



**THE USE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES'
EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: A CASE OF
INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

BY

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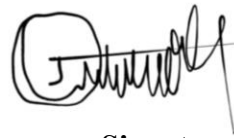
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I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have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

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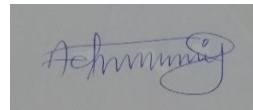
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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the preparation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication UniMAC-IJ.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all those who inspired, guided, and supported me throughout this academic journey. To my family, whose unwavering love and encouragement kept me strong and to my friends who stood by me with motivation and understanding, I owe immense gratitude. Above all, I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for granting me the strength, wisdom, and perseverance to see this work to completion.

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ABSTRACT

Although traditional media continues to play a role in government agencies' effective development communication across many developing countries, there remains a significant gap in empirical studies on how these tools are utilized by state agencies within Ghana's contemporary development context. This study examines the use of traditional media in effectively disseminating development communication by the Information Services Department's (ISD) to rural and peri-urban communities focusing on the effectiveness of the tools employed, operational challenges, and audience perceptions. Guided by Development Communication Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the study adopts a qualitative case study design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants selected from ISD officials, traditional media practitioners, and community members. Thematic analysis was employed to discuss communication strategies, message relevance, and audience feedback processes. Findings revealed that traditional media platforms—such as mobile cinema vans, community durbars, and public address systems—remain culturally relevant and accessible, particularly in areas with limited digital penetration. However, their effectiveness is undermined by logistical constraints, inadequate funding, and limited opportunities for audience participation. Community members expressed a preference for interactive and localized content, while ISD practitioners acknowledged the need for improved feedback mechanisms and capacity development. The study provides insights into how traditional media can be revitalized to meet the evolving demands of public communication in Ghana. By addressing institutional and operational weaknesses, state communicators can strengthen audience engagement and improve policy uptake. The study contributes to the growing literature on development communication by foregrounding the nuanced roles and challenges of traditional media in an increasingly digital age.

Keywords: Development Communication , Traditional Media , Information Services Department (ISD), Audience Engagement, Media Strategy, Public Information Dissemination

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Government development communication has long been acknowledged as a critical driver of national development, social transformation, and citizen empowerment. Through deliberate, targeted, and inclusive messaging, governments can influence public attitudes, modify behaviors, and foster civic engagement (Servaes, 2008; McQuail, 2010). In contexts where political trust and social cohesion are essential, communication becomes an instrument for state legitimacy and policy success. Development communication, as conceptualized by scholars like Melkote and Steeves (2001), transcends mere information dissemination—it actively involves dialogue and participation aimed at advancing societal well-being. In the Ghanaian context, the government uses various communication mechanisms to inform citizens about developmental programmes, enhance accountability, and promote behavioural change across sectors including health, sanitation, education, and agriculture (Nyamnjoh, 2005).

The Information Services Department (ISD), under Ghana’s Ministry of Information, stands out as a pioneering institution in this regard. Since the colonial and post-independence eras, the ISD has employed traditional media tools such as mobile cinema vans, community durbars, town criers, public address systems, and printed handbills to reach citizens with essential information (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). These tools have proven especially effective in rural and peri-urban areas where literacy levels may be low, and access to digital platforms remains limited. According to Obeng-Quaidoo (1985), mobile information vans and face-to-face

community engagement have historically been central to development communication in Ghana, promoting a form of communication that is both contextual and culturally relevant.

However, the digital revolution has altered the communication landscape, especially in urban and semi-urban areas, where citizens increasingly rely on radio, television, internet, and social media platforms for news and civic information (Kwansah-Aidoo, 2019; Amoah & Addo, 2022). Despite this shift, a significant proportion of Ghana's population—particularly those in the hinterlands—remains digitally excluded due to infrastructure gaps, low digital literacy, and poverty (World Bank, 2020). For these communities, traditional media remains the most accessible and trusted channel of communication. The ISD continues to leverage this reality by deploying traditional platforms to promote government policies and national programmes. Nonetheless, questions arise as to how effective these platforms are in a media environment that is increasingly interactive and citizen-driven.

More critically, there is limited empirical research examining the strategic planning, reach, and impact of ISD's traditional media tools in the contemporary era. Existing literature often focuses on communication theory, new media, or participatory development but pays insufficient attention to how traditional media still function as agents of state communication in developing countries (Servaes & Malikhao, 2007; Manyozo, 2012). This gap suggests that the role and relevance of conventional platforms—especially those used by institutions like the ISD—must be reassessed within today's media ecosystem. Understanding their continued value or shortcomings is essential for retooling government communication to be more inclusive, efficient, and participatory.

