



**ENHANCING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES IN LOWER MANYA KROBO**

BY

ELEAZAR NYANYANU KENETHEY

MADC24075

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND
COMMUNICATION (UniMAC), IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS (MA) IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

DECEMBER 2025

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Eleazar Nyanyanu Kenetey MADC24075



12/12/25

Student

Index number

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication, UniMAC.

Dr. Joseph Obeng-Baah



12/12/2025

Supervisor

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God, whose grace, wisdom, and strength have guided me throughout this academic journey. Without His divine guidance, this achievement would not have been possible.

Also, to Eleanor, for your unwavering support and unending encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Joseph Obeng-Baah, for his invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and unwavering patience throughout the entire dissertation process. His mentorship and encouragement greatly enhanced the quality and depth of this work.

I am equally grateful to my family for their constant support, motivation, and understanding. Their encouragement provided the strength and inspiration I needed to complete this academic journey successfully.

ABSTRACT

Youth empowerment has emerged as a crucial dimension of sustainable development, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where young people constitute a significant portion of the population but remain largely excluded from participatory governance and communication processes. This study explored how development communication strategies can be effectively utilised to empower youth in the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality of Ghana. Anchored in the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory, the research adopted a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide both breadth and depth of understanding. Quantitative data were collected from 200 respondents through structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were obtained from interviews and focus group discussions with 30 participants, including youth leaders, communication officers, and community stakeholders. The findings revealed that social media (33%), television (32%), and radio (16.5%) were the most frequently used communication platforms for accessing community and development information. Although the majority of respondents (79.5%) considered communication platforms easy to access, significant disparities persisted between urban and rural youth due to infrastructural and economic barriers. Moreover, 94.5% of respondents had heard of development communication, and 95.5% recognised the critical role of youth in communication for development. However, challenges such as high data costs, poor network connectivity, and language barriers limited full participation. Opportunities identified included the use of community radio, digital media, and participatory theatre to enhance inclusivity and engagement. The study concludes that development communication, when participatory, culturally grounded, and context-specific, can serve as a transformative tool for youth empowerment. It proposes a participatory communication framework that integrates traditional and digital media, capacity-building, and community dialogue to promote sustainable youth involvement in development processes.

Keywords: Development Communication, Youth Empowerment, Participatory Development Communication, Mixed Methods, Lower Manya Krobo, Ghana.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION BY STUDENT	ii
CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR.....	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.3 Problem Statement	4
1.4 Research Objectives.....	6
1.4.1 Broad Objective:	6
1.4.2 Specific Objectives:	6
1.5 Research Questions	7
1.5.1 Specific Questions:	7
1.6 Scope of Study	7
1.7 Significance of Study	8
1.8 Organisation of Study	9
1.9 Chapter Summary	10
CHAPTER TWO	11
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Review of Related Studies.....	11
2.2.1 Development Communication and Youth Engagement	12
2.2.2 Participatory Communication and Empowerment.....	13
2.2.3 The Influence of ICTs in Development Communication	14
2.2.4 Communication Barriers and Socio-cultural Constraints	16
2.2.5 Community Media and Youth Participation	16
2.3 Theoretical Framework.....	17
2.3.1 Participatory Development Communication (PDC) Theory.....	18

2.3.2 Relevance of the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) Theory within the Ghanaian Context.....	21
2.3.3 Application of the PDC Theory to the Current Study.....	23
2.4 Chapter Summary	25
CHAPTER THREE	27
METHODOLOGY	27
3.1 Introduction.....	27
3.2 Research Approach	27
3.3 Research Design.....	28
3.4 Population	28
3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique.....	29
3.6 Data Collection	30
3.7 Data Analysis	30
3.8 Reliability and Validity.....	31
3.9 Ethical Consideration.....	32
3.10 Chapter Summary	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....	33
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS	33
4.1 Introduction.....	33
4.2 Presentation of Quantitative Findings.....	33
4.2.1 Demographics of Respondents	34
4.3 Research Question 1: What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?.....	37
4.3.1 Media Platforms Frequently Used for Information on Community or Development Issues.....	38
4.3.2 Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth.....	39
4.3.3 Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth.....	39
4.3.4 Community	40
4.4 Research Question 2: What are the youth’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?	41
4.4.1 Awareness of Development Communication	41
4.4.2 Development Communication Helps Communities Solve Problems Collectively.....	42
4.4.3 Youth Have a Major Role to Play in Communication for Development.....	42

4.4.4 Overall Attitude Towards Using Communication for Community Development.....	43
4.5 Research Question 3: What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?	44
4.5.1 Challenges Faced in Accessing Communication Platforms	44
4.5.2 Factors Preventing Youth from Participating in Community Communication Activities	44
4.5.3 Opportunities that Best Promote Youth Communication and Empowerment.....	45
4.6 Research Question 4: What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?.....	46
4.6.1 Communication’s Role in Improving Youth Participation in Decision-Making.....	46
4.6.2 How Access to Communication Platforms Has Changed Youth Lives.....	47
4.6.3 Communication Strategies that Should Be Prioritised to Empower Youth.....	48
4.7 Presentation of Qualitative Data	49
4.8 Research Question 1: What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?.....	49
4.8.1 What are the main communication platforms used in your municipality to engage youth?	49
4.8.2 How accessible are these platforms to different categories of young people (e.g., rural vs. urban)?.....	50
4.9 Research Question 2: What are the youth’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?	51
4.9.1 How would you describe the role of communication in youth development programmes?.....	51
4.9.2 Do you believe youth understand and engage with development communication effectively?.....	51
4.10 Research Question 3: What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?	52
4.10.1 What are the main challenges you encounter when using communication to reach young audiences?	52
4.10.2 What opportunities exist to strengthen youth participation in communication-driven projects?	53
4.11 Research Question 4: What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?.....	54
4.11.1 From your perspective, what communication strategies could better empower youth in Lower Manya Krobo?.....	54

4.11.2 How could community radio, digital media, or participatory theatre be utilised more effectively?.....	54
4.12 Discussion of Findings.....	55
4.13 Research Question 1: What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?.....	56
4.14 Research Question 2: What are the youth’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?	57
4.15 Research Question 3: What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?	58
4.16 Research Question 4: What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?.....	60
4.17 Chapter Summary	61
CHAPTER FIVE	63
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
5.1 Introduction.....	63
5.2 Summary	63
5.3 Conclusions.....	65
5.4 Recommendations.....	66
5.5 Study Limitations.....	67
5.5 Chapter Summary	68
REFERENCES	69
APPENDICES	74

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Age.....	34
Table 2: Sex	35
Table 3: Level of Education.....	36
Table 4: Marital Status.....	36
Table 5: Occupation.....	37
Table 7: Media Platforms Frequently Used for Information on Community or Development Issues	38
Table 8: Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth.....	39
Table 9: Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth.....	40
Table 6: Community	40
Table 10: Awareness of Development Communication	41
Table 11: Development Communication Helps Communities Solve Problems Collectively	42
Table 12: Youth Have a Major Role to Play in Communication for Development	42
Table 13: Overall Attitude Towards Using Communication for Community Development	43
Table 14: Challenges Faced in Accessing Communication Platforms	44
Table 15: Factors Preventing Youth from Participating in Community Communication Activities	45
Table 16: Opportunities that Best Promote Youth Communication and Empowerment.....	45
Table 17: Communication’s Role in Improving Youth Participation in Decision-Making.....	46
Table 18: How Access to Communication Platforms Has Changed Youth Lives	47
Table 19: Communication Strategies that Should Be Prioritised to Empower Youth.....	48

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

According to the United Nations Development Programme (2021) and scholars such as Tufte (2017) and Melkote and Steeves (2015), youth empowerment constitutes a cornerstone of sustainable development, especially within marginalised communities in the Global South, where inclusive participation and communication are key drivers of social transformation. Development communication has increasingly emerged as a vital tool in equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and agency required to navigate social, economic, and political challenges. This study investigates how development communication strategies can be effectively deployed to empower the youth of Lower Manya Krobo in Ghana. The inquiry draws upon global frameworks, regional policies, and local contexts to articulate a multidimensional perspective on communication as a transformative instrument for youth-led development.

1.2 Background of the Study

Globally, young people constitute over 1.2 billion individuals aged between 15 and 24, representing one of the most significant demographic groups for driving innovation and social transformation (United Nations, 2020). Yet, despite their demographic strength, youth worldwide continue to face structural marginalisation, including limited access to education, employment, and civic participation (UNESCO, 2018). According to Melkote and Steeves (2015), *development communication*, the strategic use of communication processes and media to advance social and economic development has become central to addressing such disparities. Communication, when designed to foster dialogue and participation, serves as a transformative instrument that promotes empowerment and social inclusion rather than a mere conduit for information transmission

(McCall, 2011; Tufte, 2017). Globally, development communication approaches have enabled youth to acquire life skills, participate in governance, and engage in civic action (Servaes, 2008; Manyozo, 2012).

In industrialised contexts, communication policy reforms have been instrumental in institutionalising youth engagement. Countries such as Norway and Australia have implemented *digital inclusion policies* that bridge communicative inequalities, ensuring that all youth can participate meaningfully in civic and economic life (Singleton et al., 2009; OECD, 2019). These initiatives employ participatory media and peer-based learning to foster leadership and collective action (Carpentier, 2011). For instance, youth-led online campaigns in Scandinavia and the Pacific have demonstrated that inclusive digital ecosystems strengthen civic participation and amplify young people's policy influence (Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Loader et al., 2014). Scholars such as McQuail (2010) and Servaes (2008) further affirm that communication designed around participation rather than persuasion transforms youth from passive recipients into active producers of meaning and change. Thus, when communication is interactive and decentralised, it becomes an enabler of sustainable youth empowerment.

Across Africa, development communication has emerged as a critical mechanism for addressing youth marginalisation, especially in contexts of unemployment and exclusion (Kinyanjui, 2023; Banda, 2022). According to Tufte (2017), *youth-led communication for social change* has gained traction through participatory platforms such as community radio and mobile storytelling, which enable young people to articulate their concerns and influence policy. In Kenya and Tanzania, community-based radio stations and mobile applications have facilitated entrepreneurship training, digital literacy, and civic engagement among youth (Kinyanjui, 2023; Waisbord, 2015). Similarly, Kouakou (2021) found that in Côte d'Ivoire, digital media use among youth serves both

emancipatory and risky purposes empowering users through access to information and business opportunities while exposing them to misinformation and online inequality. These studies collectively affirm that communication in Africa must be culturally grounded and context-specific, prioritising dialogue and critical reflection (Servaes & Malikhao, 2010; Manyozo, 2012).

In Ghana, development communication has evolved as a policy and practice tool for youth empowerment, particularly through state-led initiatives such as the Youth Employment Agency (YEA) and the National Youth Authority (NYA). These programmes integrate ICT training, radio programming, and peer education to address unemployment and civic disillusionment (Lambon-Quayefio et al., 2023; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2020). Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) report that youth-led radio initiatives in Northern Ghana have improved civic awareness, health communication, and participatory governance, demonstrating the transformative potential of communication in community development. Nonetheless, Ayee (2003) and Somian (2020) argue that these interventions remain highly centralised, lacking localisation and adaptation to municipal realities. This has left regions such as Lower Manya Krobo underrepresented in media and communication-driven youth programmes, partly due to infrastructural deficits, weak ICT penetration, and socio-cultural barriers that limit participation (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021; Debrah, 2022).

The socio-cultural context of Lower Manya Krobo is particularly distinctive. Patriarchal norms, age hierarchies, and traditional governance systems shape youth participation and autonomy (McCall, 2011; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). Communication strategies that seek to empower youth must therefore engage with these cultural structures to create inclusive spaces for dialogue and self-expression (Servaes, 2008; Cornwall & Edwards, 2010). Empowerment, as conceptualised by Gaventa (2006), is not only about material opportunity but also about agency the capacity to speak, act, and influence decisions affecting one's life and community. Development communication

contributes to this empowerment by fostering critical awareness (*conscientisation*) and enabling communities to define and pursue their developmental aspirations (Freire, 1970; Waisbord, 2015). Drawing from Lasswell's (1973) communication model and Rogers' (2003) *diffusion of innovation* theory, this study positions communication as both a process and a tool for participatory transformation. It thus investigates how development communication strategies can be adapted to empower the youth of Lower Manya Krobo Municipality through inclusive, culturally grounded, and participatory approaches.

