. 345), “The principle establishes the conditions upon which relationship-building can take place. That is, relationships are not established in one-contact communication interactions.” The online platform must encourage the visitor to return to the platform as many times as possible. Relationship-building involves time,
trust, and a variety of other relational maintenance strategies that can only occur over repeated interactions (Taylor, Kent & White, 2001). The website must indirectly or and indirectly encourage return to the site another time in order to create a relationship.

Table 4.6: “Generation of Return Visits” rating of NCA website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS: ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of news items posted within last 30 days</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to related websites</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of return (Explicit statements asking visitors to return)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of discussion forums/sessions on the website</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to sign up for news letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=5)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s field data, 2019

Five (5) indicators were used to assess this principle, as indicated in Table 4.6. The researcher found that the last news items posted within the last 30 days at the time of data gathering were just three (3); specifically, they were posted on 4th September, 2nd September and 30th August, 2019. Before these three posts, a post had been made on 28th June, but, for the whole of July, there was no news publication. The four stories available had supporting images with their respective dates of publications, as well as option to download. There were no links to other websites on the NCA website. Kent and Taylor (1998, p. 330-331) mention that organisations while providing relevant content (information) should be sure not to redirect visitors to other websites, because visitors may not return and they may be lost. The NCA website observes this principle of Kent and Taylor in order to ensure, it seemed, that visitors stayed longer on their site. There were no
statements of return which explicitly asking visitors to return nor were there discussion forums/sessions available on the NCA website. Finally for this principle, the website offered the opportunity for visitors to sign up for newsletters.

Table 4.7: “Generation of Return Visits” rating of NCA Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS: ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of news items posted within last 30 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to related websites</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of return (Explicit statements asking visitors to return)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of discussion forums/sessions on the Facebook page</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to sign up for news letters</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=5)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s field data, 2019

Three items of this principle were unavailable for the Facebook page of the NCA: opportunity to sign up for newsletters, links to related website, and statement of return (see Table 4.7 above). The availability of news items posted within last 30 days was highly available as four articles were posted at the time of gathering data. Items were posted between 4th September and 14th August. But before those days, the last posted item was 18th July. The NCA Facebook allowed for discussion forums/sessions on the page as the public got involved in discussions concerning certain posts that were made by the NCA.
4.2.5  **Dialogic Loop (Interactivity)**

Taylor, Kent and White (2001) posited that, the dialogic loop is the most significant feature of a dialogic website as it promotes interactivity. According to Madichie and Hinson (2013), organisational websites must be concerned with making their stakeholders feel involved by creating room for feedback. According to the authors:

Dialogic loop refers to the two-way asymmetric nature of the website, which suggests that a good website does not only send information to the public but also gives them the opportunity to voice their comments, opinions and feedback on pertinent issues. (Madichie & Hinson, 2013, p. 343)

It is important for the National Communications Authority as a regulatory body to interact with its stakeholders on all public relations platforms. The NCA website must therefore be dialogic to allow the public receive and provide information for the benefit of both parties.
Table 4.8: “Dialogic Loop” rating of NCA Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of opportunities for visitors to the website to send emails and requests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to contacting staff directly</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for e-mail response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of online survey forms for expressing opinions on issues</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online feedback options</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to contribute on issues</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links for contacting governing body directly</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of response to emails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=8)</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s field data, 2019

Eight (8) indicators were used to assess the interactivity on the NCA website and these indicators were adapted from Kent and Taylor’s (1998) measures of interactivity. The NCA website provides at the bottom of the homepage various contacts to reach the organisation. As shown in Table 4.8, provision was made for visitors of the site to send emails as evidenced in the availability of two different email addresses: info@nca.org.gh, which is for general enquiries, and complaints@nca.org.gh, specifically for complaints. Emails were sent to both email addresses to measure the speed of response to emails. A complaint was sent to complaints@nca.org.gh on September 12, 2019 at 3:26 pm, for which a response was received same day at 5:29 pm, which is almost two (2) hours later. Another email was sent to info@nca.org.gh on September 12, 2019 at 3:25 pm, to request for general information, and a response was received on September 16, 2019 at 1:25 pm. In this case urgency is seemingly given to complaints than general requests. The
remaining five indicators for interactivity were unavailable on the NCA website. These indicators were links to contacting staff directly, online feedback options, opportunity to contribute on issues, links for contacting governing body directly and presence of online survey forms for expressing opinions on issues.