Given this background, the current study seeks to assess the role of traditional media in Ghana's government development communication, using the Information Services Department as a case study. The research aims to explore the types of media deployed, evaluate their effectiveness in

policy communication, and examine how audiences perceive and respond to such efforts. By doing so, the study contributes to both academic and policy discourses on how government communication can be optimized in environments where digital and traditional platforms coexist. It also aims to inform recommendations for enhancing the ISD's operations in alignment with best practices in development communication.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Traditional media continues to play a crucial role in government communication strategies within Ghana, especially in rural and underserved communities. Even in an era marked by technological advancement and the rise of digital platforms, the Information Services Department (ISD) consistently utilizes conventional methods such as community durbars, mobile cinema vans, posters, and public address systems to reach citizens. These tools are vital in areas where internet penetration is low and where literacy barriers impede access to print or digital content (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Kwansah-Aidoo, 2019). For decades, traditional media have served as reliable conduits for disseminating public health messages, national policies, and civic education in ways that resonate with the cultural norms and communication habits of local populations (Obeng-Quaidoo, 1985).

Nevertheless, the influence of these traditional media tools appears to be waning in contemporary Ghanaian society. Factors such as the use of outdated communication equipment, erratic maintenance schedules, and inadequate operational funding are constraining the effectiveness of the ISD's traditional approaches (Manyozo, 2012). In addition, younger and more urbanized segments of the population increasingly prefer interactive digital platforms over one-directional

communication formats, which affects audience engagement and message penetration. These emerging realities pose critical questions about the current state of ISD's communication infrastructure and whether it aligns with the evolving needs of Ghana's increasingly media-savvy population (World Bank, 2020; Amoah & Addo, 2022).

Moreover, the paradigm of government communication is shifting globally from a unidirectional, top-down model to more participatory and dialogic frameworks. Scholars like Servaes and Malikhao (2007) argue that effective development communication should incorporate mechanisms for feedback, dialogue, and community involvement to foster ownership and sustainability. Unfortunately, ISD's communication practices are often entrenched in a broadcast mentality that privileges state authority over citizen interaction. This limits the potential of traditional media platforms to serve as participatory tools for development communication and undermines their capacity to build trust between the government and the public (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

Concerns over public responsiveness further underscore the need to evaluate the ISD's communication strategies. If citizens do not find the communication methods credible, engaging, or relevant to their daily lives, the government's ability to influence behavior and mobilize support for development initiatives becomes severely compromised (McQuail, 2010). Without empirical data on audience reception, message comprehension, and impact, policymakers risk deploying communication models that are ineffective or disconnected from target communities. The lack of systematic evaluation also hinders the improvement of existing practices and the innovation of more inclusive communication approaches (Manyozo, 2012; Kwansah-Aidoo, 2019).

To address these concerns, this study seeks to investigate how traditional media platforms are currently deployed by the ISD in Ghana, and to what extent they are achieving their intended

development communication goals. By examining the tools, strategies, and audience experiences associated with traditional media, the study aims to provide an evidence-based understanding of their relevance and effectiveness. The research also intends to generate practical recommendations for enhancing the ISD's communication capacity, with the broader objective of strengthening government-citizen relations and improving policy outcomes through inclusive and responsive communication (Servaes, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2005).

1.2 Research Questions

- i. What traditional media channels are employed by the Information Services Department in government development communication?
- ii. How effective are these traditional media channels in influencing public understanding and engagement with government policies?
- iii. What are the major strengths and limitations of traditional media strategies employed by the ISD?
- iv. How do different audiences, particularly those in rural and peri-urban areas, perceive and respond to ISD's traditional media messages?