1.3 Problem Statement

Development communication has increasingly been recognised as a vital instrument for promoting participatory, inclusive, and sustainable development across the globe (Melkote & Steeves, 2015; Servaes, 2008). International organisations such as UNESCO, UNDP, and UNICEF have institutionalised Communication for Development (C4D) frameworks to enhance dialogue, facilitate social change, and empower communities to participate actively in development processes (McCall, 2011; United Nations, 2020). Studies across Latin America and Southeast Asia demonstrate that participatory approaches such as community radio, information and communication technologies (ICTs), and peer education have effectively strengthened youth involvement in governance, education, and health initiatives (Tufté, 2017; Waisbord, 2015). In the African context, participatory communication has been successfully used to promote digital literacy and civic engagement, particularly through community radio and mobile-based platforms in Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa (Kinyanjui, 2023; Kouakou, 2021). However, these interventions often remain donor-driven and urban-centred, lacking sustainability and institutional integration (Manyozo, 2012). This reveals a persistent gap between the theoretical advocacy for

participatory communication and its systematic and localised application across diverse socio-economic contexts in the Global South (Tufte, 2017).

In Ghana, communication has been integrated into national youth-focused interventions such as the Youth Employment Agency (YEA) and National Youth Authority (NYA) programmes, which aim to address unemployment and civic participation (Lambon-Quayefio et al., 2023; Debrah, 2022). Yet, these frameworks often rely on top-down communication models that limit interaction, dialogue, and co-creation with beneficiaries (Kouakou, 2021; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2020). Research by Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) in Northern Ghana revealed that youth-led radio and participatory campaigns enhance civic awareness and local ownership, aligning with the principles of Participatory Development Communication (PDC). However, these successes remain geographically limited and are not scaled to other municipalities such as Lower Manya Krobo. Moreover, although digital connectivity among Ghanaian youth has expanded significantly, online platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and Facebook are predominantly used for social interaction and entertainment rather than development-oriented engagement (Kouakou, 2021; Tufte, 2017). This misalignment underscores the need for structured, development-focused communication frameworks that harness youth digital engagement for empowerment and social transformation (Servaes, 2016; Banda, 2022).

Despite growing scholarly attention to communication for development, its application at the municipal and community levels in Ghana remains underexplored (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2020; Debrah, 2022). Lower Manya Krobo, like many localities in Ghana, faces deep-rooted youth marginalisation arising from limited employment opportunities, educational disparities, and sociocultural hierarchies that curtail youth voice and participation (Melkote & Steeves, 2015;

McCall, 2011). Gender and age-based power relations further constrain young women's participation in local governance and communication spaces, reinforcing social exclusion (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010; Tufte, 2017). Existing studies, such as those by Grauenkaer and Tufte (2018) and Manyozo (2012), confirm that communication can enhance agency when it is participatory, localised, and culturally grounded, yet few have explored this within municipal contexts. Consequently, a significant gap persists in understanding how participatory communication strategies can be locally adapted to empower youth in municipalities like Lower Manya Krobo. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by exploring how development communication, when grounded in participatory and culturally sensitive approaches, can serve as a transformative catalyst for inclusive, youth-led empowerment and sustainable development.

1.4 Research Objectives

Kumar (2019) defines research objectives guide the research process by outlining specific goals that address the identified problem. Objectives translate the broad aim into measurable components, providing direction for data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Well-formulated objectives ensure focus and coherence throughout the study.

1.4.1 Broad Objective:

To explore how development communication strategies can be utilised to empower the youth in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality, Ghana.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives:

1. To examine existing communication platforms and their accessibility among youth.
2. To assess the knowledge and perceptions of development communication among youth and stakeholders.

3. To explore barriers and opportunities in using communication for youth empowerment.
4. To propose a participatory communication framework for youth development in Lower Manya Krobo.

1.5 Research Questions

Research questions are precise, inquiry-based statements that the study seeks to answer. They operationalize the research objectives and shape the design, data collection, and analysis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). According to Creswell (2018), research questions help narrow the scope of the investigation and determine the type of data collection method; quantitative, qualitative, or mixed needed to address the research problem effectively.

1.5.1 Specific Questions:

1. What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?
2. What are the youth's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?
3. What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?
4. What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?

1.6 Scope of Study

This study is geographically restricted to Lower Manya Krobo Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana, with a specific focus on the municipality's youth population. It examines how

development communication strategies such as digital media, radio, and institutional messaging can be harnessed to empower young people in areas such as education, civic participation, and economic opportunity. Thematically, the study is centred solely on communication-driven interventions aimed at youth empowerment, excluding other development initiatives not involving communication as a strategic tool.

Methodologically, the research is limited to a quantitative approach, employing structured questionnaires to collect data from a representative sample of youth within the municipality. The data will be used to assess access to communication platforms, usage patterns, perceptions, and barriers to empowerment through communication. The study will be conducted over a three-month period, from August 2025 to October 2025, covering instrument design, data collection, statistical analysis, and interpretation of results. This approach ensures objective measurement and generalisable insights into the role of development communication in empowering youth in a localised Ghanaian context.

1.7 Significance of Study

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance in the fields of development communication, youth empowerment, and policy planning. At the academic level, it contributes to a growing body of literature that investigates the relationship between communication and social development, particularly in the Global South. While there is extensive research on youth empowerment and media in urban contexts, limited scholarly attention has been given to localised rural and peri-urban settings like Lower Manya Krobo. This research fills that gap by providing empirical evidence on how targeted communication strategies can influence youth perceptions, access to information, and participation in their own development.

Practically, the findings from this study will serve as a valuable resource for policy-makers, local government authorities, NGOs, youth organisations, and communication practitioners. By identifying communication channels that are most accessible and effective among the youth, the study can guide the design of context-sensitive, data-driven interventions that promote civic awareness, entrepreneurship, education, and social inclusion. Furthermore, it may inform national youth empowerment frameworks under institutions such as the National Youth Authority (NYA) and the Youth Employment Agency (YEA).

The study is also significant for community leaders and traditional authorities, as it can help bridge intergenerational communication gaps and improve youth engagement within culturally sensitive frameworks. For development communication specialists, this research offers insight into how participatory methods and digital tools can be operationalised in a decentralised Ghanaian setting. Ultimately, empowering the youth of Lower Manya Krobo through communication has the potential to generate ripple effects in community development, peace-building, and local governance.

1.8 Organisation of Study

This study is organised into five chapters to ensure a logical and coherent presentation of the research. Chapter One introduces the study, providing the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, and structure of the study. Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature on development communication and youth empowerment, examining both global and local perspectives to identify gaps the study seeks to fill.

Chapter Three outlines the quantitative research methodology, including the research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection tools, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four

presents and analyses the data collected, offering statistical insights into youth access to and use of development communication strategies in Lower Manya Krobo. Chapter Five concludes the study with a discussion of findings, conclusions, and practical recommendations for policy-makers, NGOs, and local stakeholders, while also suggesting directions for future research.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the study by providing a comprehensive background on the role of development communication in youth empowerment, tracing its relevance from global, African, and Ghanaian perspectives, and narrowing it to the context of Lower Manya Krobo. It outlined the research problem, highlighting the communication gaps that limit youth engagement and empowerment in the municipality. The chapter also presented the study's objectives and corresponding research questions, clarified its geographical, thematic, and methodological scope, and specified the six-month time frame. Furthermore, it discussed the significance of the study for academic, policy, and local development stakeholders. Finally, the structure of the entire study was outlined to guide the reader through the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The role of development communication in youth empowerment has become increasingly prominent in both academic and policy discourses, particularly in the Global South. As nations strive to include young people in governance, entrepreneurship, and community development, communication has emerged as a transformative tool for participation and agency (Servaes, 2008; Tufte, 2017). Within Ghana, especially in municipalities such as Lower Manya Krobo, the use of participatory and strategic communication holds immense potential for enabling social inclusion and skill development among youth. This chapter reviews relevant scholarly literature, organised around five key themes that reflect the study's objectives. It concludes with an exposition of the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory, outlining its relevance to the Ghanaian context and its application in the present study.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

According to Creswell & Creswell (2023), a review of related studies is a critical examination of existing scholarly research relevant to a specific topic. It identifies gaps, synthesises findings, and situates the current study within the broader academic discourse. This process helps refine research

questions, justify methodological choices, and demonstrate how the present study contributes new knowledge (Hart, 2018).

2.2.1 Development Communication and Youth Engagement

Globally, development communication has evolved from a top-down information dissemination model to a participatory process that promotes inclusion and mutual understanding (Quebral, 2006; Servaes, 2008). Studies such as Tufte (2017) and Melkote and Steeves (2015) demonstrate that involving youth in development communication initiatives fosters leadership, civic participation, and innovation. In India, for instance, Kaur and Prajapati (2025) found that peer-led storytelling and youth forums enhanced communication competencies and self-efficacy among adolescents. Similarly, in Kenya, Nduwayezu et al. (2025) confirmed that when youth take part in message design and dissemination, they develop stronger civic identities and problem-solving abilities.

The theoretical underpinning of these studies often draws on Participatory and Behavioural Change Communication models, which view communication as an enabler of collective learning. Servaes (2008) emphasised that the participatory model transforms communication from persuasion to collaboration. However, critics such as Manyozo (2012) argue that while participatory rhetoric dominates policy, implementation often remains top-down, especially in state-led campaigns.

In Ghana, Nyatuame and Abdallah (2022) explored youth theatre as a form of development communication and found that dramatic performances serve as powerful tools for civic education and identity formation. Their findings resonate with the current study, as both highlight how participatory communication can be locally adapted to stimulate dialogue and youth agency.

Together these studies reveal that youth engagement through communication fosters empowerment when anchored in participation, dialogue, and local culture principles that this study applies within the Lower Manya Krobo context.

2.2.2 Participatory Communication and Empowerment

Participatory communication is widely recognised as a catalyst for social empowerment. It operates on the principle that communication should facilitate dialogue, mutual learning, and collective action (Freire, 1970; Servaes, 2008). Empirical studies in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa have shown that participatory media, including community radio and theatre-for-development, can transform marginalised groups into active development actors (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

In Rwanda, participatory radio projects allowed youth to co-create messages on reproductive health, enhancing confidence and self-awareness (Nduwayezu et al., 2025). Similarly, in Nigeria, Abah (2006) illustrated how participatory theatre enabled rural communities to challenge traditional hierarchies and engage in environmental activism. These studies affirm that participatory models promote critical consciousness, collective reflection, and empowerment which are central tenets of Paulo Freire's dialogical theory.

However, some scholars, such as Waisbord (2015), argue that participatory approaches are often idealised and under-resourced, limiting scalability and sustainability. Despite these criticisms, participatory communication remains the most effective framework for integrating community voices in decision-making (Dagron, 2009).

In Ghana, participatory approaches have been effectively employed by youth-focused organisations such as Curious Minds Ghana and Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana), which operate youth-led radio programmes, media campaigns, and policy dialogues that promote

civic awareness, reproductive health, and social entrepreneurship (Curious Minds Ghana, 2023; Tagoe & Oheneba-Sakyi, 2015). These initiatives embody the principles of Participatory Development Communication (PDC) by fostering dialogue, collective learning, and leadership among young people. Through participatory radio and interactive discussions, these organisations enable youth to act as both communicators and change agents rather than passive recipients of information (Anani-Bossman & Blankson, 2023; Tufte & Grauenkaer, 2018).