Table 4. 9: “Dialogic Loop” rating of NCA Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS/ITEMS:</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of opportunities for visitors to Facebook to send emails and requests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to contacting staff directly</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for e-mail response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of online survey forms for expressing opinions on issues</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online feedback options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to contribute on issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links for contacting governing body directly</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of response to emails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % (N=8)</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s field data, 2019

The Facebook page scored better with the principle of interactivity because four out of the eight indicators were highly available with only one indicator being available in low capacity (see Table 4.9 above). The NCA had displayed the email address of the organisation on a poster of which was used as the profile photo of the account. Visitors had the option to seek information through emails, for which a response was guaranteed. The speed of response to email for Facebook
was measured as low because priority is given to emails with complaints than one seeking for general information, just like that of the website. Facebook allowed visitors contribute to issues, news items and publications that have been posted as well as having discussions with other people on matters of common interest. Features such as “Like”, “Comment” and “Share”, made it easy for visitors to make contributions on Facebook. Online feedback options were also available as the NCA responds to comments from the public. However, no links to contacting staff and governing body directly were available. In the case of the Facebook page, no staff handles were displayed for visitors to contact them directly. There were no online survey forms for visitors to express opinions on issues, although the comment section served that purpose.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of this study in relation to earlier works. The study sought to examine the extent to which the NCA’s website and Facebook platforms encourage dialogic communication with its stakeholders, identify the similarities and differences between the NCA’s communication with stakeholders through its website and Facebook platforms, and how the NCA uses its website and Facebook platforms to engage stakeholders. Findings are discussed in relation to specific research objectives in order to put them into perspective.

4.3.1 RQ1: To what extent does the NCA’s website and Facebook platforms encourage dialogic communication with its stakeholders?

The present study set out to measure how the NCA’s website and Facebook page reflect the five dialogic principles as proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002). The findings of the
research generally revealed that the National Communications Authority’s website and Facebook page were still underutilizing the features of dialogic communication. Principles, ease of interface and usefulness of information were the highest scoring principles on both the website and Facebook page of the NCA. The finding is consistent with studies done by Linvill, Hicks and McGee (2010), Muckensturm (2013), Korkuvi (2015), Ibrahim, Adam, and De Heer (2013), and Thelen (2018), who found out that most organisations were underutilizing the dialogic principles. They found that the principle of usefulness of information was the most employed principle as most organisations often provided relevant information on their internet platforms.

The website of the NCA also incorporated the principle of ease of interface well. The Facebook page was not assessed on the principle of ease of interface because the principle, is inherently present on most social media platforms. As consistent with similar studies, (Bortree and Seltzer, 2009, Rybalko and Seltzer, 2010 and Linvill, McGee, and Hicks, 2012), many social media platforms such as Facebook are designed with ease of interface and consistency in mind. The user can change effects like profile pictures, cover photos and edit information on the homepage.

Although the NCA’s website and Facebook page did not fair well in incorporating the rest of the principles, the principles of generation of returned visits and dialogic loop were the least employed on the organisations online platforms. This finding is consistent with that of Thelen, 2018; Korkuvi, 2015; Toledano, 2017; Ibrahim, Adam & De Heer, 2013; Madichie & Hinson, 2014. Their research show that organisations fail to get visitors to return to their internet platforms and interact properly with their stakeholders on these platforms. It can be concluded that the NCA does not take advantage of the interactivity features on its internet platforms especially Facebook, to interact and build relationships with the public.
The NCA by its mandate is one of the most technologically savvy government organisations in Ghana. The findings from the study show that the social media presence of the NCA is relatively low. Besides the NCA having a website and being active on Facebook page, its presence is low on other social media platforms such as YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter. In essence, there is a large group of untapped social media users who are potential publics and stakeholders of the NCA but are not covered by the public relations of the organisation.

4.3.2 RQ2: What are the similarities and differences between the NCA’s communication with stakeholders through its website and Facebook platforms?

The second research question sought to compare the NCA’s communication with stakeholders through its website and Facebook as well as the extent of employment of the dialogic principles on both platforms. The information found on the two internet platforms are similar. With regards to the usefulness of information, both internet platforms displayed the vision, mission statement and philosophy of the National Communications Authority. The findings support Dou’s (2011) assertion that, social media can inherently be a remote brochure for the organisation. In other words, through the social media platform and website of the organisation, a customer or potential customer can have a fair idea of the services of the organisation without making any physical contacts (Dou, 2011).

The NCA responded to comments and concerns of visitors on Facebook. The website of the NCA, however, did not allow flexible and convenient two-way communication between the organisation and its publics as at the time of this study. Although there were links that direct the visitor on how to get information they sought and also other social media platforms like YouTube and Twitter, no provisions were made on the website to allow comments on post or immediate
feedback. Therefore, there was more public involvement on Facebook than the website with a response rate of about 30%.

Although over 80% of the information found on the website was also found on Facebook, the posts on the latter were brief with an average of about 50 words and usually contained more graphics, adding up to over 100 pictures and videos. Though the website contained less pictures, it was more detailed in content. The two internet platforms seemed to work independent of each other to a large extent because information provided on each platform was complete in itself.

In terms of interactivity, both internet platforms allowed visitors the opportunity to send emails to the organisation as email addresses were provided on these platforms. The link that allows visitors share newsfeed from the website on the Facebook page is also designed to take visitors back to the website when they click on it. This feature afforded visitors the opportunity to share important materials on their Facebook pages and also recommend these links to friends on Facebook, thereby leading them to the website of the NCA.

The opportunity to contribute to issues was only limited to the Facebook page because it allowed visitors to comment and also see comments and complaints from others, and response from the NCA. That way there could be an open discussion on related issues. The website did not offer this option and reduced the dialogic principle of interactivity since contribution of issues and response from the organisation was not as effective as expected (see Table 4.8). Furthermore, the Facebook page allowed for discussion sessions, therefore, customers or the publics of NCA could comment and have discussions on the stories which were posted on Facebook, but they could not directly comment or discuss website posts unless through emails or other official communication. The coding for this feature on both platforms revealed that the discussions were mainly in the form of comments between visitors, responses from the organisation, or conversations among visitors.
Above all, consistent with findings from other studies, (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; McAllister, 2012; McAllister & Kent, 2009; Waters et al., 2009), the scores in the overall employment of the dialogic principles on both the website and Facebook of the NCA were relatively low. Both online platforms scored high points on the principle useful information, suggesting that the NCA besides providing useful information for their stakeholders, need improve the performance of the other dialogic principles proposed by Kent and Taylor (1998).

The NCA website performed poorly on this principle due to the unavailability of most indicators suggested by Kent and Taylor (1998). Only two out of eight items were available, which made up 25% of the dialogic loop principle. Satisfactory performance in all the dialogic principles, would promote effective dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders. Eventually better relationships would be built and the NCA’s services as a regulatory body would be improved.

From findings, it is evident that the NCA website does not encourage dialogue between stakeholders and the organisation. The NCA website may be described as a ‘monologic loop’ because it allows for only one-way flow and does not follow the two-way symmetrical model proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984). According to Taylor, Kent and White (2001), even if an organisation such as the NCA follow the suggestions of the other dialogic principles, it cannot fully be dialogic if it does not offer and follow through on two-way communication.

The Facebook of the NCA seemed more dialogic that the website. And this is because it offered more options for the organisation to interact with stakeholders. Four indicators (50%) were available. In addition to the opportunity to send emails and receive responses, there was the opportunity for online feedback options. Facebook also allowed stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to issues as well from the “comment”, “like” and “share” options on the platform. The NCA gave immediate responses to comments and enquiries that were made online. Compared to
previous studies conducted on other institutions, (Luca, 2010; Linvill, McGee and Hicks, 2010; Kim, Chun, Kwak and Nam, 2014; Madichie and Hinson, 2013), the NCA Facebook performed adequately on the dialogic loop principle.

4.3.3 RQ3: How does the NCA use its website and Facebook platforms to engage stakeholders?

Public relations focuses on relationship building, therefore NCA’s communication with its customers is become critical. In building a mutually beneficial relationship with stakeholders, the NCA needs to engage in open, honest, and ethical communication which provides an opportunity to engage stakeholders and adapt to the needs of the public (Hong, Yang, & Rim, 2010). Taylor, Kent and White (2001) assert that the organisational use of dialogic communication to build relationships with its publics is similar to an individual’s dialogue in interpersonal relationships, as such there needs to be processes that involve trust and aim to develop satisfactory and beneficial relationships.

With reference to Ghana in general and the National Communications Authority (NCA) in particular, the technological boom over the last decade, developments in online media and the fast penetration of small technologies (mobile phones and tablets), and personal computers have presented an opportunity for stakeholders of the NCA to have a better and bigger voice in the decision-making processes of the organisation. These stakeholders of the NCA are mainly the Government, operators and owners of TV and radio stations and users of TV and radio stations and the general public. For instance, the public or people who may require a product or service from the NCA gain influence by using the various fora on the NCA website to contribute ideas where solicited and seek answers to their queries, where needed.
Online media and websites provide a platform where negotiation between the NCA and its public may occur (Kent & Taylor, 1998). The dialogue on Facebook and on the website allowed stakeholders to provide feedback on organisational practices, thereby giving the NCA the opportunity to respond to the concerns of its stakeholders. As presented by previous studies, the interactivity of online platforms can enable the quality of organisation-stakeholder conversations and generate positive results such as increased trust and improved product knowledge (Sundar, Xu & Dou, 2012).