2.2.3 The Influence of ICTs in Development Communication

The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has revolutionised development communication, expanding access to participation and expression (Castells, 2011). Digital platforms now enable youth to bypass traditional gatekeepers and articulate their views directly to broader audiences. Korber (2021) found that Ghanaian youth who received digital media training gained confidence in advocacy and civic participation, echoing global studies that highlight ICTs as tools of empowerment (van Dijck, 2013).

The Digital Participation Model (Jenkins et al., 2016) supports this notion, positing that online platforms foster participatory cultures where youth produce and circulate knowledge. However, Archampong and Mensah (2024) caution that digital empowerment is not universal as structural inequalities such as access, literacy, and gender dynamics still determine who benefits.

Across Africa, mobile-based participatory communication platforms such as U-Report (UNICEF, 2023) and Voice Africa's Future have illustrated the transformative role of digital engagement in enhancing youth participation and policy responsiveness. These platforms allow young people to share their opinions on governance, education, and health issues directly with decision-makers, thus bridging the gap between grassroots concerns and institutional responses (Tufte & Grauenkaer, 2018; Banda, 2022). Research by Manyozo (2012) and Servaes (2008) underscores

that such initiatives embody the participatory ideals of development communication where communication acts as dialogue and empowerment rather than mere transmission of information. Moreover, ICT-mediated participation in Africa has proven effective in fostering civic inclusion and collective problem-solving, particularly among youth populations historically excluded from policymaking processes (Melkote & Steeves, 2021). These findings align with the present study's conceptualisation of development communication as a multi-channel process that integrates both traditional and digital media to promote inclusive participation, dialogue, and empowerment in contexts such as Lower Manya Krobo.

In the Ghanaian context, the increasing use of digital and community-based communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups, community Facebook pages, and youth radio programmes has significantly expanded participatory spaces for young people. These ICT-driven initiatives have redefined how Ghanaian youth engage in civic discourse, community mobilisation, and social entrepreneurship (Archampong & Mensah, 2024; Korber, 2021). Digital media, in particular, enable youth to share information, mobilise peers, and articulate their views in real time, thereby challenging traditional gatekeepers of communication (Anani-Bossman & Blankson, 2023). Studies by Kumi, Yeboah, and Edudzie (2025) and Dadzie and Adjotor (2025) reveal that social media platforms have become essential tools for youth advocacy and collective action in Ghana, fostering new forms of digital citizenship. These developments mirror global participatory trends where ICTs democratise communication by allowing users to co-create meaning rather than passively consume information (Servaes, 2008; Tufte, 2017). Hence, these digital and community media practices exemplify the participatory principle that communication should be by, for, and with the people, a core tenet of the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) framework underpinning this research.

2.2.4 Communication Barriers and Socio-cultural Constraints

Despite advances in participatory communication, several barriers persist in achieving effective youth empowerment. These include linguistic diversity, gender norms, political interference, and limited access to media infrastructure (Tuftte & Grauenkaer, 2018). In Uganda and Malawi, Manda (2017) found that elite capture and patriarchal structures restricted genuine youth participation in community projects. Similarly, Cheeseman and Klaas (2018) observed that youth in sub-Saharan Africa often face systemic exclusion from policymaking, despite rhetorical inclusion.

In Ghana, Kankam and Attuh (2024) identified infrastructural and cultural barriers that limit youth access to community radio. While communication is theoretically participatory, in practice it remains hierarchical, with youth often confined to passive roles. These findings partially contradict Freire's (1970) dialogical ideal, which assumes equal participation in communication.

However, scholars such as Kumi et al. (2025) argue that these challenges can be mitigated through decentralised communication systems and capacity-building initiatives. Their research on youth civil society organisations in Ghana suggests that empowerment increases when youth are trained in advocacy and digital communication.

Thus, while this study recognises structural challenges in Lower Manya Krobo, it aligns with the evidence that empowerment through communication is achievable when socio-cultural dynamics are addressed through inclusive, context-sensitive strategies.

2.2.5 Community Media and Youth Participation

Community media including radio, participatory video, and theatre-for-development remain central to youth empowerment efforts (Servaes, 2008; Tuftte, 2017). These platforms bridge the gap between traditional and modern communication forms by integrating local language, culture,

and participatory values. In Kenya, Tufte and Grauenkaer (2018) demonstrated that youth-led citizen media fostered dialogue and accountability at the community level.

In Ghana, community radio has become an instrumental tool for youth engagement. Kankam and Attuh (2024) observed that youth-produced programmes encourage civic dialogue, challenge stereotypes, and promote transparency in governance. Similarly, Nyatuame and Abdallah (2022) found that youth theatre initiatives cultivate leadership and cultural expression.

These studies often apply participatory and empowerment theories, asserting that access to media platforms strengthens identity and belonging (Dagron, 2009). However, Waisbord (2015) cautions that sustainability of such programmes depends on consistent funding and institutional support.

The present study builds on these insights by exploring how community and participatory communication frameworks can be adapted to the unique socio-economic context of Lower Manya Krobo. It therefore situates youth empowerment not merely in information access, but in collective ownership and dialogue.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a structured lens that guides research by linking concepts, theories, and empirical evidence to explain relationships among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). It anchors the study within established scholarship and provides a basis for interpretation. This study is underpinned by the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory, which emphasizes dialogue, inclusion, and collective action as tools for empowerment and social change (Servaes, 2008; Freire, 1970).

2.3.1 Participatory Development Communication (PDC) Theory

The Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory emerged in the early 1970s as a response to the shortcomings of dominant top-down communication models that characterised early development thinking. The concept was first articulated by Nora C. Quebral (1971), who defined development communication as “the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people.” Her pioneering work marked a shift from the modernisation paradigm, which focused on information dissemination and persuasion, to a participatory paradigm that valued inclusion, dialogue, and local knowledge. This conceptual transformation was later refined by Jan Servaes (1999), who argued that development communication should be rooted in cultural contexts and built on mutual respect and co-learning. Together, their ideas established the foundation for participatory approaches that remain influential in contemporary communication research and practice.

The philosophical basis of PDC draws heavily on Paulo Freire’s (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which advanced the concept of “conscientisation”, a process through which individuals develop critical awareness and take collective action for social change. Freire’s pedagogy rejects one-way communication in favour of dialogue, reflection, and joint problem-solving, principles that became central to participatory communication models. In this respect, communication is not a tool for transmitting information but a process of empowerment that enables people to articulate their realities, challenge oppression, and participate in shaping their destinies (Servaes, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). This shift transformed communication from a technical function into a socio-political process of negotiation and inclusion, resonating strongly with contexts that value local agency and collaboration.

PDC views communication as an interactive process through which stakeholders collectively identify issues, share knowledge, and develop solutions to common problems. Servaes (2008) describes it as “communication by the people and for the people,” underscoring the ethical and democratic ideals that underpin the approach. It is distinguished by its horizontal and dialogic nature, which contrasts sharply with the linear “sender–receiver” models of communication that dominated the mid-twentieth century. The emphasis on participation as both a means and an end ensure that communication contributes not only to achieving development objectives but also to building capacities, relationships, and shared ownership (Tuftte, 2017). By fostering engagement and inclusivity, PDC enables communities to redefine the meaning of development in their own terms.

Over time, the PDC framework has been successfully applied across diverse sectors, including public health, environmental management, and youth empowerment. For instance, Dagron (2009) documents the effectiveness of participatory radio and video projects in Latin America and Africa, which facilitated social dialogue and local problem-solving. Melkote and Steeves (2015) found that participatory communication approaches in rural India enhanced agricultural innovation and collective learning. Similarly, in sub-Saharan Africa, participatory media initiatives such as community radio and theatre-for-development have empowered marginalised populations to engage in governance and policy discussions (Banda, 2022; Tuftte & Grauenkaer, 2018). These applications demonstrate the flexibility of PDC and its capacity to adapt to both traditional and digital communication environments, making it suitable for contemporary youth empowerment initiatives in contexts like Ghana.

The principal strengths of PDC lie in its inclusiveness, adaptability, and ethical grounding. Unlike prescriptive models that rely on external expertise, PDC prioritises the agency of local

communities and values indigenous knowledge systems. It facilitates social learning and co-creation, which are essential for sustainable change (Servaes, 2008). Moreover, by focusing on dialogue and reflection, PDC fosters trust and mutual accountability between communicators and audiences. Manyozo (2012) argues that participatory communication leads to more resilient communities because people are actively involved in shaping interventions that affect their lives. Its democratic and bottom-up orientation makes it particularly relevant to societies characterised by social inequalities, as it seeks to amplify the voices of those traditionally excluded from decision-making.

Despite its strengths, the PDC model has not been without criticism. Waisbord (2015) contends that participatory communication can sometimes become symbolic rather than substantive, especially when institutional power dynamics limit genuine involvement. White (2004) similarly argues that participatory projects often reproduce hierarchies when facilitators or external agencies dominate discussions, thus undermining local ownership. Critics have also noted the practical challenges of implementing participatory approaches, which require significant time, resources, and community trust. Furthermore, the absence of universally accepted indicators for measuring participation and empowerment has raised concerns about the model's empirical rigour (Mefalopulos, 2008). Nonetheless, proponents maintain that these limitations can be addressed through culturally sensitive, context-driven implementation that adheres to PDC's core ethical principles.

The Participatory Development Communication theory was chosen for this study because it aligns closely with the objective of empowering youth through communication in the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. Unlike the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1962), which emphasises message dissemination, or Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which focuses on

individual behavioural change, PDC foregrounds dialogue, mutual understanding, and collective action. It allows for the integration of both traditional and digital communication channels including community radio, theatre, WhatsApp, and social media making it particularly relevant in the Ghanaian context, where youth engagement occurs across multiple media spaces. The theory's participatory ethos also resonates with Ghana's decentralisation policy, which seeks to involve communities in governance and local development (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010).

In relation to this study, PDC provides both a theoretical foundation and a practical framework for understanding how communication can be used to empower young people. Its focus on voice, agency, and dialogue offers a lens through which to explore how participatory platforms such as youth radio, social media discussions, and community forums can transform passive audiences into active stakeholders in development. This theoretical orientation supports the study's aim of exploring communication strategies that not only inform but also enable youth participation and decision-making. In the context of Lower Manya Krobo, where many young people face socio-economic marginalisation, PDC serves as a transformative model for creating inclusive spaces that value local knowledge, encourage collaboration, and promote sustainable empowerment through communication.

2.3.2 Relevance of the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) Theory within the Ghanaian Context

The relevance of the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory within the Ghanaian context is rooted in the country's socio-political commitment to decentralisation, inclusion, and participatory governance. Since the introduction of Ghana's Local Government Act (Act 936) and the National Youth Policy (2010), participatory engagement has been identified as essential for sustainable development. These frameworks encourage citizen involvement in local

decision-making, reflecting the very principles articulated in the PDC model (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010; Servaes, 2008). In a nation where youth constitute over 36% of the population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021), participatory communication has become indispensable in ensuring that young people are not merely recipients of policies but active contributors to governance and development discourse.

PDC's emphasis on dialogue and community-driven action resonates with Ghana's long-standing oral traditions and communal modes of knowledge exchange. Traditional communicative forms such as *durbar*, *folk theatre*, and *storytelling* have historically served as platforms for sharing information and negotiating collective decisions (Anani-Bossman & Blankson, 2023). These indigenous practices embody the dialogical spirit of PDC, illustrating that participation and collective problem-solving are not foreign constructs but deeply embedded in Ghanaian sociocultural life. When integrated with modern tools such as community radio and social media, these approaches bridge generational and technological divides, making development communication culturally grounded and inclusive (Tufte & Grauenkaer, 2018; Kumi, Yeboah, & Edudzie, 2025).

Within the Ghanaian media landscape, PDC principles manifest in initiatives that use community radio, youth-led theatre, and digital storytelling to facilitate participatory engagement. Organisations such as Curious Minds Ghana, Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana), and Radio Ada exemplify how communication can be used as a process of empowerment, particularly among youth and marginalised groups (Tagoe & Oheneba-Sakyi, 2015; Curious Minds Ghana, 2023). These platforms foster interactive discussions on governance, health, education, and entrepreneurship, thereby transforming audiences into co-creators of development messages. Their work reflects PDC's premise that when communities, particularly young people, are given voice

and agency, they become active agents of change rather than passive recipients of development aid.