Aside the relationship at the stakeholder-organisation level, dialogic communication plays an pivotal role in enhancing NCAs image amongst its stakeholders. Although the present study found out that NCA had a very active website and Facebook page, the present study revealed the NCA, like most state agencies, hesitated in opening or encouraging active and real-time participation of stakeholders in its communication of activities and programmes. Such a finding is consistent with that of existing literature that suggests that state agencies do not fully take advantage of their online presence to facilitate positive organisational images (Vernuccio, 2014). The study also found out that organisational representatives have a tendency of relying on one-way communication to control what messages were disseminated, and therefore, did not actively participate with stakeholders online. Thus, the posts on Facebook were not in any way influenced by the audience, but rather were solely made at the discretion of the page managers.

Consequently, the NCA might miss the opening to generate a potentially positive organisational image, one often effectively created with the involvement of stakeholders. This is very important to dialogic communication because content which is generated through stakeholder involvement creates more value for the organisation than content generated by the organisation itself (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014). From this study, the NCA must expect content created
by stakeholders to play an important role in shaping organisational images. Therefore, as Vernuccio (2014) argues, organisations must learn to talk with their stakeholders instead of talking at them as they co-construct organisational images.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented findings of the study and discussion of findings. General findings suggest that while the National Communications Authority is taking advantage of the benefits of website and social media as tools for engagement with its diverse stakeholders, there is still a wide range of untapped potentials to be explored. According the findings, the NCA’s website and Facebook page do not fully reflect the five principles of dialogic communication as only principle of usefulness of information employed fully. The findings also revealed that both the website and Facebook page of the NCA were quite similar in the was they were used to communicate with stakeholders. The major difference was that the Facebook page provided additional features that aid interactivity with stakeholders. The findings were mostly consistent with previously reviewed literature.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

The present work set out to investigate how the Ghana National Communications Authority communicates with its stakeholders online, that is, on its website and social media platforms. To accomplish its goal, it employed a modified version of Kent and Taylor’s (1998; 2002) dialogic theory of communications. It content analysed communication with stakeholders on the NCA’s website and Facebook page for a period of three months.

What is left of this final chapter begins with a summary of the present study. It then goes on to draw conclusions from the major findings of the study. Next, the chapter discusses the study’s limitations, followed by recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with a summary.

5.2 Summary

The study set out to content analyse the website and Facebook page of the National Communications Authority’s communication with stakeholders to determine whether or not it was dialogic. To facilitate this objective, the study employed Kent and Taylor’s dialogic theory of communication as a theoretical framework. The study also sought to examine the similarities and differences in communication through NCA’s website and Facebook page. The data analysis used for the study was done according to the five dialogic principles of communications propounded by Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002). These principles are “Ease of Interface, Usefulness of Information, Conservation of Visitors, Generation of Return Visits and Dialogic Loop” (Kent & Taylor, 1998).
The methodology for the study was quantitative content analysis which was used in analysing the NCA’s website and Facebook page. The findings indicated that the two internet platforms of the NCA were easy to use and contained useful information. The homepage of the NCA’s website had major links to other parts of the website. However, certain vital information such as employment opportunities, Frequently Asked Questions, annual reports and downloadable media files were not available on the Facebook page of the NCA. The study also found that, there were some similarities as well as differences between the Facebook page and the website of the NCA, which was evident in the information posted on each internet platform. The website of the NCA, however, did not allow two-way communication between the organisation and its publics. Even though there were links that directed visitors to other social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn, no provision was made on the NCA website to comment on their post or receive feedback via the same medium unlike the Facebook page.

To a large extent, the NCA did not adequately employ the dialogic principles on its website and Facebook page as most of the principles such as the conservation of visitors, generation of return visits and dialogic loop were underutilised.

5.3 Conclusions

Organisations in recent times, continue to take advantage of Kent and Taylor’s (1998; 2002) principles of dialogic communication to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with their stakeholders. There has been substantial improvement in the way organisations engaged its publics in the traditional media era to the recent social media era.

The National Communications Authority is not fully utilizing its dialogic potential of its website and Facebook platforms, beyond the current information-sharing function. According to
Kent and Taylor (1998), two-way communication facilitated by the strategic use of the internet, is
one of the best ways organisations can build relationships with their publics.

Findings from the study suggest that the NCA website and Facebook page despite providing
useful information for its stakeholder, is still underutilizing the interactive features that enable
healthy relationships with an organisation’s publics. And according to Kent, Taylor and White
(2001), interactivity is the most important feature of dialogic website or social media, therefore,
the NCA may have to increase their level of interactivity on their internet platforms to promote a
better relationship with the general public.

5.4 Limitation of the Study

The study analysed two internet platforms, the Facebook page and website of the NCA out
of multiple internet media platforms. Although the two internet platforms (website and Facebook
page) of the NCA were highly patronized, the inclusion of more internet platforms of the
organisation in the study would have yielded an extensive result. Also, the study analysed the two
internet platforms over a three-month period. A larger sample over a longer period might have
generated more varied findings on the use of dialogic principles by the NCA on its internet
platforms. Since the source of data for the study was internet-based, interrupted internet supply
made it difficult to collect data. Financial constraints posed challenges for researcher to travel to
and from the NCA office.

5.5 Recommendations

As an organisation that seeks to be a world class communications regulator that facilitates
innovative, reliable and sustainable communication solutions to meet stakeholder’s expectations,
it is important for the National Communications Authority to interact with its stakeholders through all social media platforms. The NCA must ensure that information posted on its website and Facebook page complements each other in order to keep visitors of each internet platforms equally updated. As a way of asking visitors to patronise the website of the NCA often, the website must explicitly appeal to visitors to visit the site again. Research-based strategies can offer valuable insights to and properly position organisations to structure adequate posts which are dialogic and are targeted as specific stakeholders, because consumers are more receptive to online messages from organisations with whom they have a sense of relationship than they are to messages from mere acquaintances (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). Therefore, structuring and developing posts that are targeted is important for messages to be received and reciprocated by stakeholders.

Future research could analyse communication behaviour of the NCA’s website and Facebook page for a longer period of time. Also, different research methods such as in-depth interviews and survey questionnaires could be explored to get more insight into the phenomenon, as well as validate findings. Further, future research could analyse the communication behaviour by the NCA on multiple internet platforms such as Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. Future research could also comparatively analyse the social media platforms of public organisations and private organisations to examine their communication behaviour with stakeholders. Also, future research can analyse other Ghanaian state agencies or regulatory bodies in comparison to NCA to can find out to extent to which state agencies (regulatory bodies) in Ghana employ dialogic communication on their online platforms to build relationships with their stakeholder.
5.6 Chapter Summary

The final chapter gave a brief summary of the entire study. It subsequently highlighted the implications of the findings on the communication behaviour of the online platforms of the National Communications Authority. The chapter further discussed the limitations of the study and made recommendations for future research.
REFERENCES

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2014.908721


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION CODE GUIDE FOR WEBSITE

(Adapted from McAllister-Spooner and Kent, 2009)

KEY: 0 = Not Available; 1 = Available, Low; 2 = Available, High

EASE OF INTERFACE (USE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of site maps/major links on the home page to the rest of the website.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ease of identifying major links to other sites on the NCA’s home page.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menu links on home page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low reliance on graphics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The incorporation of search engines on the home page.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of the NCA’s vision, mission statement, philosophy and history on the website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo display</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar of events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloadable media files</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability of press releases in a chronological manner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of photos and videos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide contact information and location of the NCA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONSERVATION OF VISITORS (MAINTENANCE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important information available on the home (first) page.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside links (other Platforms of the NCA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading time (&gt;4 secs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of a clear posting of the last update date and time.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## GENERATION OF RETURN VISITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of news items posted within last 30 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Links to related websites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement of return (Explicit statements asking visitors to return)</td>
<td></td>
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## DIALOGIC LOOP (INTERACTIVITY)

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<td>Links for contacting governing body directly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speed of response to emails</td>
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APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION CODE GUIDE FOR FACEBOOK

(Adapted from McAllister-Spooner and Kent, 2009)

KEY: 0 = Not Available; 1 = Available, Low; 2 = Available, High

USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The availability of the NCA’s vision, mission statement, philosophy and history on the website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logo display</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calendar of events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Downloadable media files</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The availability of press releases in a chronological manner

Use of photos and videos

Provide contact information and location of the NCA

**CONSERVATION OF VISITORS (MAINTENANCE)**

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<tr>
<td>Important information available on the home (first) page.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside links (other Platforms of the NCA)</td>
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<td>Loading time (&gt;4 secs)</td>
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