Moreover, PDC aligns strongly with Ghana's democratic culture and participatory governance agenda. According to Owusu and Sam (2021), participatory communication channels such as youth radio and town-hall meetings have strengthened civic responsibility and policy accountability at the district level. Such engagement models embody the horizontal communication that PDC advocates, as they prioritise mutual exchange over top-down persuasion. This participatory ethos has proven especially relevant in rural areas, where development success depends on trust, inclusivity, and culturally sensitive communication processes (Manyozo, 2012; Melkote & Steeves, 2021).

Finally, the Ghanaian experience demonstrates that the participatory communication approach offers a viable path toward youth empowerment and community transformation. By localising the PDC framework through radio, ICT, and traditional dialogue, communication becomes a shared developmental responsibility. This participatory reorientation not only improves policy responsiveness but also strengthens the social fabric by embedding democratic values at the grassroots level. Thus, the PDC theory provides a theoretical and practical lens for understanding how inclusive communication can promote empowerment, collective action, and sustainable development within Ghana.

2.3.3 Application of the PDC Theory to the Current Study

The application of the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory to this study is particularly pertinent, as it provides a conceptual framework for understanding how communication strategies can be harnessed to empower youth in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. In this context, the youth are not viewed as passive beneficiaries but as co-producers

of knowledge and agents of change. The study's focus on participatory communication tools such as youth radio, community dialogue forums, and social media engagement directly reflects PDC's insistence on horizontal communication and mutual learning (Servaes, 2008; Freire, 1970). The theory offers a lens through which the interplay between access, participation, and empowerment can be analysed, providing a solid foundation for exploring how development communication can catalyse transformation among the municipality's young population.

Practically, the PDC framework informs the design of this study's communication model by emphasising the two-way flow of information between youth, local authorities, and development stakeholders. In Lower Manya Krobo, community radio stations and WhatsApp groups already serve as participatory spaces for discussing issues such as education, employment, and health. Applying PDC principles ensures that these dialogues become structured platforms for collective problem-solving rather than unidirectional information sharing. This mirrors empirical evidence from Tufte and Grauenkaer (2018), who found that participatory media platforms in Kenya and Tanzania significantly increased youth engagement in local governance through dialogue-based communication.

The theory also aligns with the study's methodological orientation, which adopts a mixed-methods approach to integrate quantitative breadth with qualitative depth. This reflects PDC's epistemological position that knowledge production must combine empirical data with lived experience (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). In this study, surveys capture the extent of youth access to communication platforms, while interviews and focus groups explore perceptions and participation dynamics. Such methodological complementarity ensures that findings are both statistically grounded and contextually meaningful consistent with the participatory ideals of co-learning and inclusion (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Furthermore, PDC's application in this study underscores the critical importance of agency and voice in youth empowerment. As argued by Freire (1970) and Servaes (2008), communication that facilitates self-expression and reflection enables participants to transform their social realities. By using participatory media and community dialogues, this study investigates how young people in Lower Manya Krobo articulate their aspirations, challenge marginalisation, and contribute to local development planning. The framework thus provides a means to evaluate communication not just as a tool for information dissemination, but as a process of identity formation, collaboration, and empowerment.

Ultimately, the PDC framework provides both a theoretical and operational foundation for this study. It guides the interpretation of findings by linking youth empowerment outcomes to participatory communication practices. In doing so, it bridges theory and practice—translating abstract principles of participation into actionable strategies for sustainable development in Lower Manya Krobo. Through this lens, the study seeks to demonstrate that when youth are meaningfully engaged in communication processes, they evolve from passive recipients of information to active agents of transformation, reinforcing the transformative promise at the heart of the Participatory Development Communication theory.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an extensive review of existing literature and theoretical perspectives underpinning the study on enhancing youth empowerment through development communication strategies in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. The review established that communication has evolved from a linear, top-down model of information transfer to a participatory, dialogic process that values local voices, inclusivity, and co-creation. Global, African, and Ghanaian studies consistently revealed that youth empowerment thrives when development communication adopts

participatory approaches that integrate both traditional and digital media, allowing young people to become active agents of change rather than passive recipients of information. Empirical evidence from initiatives such as community radio, participatory theatre, and ICT-based platforms like U-Report demonstrated that communication serves as a vital catalyst for civic engagement, collective problem-solving, and social transformation. However, the review also identified persistent challenges, including limited access to communication resources, weak institutional support, and the prevalence of symbolic participation that undermines genuine empowerment gaps that are particularly visible in local governance systems such as those in Lower Manya Krobo. The chapter further elaborated on the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory, tracing its evolution from the 1970s through the contributions of scholars like Nora Quebral, Jan Servaes, and Paulo Freire, whose ideas on dialogue, reflection, and action remain central to contemporary participatory paradigms. PDC's emphasis on inclusivity, horizontal communication, and community ownership was shown to align closely with Ghana's decentralisation and youth development agendas, making it the most appropriate framework for this study. While acknowledging its criticisms, such as power imbalances and challenges of operationalisation, the theory's strengths such as its adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and ethical grounding were highlighted as essential for understanding communication as a process of empowerment. Consequently, this chapter provided both a conceptual and empirical foundation for the study, demonstrating that PDC offers a viable pathway for designing communication strategies that are participatory, context-driven, and capable of transforming the developmental experiences of youth in Lower Manya Krobo.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted for the study entitled “Enhancing Youth Empowerment through Development Communication Strategies in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality.” It details the research approach, design, target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data analysis techniques, validity and reliability measures, and ethical considerations. The chapter adopts a mixed-methods paradigm, reflecting the study’s alignment with participatory development communication, which values both quantitative breadth and qualitative depth (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tufte & Grauenkaer, 2018). This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how communication strategies can be used to empower youth in the study area.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach describes the overarching strategy guiding how data were collected, analysed, and interpreted. This study adopted a mixed methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative component provided measurable evidence on youth access to communication platforms, awareness, and attitudes, while the qualitative component captured deeper insights into experiences, perceptions, and meanings (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

This approach was chosen because youth empowerment and communication are multidimensional and cannot be fully understood through numerical data alone (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Quantitative data establish general patterns, while qualitative data contextualise these findings

within the lived experiences of participants. The use of both methods ensured triangulation and credibility, aligning with the participatory ethos of development communication (Servaes, 2008; Freire, 1970).

3.3 Research Design

The research design defines the structure and plan that connects research questions to the data collected and the conclusions drawn. This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods design, in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously but analysed separately before being integrated (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design was appropriate because it allowed each data type to retain its integrity while complementing the other to provide a holistic understanding of communication and empowerment (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

The quantitative design took the form of a descriptive survey, which is suitable for obtaining information on population characteristics, attitudes, and opinions (Babbie, 2020). It provided numerical insights into the accessibility and usage of communication platforms. The qualitative design followed a case study approach focusing on Lower Manya Krobo as a unique context where youth empowerment is mediated through communication. Yin (2018) notes that case study designs are ideal for exploring complex social phenomena within their real-life context. This design was chosen to capture the participatory nuances and cultural dynamics of youth communication within the municipality.

3.4 Population

The population refers to the entire group of individuals who share common characteristics relevant to the research problem (Kothari, 2011). For this study, the population comprised all youth aged 15–35 years residing in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality, as defined by Ghana's *National Youth*

Policy (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010). It also included stakeholders such as communication officers, NGO workers, local government officials, and community leaders engaged in youth development activities.

This population was chosen because youth constitute approximately 42% of the municipality's total inhabitants (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021), making them a crucial demographic for community development. Including both youth and key stakeholders allowed the study to capture multiple perspectives, consistent with the participatory principle of engaging both “message producers” and “receivers” (Servaes, 2008).

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling process determines the subset of the population included in the study and how they were selected (Bryman, 2016). This study employed a multi-stage sampling technique, combining both probability and non-probability methods to ensure representativeness and depth.

A total of 200 respondents participated in the quantitative survey, while 30 participants (20 youth and 10 key informants) took part in the qualitative phase. This sample size was deemed appropriate for a mixed methods study, allowing for both statistical reliability and qualitative saturation (Creswell, 2014).

In the first stage, stratified random sampling was used to select communities within Lower Manya Krobo, ensuring that both urban and rural areas were represented. Within these strata, simple random sampling identified youth respondents for the quantitative survey. This probability-based approach minimised bias and increased the representativeness of the findings.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was applied to select participants with relevant knowledge or experience in youth communication and empowerment. This included youth leaders,

NGO officials, media practitioners, and assembly representatives. According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling allows researchers to select “information-rich” cases that provide depth and insight rather than generalisation.

This combined approach ensured that the sample reflected the diversity of youth experiences and institutional viewpoints in Lower Manya Krobo, fulfilling the complementarity principle of mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3.6 Data Collection

The data collection process involves the systematic gathering of information relevant to the research objectives. Two main instruments were employed: structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides.

The questionnaire, administered to youth respondents, consisted of both closed and open-ended questions to capture data on demographics, communication access, awareness, and empowerment experiences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). This tool was chosen for its ability to generate quantifiable data across a large group efficiently.

The interview guide was used for qualitative data. These instruments allowed for flexibility and deeper probing into issues such as communication barriers, youth perceptions, and empowerment outcomes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Data were collected over six weeks and pre-tested in a neighbouring district to ensure clarity and contextual relevance. Face-to-face administration was preferred to maximise response accuracy and accommodate varying literacy levels.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis stage involves organising and interpreting data to answer research questions. A convergent mixed methods strategy was applied. Quantitative data were processed using SPSS,

with descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) summarising key variables (Field, 2018). Tables and charts were used for clarity and comparison.

Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using manual thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-step framework: familiarisation, coding, theme development, review, definition, and interpretation. Themes were derived inductively to represent participants' authentic voices.

To enhance robustness, triangulation was applied to integrate findings from both datasets, comparing convergences and divergences between numerical trends and narrative insights (Denzin, 2012). This integration ensured that conclusions were both statistically grounded and contextually rich, reflecting the participatory ethos of the study.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

Validity ensures that the research accurately measures what it intends to measure, while reliability ensures consistency of results over time (Cohen et al., 2018). Content validity was established through expert review by communication scholars and pilot testing in a neighbouring district. Triangulation of methods (survey, interviews, FGDs) further strengthened construct validity (Denzin, 2012).

For reliability, consistent data collection procedures were maintained, and quantitative instruments were tested using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency (Field, 2018). In qualitative analysis, reliability was achieved through detailed field notes, peer debriefing, and reflexive journaling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Research ethics ensure participants' rights, safety, and dignity. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Participants were briefed about the study's objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any stage (BERA, 2018). Informed consent both written and verbal were obtained, especially for those with limited literacy.

Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained through pseudonyms and secure data handling. Sensitive information, especially regarding political or personal issues, was treated with discretion (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, consistent with participatory ethics, findings will be disseminated to the community through accessible summaries, ensuring feedback and transparency (Servaes, 2008; Freire, 1970).

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodological framework for the study, explaining the rationale for each methodological choice. A mixed methods approach and convergent design were selected to capture both the measurable and experiential dimensions of youth empowerment. The population, sampling procedures, and data collection methods were clearly defined to ensure inclusivity and representativeness.

Data analysis combined statistical and thematic techniques, with triangulation used to validate results. Ethical protocols and reliability measures were rigorously applied to maintain research integrity. Collectively, these procedures provide a strong foundation for exploring how development communication strategies can empower youth in the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality through participatory, context-sensitive approaches.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to interpret and analyse the data collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods in relation to the research objectives and questions outlined in earlier chapters. The quantitative data, derived from structured questionnaires administered to 200 respondents, are presented using frequency tables and percentages to show distribution patterns and trends among participants. The qualitative data, obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, complement the quantitative results by providing deeper insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of youth and key stakeholders regarding development communication and empowerment.

The chapter is structured into two main sections: presentation of quantitative findings and presentation of qualitative findings, followed by a discussion of results that integrates both data sets through triangulation. This approach aligns with the mixed methods design adopted for the study, ensuring that the strengths of both numerical evidence and narrative interpretation are utilised to present a holistic understanding of the research problem. Guided by the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) framework, the chapter interprets the data within the context of participatory engagement, dialogue, and inclusivity which are core principles central to youth empowerment and sustainable community development in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality.

4.2 Presentation of Quantitative Findings

This section presents the quantitative findings derived from the survey conducted among youth in the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. It highlights statistical data on respondents' demographics,

communication access, awareness, attitudes, and challenges. The analysis provides numerical evidence to address the study’s research questions and support subsequent qualitative interpretations.

4.2.1 Demographics of Respondents

This subsection presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. It includes information on their age, sex, educational level, marital status and occupation. These variables provide essential background context for understanding how demographic factors influence youth access to and engagement with development communication platforms.

4.2.1.1 Age

The results show that the majority of respondents (55.5%) were aged between 26 and 35 years, followed by 24% who were within the 18–25 age group. This indicates that most participants were young adults who fall within the core youth bracket. Respondents aged 36–45 years formed 15%, while those aged 46–55 years and 56 years and above constituted 3% and 2.5% respectively. This pattern suggests that the study captured a predominantly youthful population, with limited representation from older age groups.

Table 1:Age

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18-25	48	24.0
26-35	111	55.5
36-45	30	15.0
46-55	6	3.0
56+	5	2.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The dominance of respondents aged 26–35 years implies that the findings largely reflect the perspectives of individuals who are likely to be active, economically engaged, and socially mobile. The smaller representation of older participants indicates that the study focused mainly on youth-related experiences, which aligns with its objective of exploring communication strategies for empowerment among young people.

4.2.1.2 Sex

Out of the 200 respondents, 59% were male and 41% were female. This distribution shows a slightly higher participation of males compared to females. While both genders were well represented, the data suggest that more men than women took part in the study.

Table 2: Sex

Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Female	82	41.0
Male	118	59.0
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The difference in representation may reflect varying levels of availability or willingness to participate. However, the inclusion of both males and females ensures that the study captures a balanced range of views and experiences regarding communication and empowerment among youth in the area.

4.2.1.3 Level of Education

The educational distribution shows that 42.5% of respondents were undergraduates, 28.5% held diplomas, 22.5% had senior high school education, and 6.5% had postgraduate qualifications. This

means that most participants possessed tertiary education, indicating a relatively educated group of respondents.

Table 3: Level of Education

Level of Education	Number of respondents	Percentage
Diploma	57	28.5
Postgraduate	13	6.5
Senior high	45	22.5
Undergraduate	85	42.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The results suggest that the majority of respondents have attained a level of education that enables them to engage effectively with communication platforms and development initiatives. The smaller proportion of respondents with postgraduate education implies that while many have tertiary-level qualifications, few have advanced beyond undergraduate studies.

4.2.1.4 Marital Status

Analysis of marital status shows that 92.5% of respondents were single, while 7.5% were married.

This clearly indicates that the overwhelming majority of participants were unmarried.

Table 4: Marital Status

Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Married	15	7.5
Single	185	92.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The dominance of single respondents suggests that most participants are likely within the early stages of adulthood, focusing on education, career building, or personal development. The smaller

number of married respondents means that the data largely reflect the perspectives of unmarried youth in the study area.

4.2.1.5 Occupation

The occupational data reveal that 42% of respondents were civil servants, followed by 37.5% who identified as ordinary citizens. Journalists and media practitioners made up 9%, academics or researchers accounted for 6.5%, and politicians or party officials comprised 5%.

Table 5: Occupation

Occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Academic/Researcher	13	6.5
Civil Servant	84	42.0
Journalist/Media Practitioner	18	9.0
Ordinary citizen	75	37.5
Politician/Party Official	10	5.0
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

This distribution shows that a large proportion of participants were employed in formal sectors such as the civil service, while a considerable number represented ordinary community members. The inclusion of journalists, academics, and politicians adds diversity, ensuring that perspectives from both professional and non-professional backgrounds were represented.

4.3 Research Question 1: What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?

This question investigates the various development communication channels available to youth in Lower Manya Krobo, such as radio, social media, and community forums. It examines how accessible and effective these platforms are in facilitating youth engagement, participation, and information sharing for local development and empowerment

4.3.1 Media Platforms Frequently Used for Information on Community or Development Issues

The data show that the most frequently used media platform among respondents for accessing community or development information was social media (33%), followed closely by television (32%) and radio (16.5%). Newspapers were used by 14.5% of respondents, while community meetings accounted for only 4%. This indicates that digital and broadcast media dominate as primary information sources for youth, with traditional interpersonal methods playing a minimal role.

Table 6: Media Platforms Frequently Used for Information on Community or Development Issues

Which of the following media platforms do you frequently use for information on community or development issues?	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Community Meetings	8	4.0
Newspaper	29	14.5
Radio	33	16.5
Social Media	66	33.0
TV	64	32.0
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The high preference for social media and television suggests that youth in the study area rely heavily on visual and interactive platforms for information. The relatively low participation in community meetings implies that face-to-face engagement in civic issues may be limited. This

trend reflects a shift towards more individualised and technology-driven access to community information.

4.3.2 Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth

Findings from Table 9 show that 79.5% of respondents described communication platforms as easy to access, 12.5% remained neutral, 4.5% found them very easy, and only 3.5% found them difficult to access. This indicates that most respondents have adequate access to communication channels within their communities.

Table 7: Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth

How often do you access information from these sources?	Number of respondents	Percentage
Daily	148	74.0
Monthly	8	4.0
Rarely	7	3.5
Weekly	37	18.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The high perception of accessibility implies that infrastructural and technological barriers are relatively minimal. It also suggests that youth have access to various information sources, which provides a foundation for participation in community discussions and development initiatives.

4.3.3 Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth

Findings from Table 9 show that 79.5% of respondents described communication platforms as easy to access, 12.5% remained neutral, 4.5% found them very easy, and only 3.5% found them difficult to access. This indicates that most respondents have adequate access to communication channels within their communities.

Table 8: Accessibility of Communication Platforms to Youth

Rate the accessibility of these communication platforms to youth in your community.	Number of respondents	Percentage
Difficult	7	3.5
Easy	159	79.5
Neutral	25	12.5
Very easy	9	4.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data. 2025.

The high perception of accessibility implies that infrastructural and technological barriers are relatively minimal. It also suggests that youth have access to various information sources, which provides a foundation for participation in community discussions and development initiatives.

4.3.4 Community

Out of the 200 respondents, 57.5% were from urban areas and 42.5% from rural communities. This indicates a fairly balanced representation, though urban participants were slightly more than their rural counterparts.

Table 9:Community

Community	Number of respondents	Percentage
Rural	85	42.5
Urban	115	57.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The results suggest that the study incorporated views from both urban and rural youth. The higher proportion of urban respondents may be due to their easier accessibility and proximity to communication infrastructure, while the inclusion of rural participants ensures that experiences from less urbanised areas were also reflected.

4.4 Research Question 2: What are the youth’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?

This question explores how youth understand, perceive, and respond to development communication. It assesses their awareness, attitudes, and levels of participation in communication initiatives, determining whether they view such strategies as relevant and empowering tools for their personal growth and community development.

4.4.1 Awareness of Development Communication

An overwhelming majority of respondents (94.5%) indicated that they had heard of development communication, while 3% said no, and 2.5% were unsure. This shows a strong level of awareness of the concept among respondents.

Table 10: Awareness of Development Communication

Have you heard of development communication	Number of respondents	Percentage
Maybe	5	2.5
No	6	3.0
Yes	189	94.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The result suggests that development communication is a familiar idea within the community, possibly due to exposure to development-oriented programmes or local initiatives. The very small number of respondents unaware of the concept shows that most youth are informed about communication’s role in development.

4.4.2 Development Communication Helps Communities Solve Problems Collectively

The data show that 83.5% of respondents agreed, 5% strongly agreed, 9% were neutral, and only 2.5% disagreed that development communication helps communities solve problems collectively.

This means the vast majority recognise its collective problem-solving potential.

Table 11: Development Communication Helps Communities Solve Problems Collectively

Development communication helps communities solve problems collectively.	Number of respondents	Percentage
Agree	167	83.5
Disagree	5	2.5
Neutral	18	9.0
Strongly agree	10	5.0
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

This result indicates that respondents value communication as a means for collaboration and shared understanding in addressing local challenges. The high level of agreement underscores the belief that development communication contributes positively to community cooperation and empowerment.

4.4.3 Youth Have a Major Role to Play in Communication for Development

Out of the 200 respondents, 95.5% agreed that youth have a major role in communication for development, while 4.5% disagreed. This shows a strong belief among participants that young people are central to the communication and development process.

Table 12: Youth Have a Major Role to Play in Communication for Development

Youth have a major role to play in communication for development.	Number of respondents	Percentage
False	9	4.5

True	191	95.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The result highlights widespread recognition of the importance of youth in driving development communication efforts. It suggests that the youth themselves are aware of their potential influence in shaping development narratives and community transformation.

4.4.4 Overall Attitude Towards Using Communication for Community Development

Findings show that 77% of respondents had a positive attitude towards using communication for community development, 9.5% were neutral, 5% were very positive, 6% were negative, and 2.5% were very negative. This means that the majority of participants view communication positively as a development tool.

Table 13: Overall Attitude Towards Using Communication for Community Development

How would you describe your overall attitude towards using communication for community	Number of respondents	Percentage
Negative	12	6.0
Neutral	19	9.5
Positive	154	77.0
Very Negative	5	2.5
Very Positive	10	5.0
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The predominance of positive attitudes suggests that respondents are willing and open to engage in communication-based initiatives. The small proportion of negative or neutral responses may be due to differences in exposure or perceived relevance of certain communication platforms.

4.5 Research Question 3: What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?

This question identifies the key challenges and enabling factors that influence the use of development communication for youth empowerment. It focuses on obstacles such as cost, language, and infrastructure, as well as opportunities like training, digital inclusion, and participatory engagement.

4.5.1 Challenges Faced in Accessing Communication Platforms

The analysis reveals that cost (32.5%) was the most cited challenge in accessing communication platforms, followed by language barriers (27.5%) and poor network (27.5%), while lack of information (12.5%) was the least reported challenge. This suggests that both financial and infrastructural issues hinder youth access.

Table 14: Challenges Faced in Accessing Communication Platforms

What challenges do you face in accessing communication platforms?	Number of respondents	Percentage
Cost	65	32.5
Lack of information	25	12.5
Language barriers	55	27.5
Poor network	55	27.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

These findings indicate that although platforms may exist, affordability and linguistic inclusivity remain barriers for some respondents. Addressing cost and connectivity limitations would therefore improve equitable access and participation in communication-based development processes.

4.5.2 Factors Preventing Youth from Participating in Community Communication Activities

The results show that lack of time (35.5%) and lack of confidence (34.5%) were the leading factors preventing youth participation. This was followed by political interference (20%) and gender restrictions (10%). The results indicate that personal and structural factors both play roles in limiting involvement.

Table 15: Factors Preventing Youth from Participating in Community Communication Activities

What prevents youth from participating in community communication activities?	Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender restrictions	20	10.0
Lack of confidence	69	34.5
Lack to time	71	35.5
Political interference	40	20.0
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The dominance of time and confidence-related issues suggests that participation barriers are not purely institutional but also behavioural. Political interference and gender-based challenges, though less prevalent, indicate that inclusivity and neutrality must be considered in communication planning.

4.5.3 Opportunities that Best Promote Youth Communication and Empowerment

According to the results, social media (38.5%) and community radio (30.5%) were identified as the most effective opportunities for promoting youth communication and empowerment. Other options such as youth clubs (16.5%), educational campaigns (13.5%), and drama/theatre (1%) were less favoured.

Table 16: Opportunities that Best Promote Youth Communication and Empowerment

Which of the following opportunities best promotes	Number of respondents	Percentage
--	-----------------------	------------

youth communication and empowerment?		
Community radio	61	30.5
Drama/Theatre	2	1.0
Educational campaigns	27	13.5
Social media	77	38.5
Youth clubs	33	16.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

This pattern indicates that youth prefer modern and accessible platforms that allow real-time interaction and visibility. The prominence of social media and community radio shows that both digital and localised participatory media play key roles in youth empowerment.

4.6 Research Question 4: What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?

This question seeks to design a participatory communication framework tailored to the Lower Manya Krobo context. It integrates insights from findings to propose strategies that enhance youth inclusion, dialogue, and empowerment through multi-channel, culturally grounded, and interactive communication approaches.

4.6.1 Communication’s Role in Improving Youth Participation in Decision-Making

Results show that 87% of respondents agreed, 2.5% strongly agreed, 4% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 2.5% strongly disagreed that communication has improved their participation in decision-making. This overwhelming agreement underscores the positive influence of communication on civic involvement.

Table 17: Communication's Role in Improving Youth Participation in Decision-Making

How much do you agree that communication has improved your participation in decision-making?	Number of respondents	Percentage
Agree	174	87.0
Disagree	8	4.0
Neutral	8	4.0
Strongly agree	5	2.5
Strongly disagree	5	2.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025.

The findings indicate that access to communication platforms enhances youth engagement in governance and decision-making processes. The few neutral or negative responses may suggest unequal access or differing experiences with communication initiatives.

4.6.2 How Access to Communication Platforms Has Changed Youth Lives

The results indicate that better participation (34%) and improved knowledge (31.5%) were the most reported effects of communication access. Increased confidence (19.5%) and business opportunities (12%) followed, while 3% reported no change. This shows that communication access has had multiple positive effects on respondents’ lives.

Table 18: How Access to Communication Platforms Has Changed Youth Lives

In what ways has access to communication platforms changed your life?	Number of respondents	Percentage
Better participation	68	34.0
Business opportunities	24	12.0
Improved knowledge	63	31.5
Increased confidence	39	19.5

None	6	3.0
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025

These results demonstrate that communication platforms not only enhance knowledge sharing but also build confidence and open economic opportunities. The low percentage reporting no change implies that communication engagement has had tangible benefits for most respondents.

4.6.3 Communication Strategies that Should Be Prioritised to Empower Youth

Findings show that social media engagement (41.5%) was ranked highest among preferred communication strategies, followed by community meetings (23.5%), radio engagement (17.5%), and TV shows (17.5%). This highlights social media as the most effective and favoured channel for youth empowerment.

Table 19: Communication Strategies that Should Be Prioritised to Empower Youth

How much do you agree that communication has improved your participation in decision-making?	Number of respondents	Percentage
Agree	174	87.0
Disagree	8	4.0
Neutral	8	4.0
Strongly agree	5	2.5
Strongly disagree	5	2.5
Total	200	100

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The preference for social media suggests that it provides accessible and interactive spaces for youth expression and engagement. However, the significant interest in community meetings and radio also indicates that combining digital and traditional media could yield more inclusive and effective empowerment strategies.

4.7 Presentation of Qualitative Data

This section presents the qualitative findings obtained from interviews and open-ended responses of participants in the Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. It explores their experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding development communication and youth empowerment. The narratives are organised under thematic areas aligned with the study's research questions, supported by direct participant quotations for clarity and authenticity.

4.8 Research Question 1: What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?

4.8.1 What are the main communication platforms used in your municipality to engage youth?

The findings revealed that participants rely on a blend of digital and traditional media for accessing and sharing community and development information. The most frequently mentioned platforms were WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, while community radio, church announcements, and public address systems remained important in more rural communities. Some participants noted that official channels, such as municipal information boards, were “not youth-friendly,” suggesting a disconnect between formal institutional communication and youth-preferred methods. Participants highlighted that social media groups managed by youth organisations and NGOs have become central for information exchange and mobilisation.

Differences also emerged between urban and rural respondents. Those in towns were more likely to use social media and online groups, whereas participants from rural areas relied heavily on radio and town criers. For instance, “We mostly use WhatsApp groups, Instagram, and Facebook pages created by youth clubs and NGOs” (P1), while another added, “In my village, we mostly hear things from the community radio or town criers” (P2). Similarly, one stakeholder confirmed, “The

communication platforms include community radio stations, WhatsApp groups, and information centres” (P10). This suggests that youth communication in Lower Manya Krobo is hybrid, combining both digital innovation and local community-based dissemination methods.

4.8.2 How accessible are these platforms to different categories of young people (e.g., rural vs. urban)?

Participants consistently highlighted inequalities in access between urban and rural youth. Those in urban areas reported that communication platforms are “very accessible,” thanks to better mobile networks, smartphone availability, and NGO activities. However, rural youth described challenges such as poor network connectivity, limited digital access, and inconsistent programme coverage. One participant observed, “For those of us in urban areas, it’s easier. But some of my friends from Odumase’s outskirts complain about poor network” (P1). Similarly, another commented, “It’s harder for us. We don’t have regular access to internet, and network is bad. Youth in town are better off” (P2).

Stakeholders supported these findings, acknowledging that urban youth benefit more from digital communication, while rural youth depend on traditional channels like radio and information centres. As one explained, “Urban youth generally have better access because mobile network coverage is stronger and smartphones are more common, while rural youth depend on the community radio and outreach programmes” (P9). Another added, “It’s only accessible during broadcast, but they are sometimes repeated on our community radio” (P8). Overall, the data reveal a persistent digital divide in Lower Manya Krobo, limiting equal participation across different youth groups.

4.9 Research Question 2: What are the youth’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?

4.9.1 How would you describe the role of communication in youth development programmes?

All participants acknowledged that communication plays a central role in the success of youth development initiatives. They identified communication as a tool that promotes awareness, engagement, and understanding, enabling young people to participate meaningfully in community activities. For example, one participant stated, “Communication is key. Without it, youth programmes would be empty” (P1), while another observed, “If we don’t hear about a programme, how can we join?” (P2). Others emphasised that communication motivates and sustains youth involvement: “It helps us know where to go, what to do, and who to talk to” (P3).

Several participants also linked communication to programme clarity and inclusivity. One commented, “When things are communicated properly to the youth, it makes it easier for them to navigate their way in the programme” (P7), while another noted, “Effective communication ensures that youth understand development programmes, participate actively, and provide feedback” (P10). Collectively, the data suggest that communication acts as both an informational and participatory process, influencing youth confidence, programme ownership, and sustainability.

4.9.2 Do you believe youth understand and engage with development communication effectively?

Views on youth understanding of development communication were mixed. Some respondents asserted that youth engage effectively, especially those involved in school clubs or NGO activities, while others felt that many young people lack understanding or interest. One participant explained,

“Some youth understand development communication, especially those active in school clubs. But many think it’s boring or too complicated” (P1). Another observed, “Not really. Some youth don’t know that things like radio shows or community plays are meant to help them grow” (P2). These comments suggest that engagement depends on exposure, education, and perceived relevance.

Participants agreed that message format and language strongly influence engagement. Several stressed that communication is more effective when presented in local languages or Pidgin. As one noted, “If it’s not catchy or in Pidgin or our language, we skip” (P3), while a stakeholder added, “Engagement varies because many young people understand when information is communicated in relatable language or through interactive platforms” (P10). This indicates that localisation and simplification of communication materials can enhance comprehension and inclusivity among diverse youth audiences.

4.10 Research Question 3: What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?

4.10.1 What are the main challenges you encounter when using communication to reach young audiences?

Participants identified short attention spans, language barriers, and limited feedback mechanisms as the most significant challenges. Some explained that many youth are distracted or uninterested in long or complex communication formats. For example, one participant noted, “It is very difficult to get their attention since they are mostly busy and restless” (P9), while another said, “Most of the young audience do not pay attention to the information being broadcasted” (P8). These reflections show that communication strategies that fail to engage youth interactivity are easily ignored.

Other participants pointed to inclusivity and feedback issues. “Language barrier and digital divide. Not everyone speaks English well, and not all have smartphones” (P1), said one, while another added, “Leaders don’t listen back. It feels one-sided” (P5). Another participant mentioned, “Mistrust, low youth voice, and poor feedback systems” (P6). The combination of linguistic, technological, and relational barriers suggests that communication must be two-way and context-sensitive to effectively engage youth in development initiatives.

4.10.2 What opportunities exist to strengthen youth participation in communication-driven projects?

Participants emphasised that youth participation can be strengthened through inclusion, co-creation, and training. Several respondents proposed that young people should be involved from the planning stages of communication campaigns and trained as content creators. “If youth could be trained as communication ambassadors, we’d do better” (P2), explained one participant. Another added, “Involve youth from planning to delivery. Also train us in media production and storytelling” (P5). Participants argued that empowering youth with communication skills will encourage ownership and sustainability of initiatives.

Social media was also identified as a key opportunity for enhancing youth involvement. “There’s potential in involving youth directly in planning campaigns. We could also use peer educators to reach those not in school” (P1), suggested one respondent. Another stakeholder agreed, stating, “Train youth in communication skills so they can co-create and co-deliver messages” (P10). These insights indicate that creating youth-centred communication spaces both online and offline can foster engagement, leadership, and confidence among young people.

4.11 Research Question 4: What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?

4.11.1 From your perspective, what communication strategies could better empower youth in Lower Manya Krobo?

Across participants, social media engagement was identified as the most powerful strategy for empowering youth. Respondents explained that young people spend much of their time online, making platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp effective for mobilisation. “Engage youth more on social media because that’s where we focus” (P7), said one participant, while another emphasised, “Most youth are now glued to social media, so that is the best way to get them” (P9). Participants viewed social media as accessible, relatable, and capable of amplifying youth voices beyond the local community.

Participants also proposed language adaptation, storytelling, and skill development as effective empowerment tools. One youth stated, “Mix English with Krobo or Pidgin. Use real faces of youth from our area, not stock images” (P3), while a stakeholder added, “Establish youth resource centres with internet access and provide communication training workshops for youth leaders” (P10). These suggestions demonstrate that empowerment requires more than technology as it also depends on cultural relevance, creativity, and capacity building among youth.

4.11.2 How could community radio, digital media, or participatory theatre be utilised more effectively?

Participants highlighted the enduring influence of community radio but noted that it must evolve to remain interactive and youth-driven. Many suggested creating opportunities for youth-hosted programmes, talk shows, and feedback segments. For example, “Community radio is powerful here, but it needs more interactive sessions” (P1), while another added, “Community radio should

allow us to share our own stories and create youth panels to discuss issues live” (P4). Respondents also recommended linking radio programmes to social media to increase reach and listener participation.

Similarly, participatory theatre and digital media were viewed as effective tools for community education and engagement when made locally relevant. “Participatory theatre can be exciting if it connects to our lifestyle like dramas about apprenticeships or dating life” (P3), one participant said. Another explained, “Community theatre is very effective here... if they come back, people will learn more” (P2). Stakeholders suggested “hosting youth talk shows and using online polls and live sessions for two-way engagement” (P10). Together, these findings underscore that a blended communication approach, combining traditional and digital channels, can enhance youth participation and development outcomes.

4.12 Discussion of Findings

In this section, the findings will be discussed based on the research questions guiding this study namely;

1. What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?
2. What are the youth’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?
3. What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?
4. What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?

4.13 Research Question 1: What development communication channels are accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo?

Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that youth in Lower Manya Krobo access a wide range of communication channels that blend traditional and digital media. Quantitatively, social media (33%), television (32%), and radio (16.5%) emerged as the most used sources of information on community and development issues (Table 7). Similarly, 79.5% of respondents rated communication platforms as “easy to access,” indicating a generally favourable media environment (Table 9). Qualitative data confirmed these patterns, showing that youth rely heavily on WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, while community radio, church announcements, and public address systems remain significant in rural areas. This combination reflects a hybrid communication landscape where modern technology coexists with culturally embedded traditional media. The popularity of social media suggests that young people prefer platforms that are interactive, immediate, and peer-driven.

However, despite the broad availability of communication channels, access remains unequal between rural and urban youth. Participants from urban centres described communication as “very accessible,” while those in rural areas cited “poor network” and “limited internet coverage” as constraints (P1, P2). This finding aligns with Archampong and Mensah (2024) and Kankam and Attuh (2024), who observed that infrastructural disparities and network unreliability continue to limit equitable participation in development communication across Ghana. Within the framework of the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory, this highlights a key challenge while communication tools exist, participation cannot be fully realised without addressing the socio-technical inequalities that affect access. The digital divide, therefore, remains a structural barrier that weakens inclusivity and reduces the reach of participatory initiatives in rural areas.

The accessibility of diverse media platforms in Lower Manya Krobo demonstrates the potential for multi-channel participatory engagement. The prominence of community radio and social media resonates with findings from Tufte and Grauenkaer (2018) and Nyatuame and Abdallah (2022), who identified these platforms as effective vehicles for youth inclusion in development discourse. From a theoretical standpoint, the PDC model underscores that empowerment occurs when communication channels enable dialogue, co-learning, and shared ownership. Thus, while the youth of Lower Manya Krobo have increasing access to various media, the full potential of these platforms can only be realised when they are made interactive, inclusive, and adapted to the linguistic and cultural contexts of all youth both urban and rural.

4.14 Research Question 2: What are the youth’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication?

The study found that youth in Lower Manya Krobo demonstrate strong awareness and positive attitudes towards development communication. Quantitatively, 94.5% of respondents confirmed that they had heard of development communication (Table 10), and 83.5% agreed that it helps communities solve problems collectively (Table 11). Similarly, 95.5% affirmed that youth have a major role to play in communication for development (Table 12). These findings are supported by qualitative responses, where participants described communication as “key” to learning about opportunities, building motivation, and staying engaged (P1, P3). This indicates that youth perceive communication not merely as information dissemination, but as a participatory tool for awareness and empowerment. Such perceptions align with Melkote and Steeves (2015), who assert that communication becomes transformative when it fosters participation, dialogue, and collaboration.

Despite these positive perceptions, the data also revealed variations in understanding. Some youth, especially those active in school or NGO clubs, demonstrated clear comprehension of development communication, while others found it “boring or too complicated” (P1, P2). This variation reflects differences in exposure, education, and how messages are framed. The findings echo Manyozo’s (2012) argument that participatory communication remains most effective when messages are contextualised in local culture and language. The use of Pidgin, Krobo, or other indigenous languages was suggested by several respondents (P3, P7) as a way to make development messages more relatable. According to Freire’s (1970) dialogical approach, which forms part of the PDC framework states that communication should be grounded in people’s lived realities and spoken in languages they understand. Therefore, meaningful participation depends not only on access but also on comprehension and cultural resonance.

Overall, youth attitudes towards development communication in Lower Manya Krobo were predominantly positive, reflecting readiness to participate and collaborate in local initiatives. This mirrors findings from studies by Tufte (2017) and Nduwayezu et al. (2025), which demonstrate that youth who view communication as empowering are more likely to engage in civic action and leadership. Within the PDC perspective, such attitudes are crucial because they form the foundation for collective reflection and action. By understanding communication as a participatory process, youth move from being passive recipients of information to active co-creators of knowledge and change, thereby fulfilling the dialogical ideals of the PDC model.

4.15 Research Question 3: What are the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment?

Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed multiple barriers to effective communication-driven empowerment. Quantitatively, cost (32.5%), language barriers (27.5%), and poor network

(27.5%) were identified as the most critical challenges (Table 14). Qualitative responses further emphasised issues such as short attention spans, lack of inclusivity, and limited feedback channels. For instance, participants noted that “it is very difficult to get their attention since they are mostly busy and restless” (P9) and that “leaders don’t listen back so it feels one-sided” (P5). These findings suggest that barriers are not only technological but also process-related, involving a lack of two-way dialogue and limited participatory mechanisms. Such challenges echo Waisbord’s (2015) critique that participatory communication can often become symbolic when institutional structures constrain genuine engagement.

Conversely, several enablers were identified that can strengthen communication for youth empowerment. Both data sets pointed to youth inclusion, peer education, and communication training as key opportunities. Respondents advocated for direct involvement of young people in planning and implementing communication initiatives, suggesting roles such as “communication ambassadors” or content creators (P2, P5). This aligns with the findings of Nyatuame and Abdallah (2022) and Curious Minds Ghana (2023), who demonstrated that youth-led communication fosters ownership, confidence, and sustained participation. These practices embody PDC’s principles of horizontal communication and co-creation, where knowledge flows reciprocally between youth, facilitators, and institutions.

Additionally, platforms such as social media and community radio were seen as powerful enablers of empowerment when used interactively. The study found that 38.5% of respondents considered social media the best opportunity for promoting youth communication and empowerment, followed by community radio (30.5%) (Table 16). These findings corroborate Tufte and Grauenkaer (2018) and Banda (2022), who argue that participatory media whether digital or local provide spaces for voice, visibility, and collaboration. In the context of PDC, these platforms

exemplify communication as dialogue, where youth are not merely informed but engaged in continuous cycles of reflection and action. Thus, while barriers such as cost, network, and exclusion persist, the evidence indicates that effective empowerment is achievable through inclusive, localised, and interactive communication strategies.

4.16 Research Question 4: What communication framework can be proposed to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo?

Findings from the study collectively point toward a Participatory Multi-Channel Communication Framework that integrates traditional, community-based, and digital platforms to promote inclusive youth empowerment. Quantitative data showed that social media engagement (41.5%) was the most preferred strategy for empowerment, followed by community meetings (23.5%) and radio (17.5%) (Table 19). Qualitative insights reinforced this, with participants emphasising the effectiveness of social media, storytelling, and local languages in reaching and mobilising youth (P3, P7). Community radio was identified as an enduring channel, especially in rural areas, but respondents stressed that it must become more interactive and youth-led, featuring talk shows, debates, and call-in sessions (P1, P4). This triangulation of evidence suggests that empowerment depends on combining multiple communication forms into a participatory system.

The proposed framework also draws on theoretical principles of PDC, which emphasise horizontal communication, co-creation, and mutual learning (Servaes, 2008; Freire, 1970). Within this framework, communication is seen as a process of dialogue and empowerment, where youth act as communicators, facilitators, and decision-makers. Integrating digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook with traditional media like radio and participatory theatre ensures inclusivity across socio-economic and geographical divides. As Tufte (2017) and Melkote and Steeves (2015) assert, sustainable empowerment arises when communities are engaged through

both interpersonal and mediated channels that respect local culture and knowledge systems. The PDC theory thus provides the conceptual scaffolding for a hybrid participatory model suitable for Lower Manya Krobo's diverse communication ecosystem.

Finally, the proposed framework must also address structural and behavioural barriers to ensure genuine participation. This includes improving digital literacy, reducing cost-related access barriers, promoting gender equity in media participation, and institutionalising youth representation in local communication planning. Such measures resonate with Ghana's decentralisation and youth policy frameworks (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2010), which call for inclusive and participatory governance. As the findings demonstrate, when communication is localised, dialogical, and participatory, it becomes a transformative tool for empowerment, not merely an information channel. Therefore, the proposed framework seeks to operationalise the ideals of PDC including dialogue, inclusion, and co-creation to transform youth from passive recipients of information into active agents of social and developmental change in Lower Manya Krobo.

4.17 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study on the use of development communication strategies to empower youth in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. The results revealed that social media, television, and radio are the most accessible and frequently used communication platforms among youth, with the majority describing them as easy to access. Most respondents were aware of development communication and recognised its value in promoting participation and collective problem-solving. Both quantitative and qualitative findings indicated that youth have a positive attitude towards communication as a tool for empowerment, though accessibility and comprehension vary between urban and rural settings. These disparities were

linked to issues such as poor network connectivity, cost of data, and language barriers, which continue to limit equitable participation.

The findings further established that communication contributes significantly to youth engagement, confidence building, and decision-making. However, barriers such as limited feedback, lack of inclusivity, and one-way information flow were found to weaken the participatory process. Opportunities for improvement include training youth as communication ambassadors, promoting peer-led communication, integrating local languages, and combining digital and traditional media such as community radio and social media. Guided by the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory, the study concluded that effective empowerment depends on communication systems that are interactive, inclusive, and co-created. Hence, a participatory multi-channel framework that blends modern digital tools with traditional media is proposed to strengthen youth engagement and sustainable development in Lower Manya Krobo.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the concluding aspects of the study on Enhancing Youth Empowerment through Development Communication Strategies in Lower Manya Krobo Municipality. It summarises the key findings, draws relevant conclusions, outlines the study's limitations, and provides recommendations for practice, policy, and future research. The study sought to explore how communication strategies can be effectively utilised to empower youth, guided by the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) framework, which emphasises dialogue, inclusion, and shared ownership of the communication process. By integrating quantitative and qualitative findings, the chapter provides a comprehensive reflection on how participatory and multi-channel communication can enhance youth engagement and empowerment within the municipality.

5.2 Summary

The study was guided by four main research questions. The first research question sought to identify the development communication channels accessible to the youth in Lower Manya Krobo. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that social media, television, and radio were the most frequently used and accessible communication platforms. About 79.5% of respondents reported that communication platforms were easy to access, while 33% cited social media as their primary source of community or development information. Qualitative data supported these findings, showing that youth in urban areas relied more on digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, whereas rural youth depended on community radio and town criers. These results demonstrate that the municipality operates a hybrid communication environment,

where digital and traditional media coexist and serve as complementary platforms for youth engagement and empowerment.

The second research question examined youth knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding development communication. The findings showed a high level of awareness and positive attitudes among respondents. A vast majority (94.5%) had heard of development communication, and 95.5% believed that youth play a significant role in communication for development. Most participants associated communication with awareness creation, collective problem-solving, and community involvement. However, differences in understanding were noted between youth who were active in civic or educational groups and those who were not, largely due to variations in exposure and literacy levels. The findings further revealed that communication was perceived as more effective when presented in local languages or relatable formats such as storytelling, drama, and radio discussions. This underscores the need for culturally grounded and locally relevant communication strategies to enhance inclusivity and comprehension.

The third research question explored the major barriers and enablers in using development communication for youth empowerment. The results identified cost of access, poor network connectivity, and language barriers as the most significant obstacles. Limited feedback mechanisms, time constraints, and political interference were also found to hinder meaningful youth participation. Nonetheless, the study revealed key enablers such as youth training in communication, peer-led information sharing, and participatory content creation. The analysis showed that when youth are engaged as message co-creators and ambassadors, communication becomes more effective and empowering. These findings align with the PDC framework, which posits that genuine empowerment emerges when communities participate fully in both message design and dissemination.

The fourth research question focused on proposing a communication framework to enhance youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo. Based on the findings, the study proposed a Participatory Multi-Channel Communication Framework, which integrates traditional, community-based, and digital communication platforms. This framework encourages the use of social media, community radio, participatory theatre, and dialogue forums as interlinked channels for youth engagement. It also promotes two-way communication, capacity building, and the use of local languages to strengthen inclusivity. The framework aligns with the participatory ethos of the PDC theory, which emphasises that communication should be “by the people and for the people,” promoting collaboration, collective problem-solving, and shared ownership of development initiatives.

Overall, the findings affirmed that development communication plays a critical role in fostering youth empowerment in the municipality. Youth were found to be not only recipients of information but also potential communicators, organisers, and change agents. The study therefore demonstrated that when communication processes are inclusive, interactive, and youth-led, they have the potential to transform local development dynamics, strengthen civic engagement, and promote sustainable empowerment among young people in Lower Manya Krobo.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that effective youth empowerment in Lower Manya Krobo depends largely on participatory and multi-channel communication strategies that promote inclusion, dialogue, and collective action. The dominance of social media, television, and community radio as information sources indicates a shift toward more interactive and visual platforms that resonate with the youth’s communication preferences. However, disparities in access between rural and urban youth continue to pose challenges to equitable participation. Furthermore, while youth generally possess

positive attitudes toward development communication, their engagement is sometimes constrained by structural barriers such as cost, poor infrastructure, and lack of inclusive language use.

The study further concludes that the Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory provides an effective framework for understanding and improving youth empowerment efforts. The theory's emphasis on dialogue, mutual learning, and co-creation aligns with the needs of the youth population, especially in a context like Lower Manya Krobo, where empowerment must be rooted in both cultural and technological realities. Communication, when grounded in participatory principles, becomes not just a medium of information transfer but a process of transformation that strengthens agency, confidence, and collective identity among youth.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following key recommendations. Firstly, local authorities and development partners should invest in improving the accessibility and affordability of communication platforms, particularly in rural areas. Expanding mobile network coverage, reducing internet costs, and supporting community radio initiatives will ensure that all youth have equal access to development information. Additionally, information should be communicated in local languages such as Krobo and Pidgin English to enhance understanding and participation across literacy levels.

Secondly, youth participation in development communication should be institutionalised and capacity-driven. The Municipal Assembly, NGOs, and media organisations should provide training for young people in communication, digital literacy, and media production. Creating youth ambassador programmes and community media clubs will empower young people to co-create messages, lead campaigns, and sustain engagement beyond project cycles. Such capacity-building

initiatives align with the PDC framework's focus on co-learning and ownership of the communication process.

Finally, a participatory multi-channel communication framework should be adopted to guide future youth engagement initiatives. This framework should combine traditional channels such as community radio and theatre-for-development with modern digital tools like WhatsApp, Facebook, and podcasts. Encouraging cross-platform integration and continuous feedback mechanisms will ensure that communication remains inclusive, dynamic, and responsive to the needs of all youth. Policymakers and practitioners should also consider embedding participatory communication principles within local governance and national youth policies to ensure that empowerment through communication becomes sustainable and systemic.

5.5 Study Limitations

The study encountered several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research was conducted within a single municipality namely the Lower Manya Krobo and therefore, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of youth in other districts or regions of Ghana.

Secondly, while the study employed a mixed methods approach, resource and time constraints limited the number of qualitative participants, which may have restricted the diversity of perspectives captured.

Thirdly, some respondents showed limited understanding of the term “development communication,” which required further clarification during data collection and could have influenced responses. Finally, the study relied primarily on self-reported data, which may have been affected by social desirability bias, particularly when discussing issues of participation and empowerment.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a synthesis of the study's findings, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations. It reaffirmed that development communication serves as a vital tool for empowering youth in Lower Manya Krobo, especially when guided by participatory and inclusive approaches. The findings demonstrated that while youth exhibit high awareness and positive attitudes toward communication, structural barriers such as cost, network limitations, and language diversity hinder equal participation. The chapter concluded that implementing a participatory multi-channel communication framework that integrates both digital and traditional media can significantly strengthen youth engagement, enhance local ownership, and promote sustainable development outcomes. Guided by the PDC theory, the study ultimately underscores that true empowerment occurs when communication becomes a process of dialogue, collaboration, and shared transformation among all stakeholders.

REFERENCES

- Abah, O. S. (2006). *Performing life: Case studies in the practice of theatre for development*. Kraft Books.
- Adzahlie-Mensah, V. (2020). Youth marginalisation and local governance in Ghana: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 12(2), 45–58.
- Anani-Bossman, A., & Blankson, C. (2023). Community media and youth participation in Ghana: Exploring dialogic engagement. *African Communication Research*, 16(1), 90–109.
- Archampong, E., & Mensah, M. (2024). Digital citizenship and youth empowerment in Ghana: The role of ICT skills and media literacy. *Information Technology for Development*, 30(2), 155–173.
- Ayee, J. R. A. (2003). *Decentralisation and local governance in Ghana*. University of Ghana Press.
- Babbie, E. (2020). *The practice of social research* (15th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Banda, F. (2022). *Participatory communication for social change in Africa*. Routledge.
- BERA. (2018). *Ethical guidelines for educational research* (4th ed.). British Educational Research Association.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Carpentier, N. (2011). *Media and participation: A site of ideological-democratic struggle*. Intellect Books.
- Castells, M. (2011). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Cheeseman, N., & Klaas, B. (2018). *How to rig an election*. Yale University Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Cornwall, A., & Edwards, J. (2010). *Introduction: Negotiating empowerment*. Zed Books.

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Curious Minds Ghana. (2023). *Annual report 2023*. Curious Minds.
- Dagron, A. G. (2009). *Making waves: Stories of participatory communication for social change*. Rockefeller Foundation.
- Debrah, E. (2022). Youth participation and decentralised governance in Ghana: Institutional gaps and communication barriers. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies*, 19(3), 101–119.
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Transaction Publishers.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2021). *2021 Population and Housing Census Report*. GSS.
- Gaventa, J. (2006). Finding the spaces for change: A power analysis. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(6), 23–33.
- Hart, C. (2018). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the research imagination* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Jenkins, H., Ito, M., & boyd, d. (2016). *Participatory culture in a networked era*. Polity Press.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), 112–133.
- Kankam, G., & Attuh, B. (2024). Community radio and youth engagement in Ghana: Barriers and pathways. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 16(2), 210–229.
- Kaur, R., & Prajapati, A. (2025). Peer-led storytelling and youth communication competencies in India. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 35(1), 76–92.

- Kinyanjui, M. (2023). *Youth, media, and participation in Africa: Communication for development perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kothari, C. R. (2011). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Age International.
- Korber, L. (2021). Digital empowerment and civic engagement among Ghanaian youth. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 13(3), 329–347.
- Kouakou, K. (2021). Digital media use and youth empowerment in Côte d’Ivoire. *African Communication Research*, 14(2), 112–131.
- Kumi, E., Yeboah, T., & Edudzie, E. (2025). Social media activism and youth civic engagement in Ghana. *Information, Communication & Society*, 28(1), 1–18.
- Kumar, R. (2019). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Lambon-Quayefio, M. P., Abebrese, J., & Opoku, D. (2023). Assessing youth employment programmes in Ghana. *African Development Review*, 35(1), 97–112.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Livingstone, S., & Helsper, E. (2010). Balancing opportunities and risks in teenagers’ use of the internet. *New Media & Society*, 12(2), 309–329.
- Loader, B. D., Vromen, A., & Xenos, M. A. (2014). *The networked young citizen: Social media, political participation and civic engagement*. Routledge.
- Manyozo, L. (2012). *Media, communication and development: Three approaches*. Sage.
- McCall, E. (2011). *Communication for development: Theory and practice for empowerment and social justice*. Kumarian Press.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail’s mass communication theory* (6th ed.). Sage.
- Melkote, S. R., & Steeves, H. L. (2015). *Communication for development: Theory and practice for empowerment and social justice* (3rd ed.). Sage.

- Ministry of Youth and Sports. (2010). National Youth Policy of Ghana. Government of Ghana.
- Mefalopulos, P. (2008). Development communication sourcebook: Broadening the boundaries of communication. World Bank.
- Nduwayezu, J., Uwineza, A., & Ngoga, S. (2025). Youth participation through participatory radio in Rwanda. *Communication and Development Review*, 7(1), 45–61.
- Nyatuame, M., & Abdallah, I. (2022). Theatre for development and youth empowerment in Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Communication*, 10(2), 55–74.
- OECD. (2019). Bridging the digital gender divide: Include, upskill, innovate. OECD Publishing.
- Owusu, M., & Sam, J. (2021). Participatory governance and communication in Ghana's local government system. *African Journal of Public Administration*, 8(4), 78–93.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Plano Clark, V. L., & Ivankova, N. V. (2016). *Mixed methods research: A guide to the field*. Sage.
- Quebral, N. C. (2006). Development communication in the agricultural context. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 16(1), 100–107.
- Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). Free Press.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Servaes, J. (2008). *Communication for development and social change*. Sage.
- Servaes, J., & Malikhao, P. (2010). Advocacy strategies for health communication. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 5(1), 1–14.
- Singleton, A., Parlane, S., & Patrick, R. (2009). Youth, technology, and civic participation in Australia. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12(6), 617–631.
- Somian, A. (2020). Youth participation in communication for local development in Eastern Ghana. *African Journal of Communication*, 8(1), 44–63.

- Tagoe, M. A., & Oheneba-Sakyi, Y. (2015). Promoting civic participation through youth radio in Ghana. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 7(3), 289–307.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage.
- Tufte, T. (2017). *Communication and social change: A citizen perspective*. Polity Press.
- Tufte, T., & Grauenkaer, N. (2018). Participatory communication and youth agency in Africa. *Nordic Journal of Media Studies*, 2(1), 25–46.
- Tufte, T., & Mefalopulos, P. (2009). *Participatory communication: A practical guide*. World Bank.
- UN DESA. (2020). *World Youth Report: Social policies and youth participation*. United Nations.
- UNESCO. (2018). *Youth and civic engagement through communication and information*. UNESCO Publishing.
- UNICEF. (2023). *U-Report Global Annual Summary Report 2023*. UNICEF.
- van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford University Press.
- Waisbord, S. (2015). *Communication: A post-discipline*. Polity Press.
- White, S. (2004). *Participatory video: Images that transform and empower*. Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.)*. Sage.

APPENDICES

Structured Questionnaire for Youth Respondents

Section A: Demographic Information

- Age - 18–25, 26–35, 36–45, 46–55, 56+
- Sex – Male, Female, Prefer not to say
- Education level - Senior High, Diploma/Professional, Undergraduate, Postgraduate.
- Occupation - Politician/Party Official, Civil Servant, Journalist/Media Practitioner, Academic/Researcher, Ordinary Citizen
- Marital status – Single / Married
- Community - (urban/rural)

Section B: Existing Development Communication Channels

1. Which of the following media platforms do you frequently use for information on community or development issues?
 Radio TV Social Media Community Meetings Theatre Newspapers
Others (specify)
2. How often do you access information from these sources?
 Daily Weekly Monthly Rarely
3. Rate the accessibility of these communication platforms to youth in your community.
(1 = Very difficult, 5 = Very easy)

Section C: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceptions

1. Have you heard of “development communication”?
 Yes No Not sure
2. Development communication helps communities solve problems collectively.
(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)
3. Youth have a major role to play in communication for development.
(Likert scale 1–5)
4. How would you describe your overall attitude towards using communication for community development?
 Very positive Positive Neutral Negative Very negative

Section D: Barriers and Opportunities

1. What challenges do you face in accessing communication platforms?
 Poor network Cost Language barriers Lack of information Other (specify)
2. What prevents youth from participating in community communication activities?
 Lack of time Lack of confidence Political interference Gender restrictions
Other (specify)
3. Which of the following opportunities best promote youth communication and empowerment?
 Social media Community radio Youth clubs Drama/theatre Educational campaigns

Section E: Empowerment Outcomes and Framework Suggestions

1. How much do you agree that communication has improved your participation in decision-making?
2. In what ways has access to communication platforms changed your life?
 Increased confidence Better civic participation Improved knowledge Business opportunities None
3. What communication strategies should be prioritised to empower youth in your community?

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Key Informants

The semi-structured interview guide was designed to gather qualitative data from key informants such as community leaders, NGO workers, communication officers, and assembly officials.

Theme 1: Communication Infrastructure and Access

- What are the main communication platforms used in your municipality to engage youth?
- How accessible are these platforms to different categories of young people (e.g., rural vs. urban)?

Theme 2: Knowledge and Perception of Development Communication

- How would you describe the role of communication in youth development programmes?
- Do you believe youth understand and engage with development communication effectively?

Theme 3: Barriers and Opportunities

- What are the main challenges you encounter when using communication to reach young audiences?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen youth participation in communication-driven projects?

Theme 4: Framework and Future Strategies

- From your perspective, what communication strategies could better empower youth in Lower Manya Krobo?
- How could community radio, digital media, or participatory theatre be utilised more effectively?