1.3 Research Objectives

This study has two-fold objectives namely broad and specific. Broadly speaking, it assesses the effectiveness and continued relevance of traditional media as used by government agencies such as the Information Services Department in effectively disseminating development communication. However, specifically, it sought to:

1. Identify the traditional media tools and strategies utilized by the ISD in communicating development messages.
 - i. Evaluate the effectiveness of these tools in enhancing public awareness, understanding, and behavioural change.
 - ii. Examine the operational challenges and limitations associated with the use of traditional media by the ISD.
 - iii. Investigate public perceptions and responses to development messages delivered through traditional media platforms.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Geographically, this study is confined to selected districts within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana where the Information Services Department (ISD) maintains active communication operations using traditional media tools. The region, being a mix of urban, peri-urban, and rural communities, offers a diverse context for evaluating the reach and effectiveness of traditional media in government communication. Districts will be purposively selected based on the presence of functioning ISD units and the frequency of traditional media deployments. This will allow for a focused but meaningful exploration of how these conventional communication strategies are implemented in different socio-demographic environments. The decision to limit the study to Greater Accra is informed by logistical considerations and the need to observe both urban and semi-rural responses to traditional communication methods within a defined governmental structure (GSS, 2021).

Thematically, the research is centered on assessing the use and effectiveness of traditional communication tools—namely mobile cinema vans, community durbars, town announcements,

posters, and public address systems—utilized by the ISD to disseminate government development information. The time frame for this study spans from 2020 to 2024, capturing recent developments and adjustments in communication practices, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent government response efforts. The study focuses on three key stakeholder groups: ISD personnel responsible for content creation and dissemination, local government officials involved in community outreach, and community members who are the intended recipients of these messages. Digital or online communication strategies are deliberately excluded to ensure a concentrated analysis of conventional media platforms, which are still widely used in areas with limited internet access and among populations with lower digital literacy (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Manyozo, 2012).

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study is justified on several grounds, particularly in its contribution to the evolving discourse on development communication. In an era dominated by digital transformation, there remains a scholarly gap concerning the relevance and continued utility of traditional media, especially in regions with limited digital access. Much of the academic focus has shifted toward the proliferation of social media, mobile platforms, and internet-based communication tools (Servaes, 2008; Manyozo, 2012). However, in Ghana and other developing countries, traditional media remains a primary vehicle for communicating state policies and developmental messages to underserved and marginalized communities (Banda, 2006; Tufte, 2017). This study seeks to illuminate how traditional media continues to function as a cornerstone of government outreach, thereby enriching the literature with context-specific insights on media pluralism and communication equity.

Moreover, the study provides empirical data on the operational strategies, strengths, and limitations of the Information Services Department (ISD) in executing its mandate. By assessing the effectiveness of ISD's communication activities, the study offers evidence-based insights that can inform policy decisions and strategic planning. It also addresses the broader concern of communication inclusivity in the face of a persistent digital divide, responding to calls for research that centers the information needs of rural and peri-urban populations (Adu-Gyamfi & Bossman, 2022; Obeng-Quaidoo, 2007). The findings are expected to be of practical relevance to policymakers, government communicators, and development practitioners seeking to recalibrate their approaches for maximum impact. Furthermore, the study has capacity-building implications for the ISD, particularly in enhancing audience segmentation, message tailoring, and the integration of effective feedback mechanisms into its communication cycle.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research topic, outlines the problem statement, and sets forth the research questions, objectives, scope, and significance. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature, providing a theoretical foundation for the study. Chapter Three details the research methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques. Chapter Four presents the findings and discusses their implications. Chapter Five concludes the study with a summary of key insights, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Chapter Three presents the theoretical and conceptual framework that underpins this study. It also outlines the empirical literature, basic assumptions, and definitions of key terms and concepts. This chapter is designed to provide a robust academic foundation for understanding how traditional media contributes to government development communication, particularly through the operations of Ghana's Information Services Department (ISD). The theoretical perspectives and conceptual mappings serve as analytical lenses for examining the dynamics of media deployment, message reception, and policy communication in the Ghanaian context.

2.1 Theoretical Foundation (Two Theories)

Two primary theories inform this study: the Development Communication Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). Each of these theories brings unique insights into understanding the dynamics of traditional media use by the Information Services Department (ISD) in government development communication in Ghana.

2.1.1 Development Communication Theory

Development Communication Theory emerged in the post-World War II era as a response to the growing need for communication strategies that could support development in newly independent countries (Servaes, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). The theory postulates that communication is not merely a tool for information dissemination but a pivotal mechanism in achieving societal

transformation, national integration, and economic progress. It supports the use of traditional and mass media to promote education, political awareness, health campaigns, and mobilization for development projects. In this view, media becomes a partner in the development process, not just a conveyor of messages.

The theory is rooted in participatory communication principles, which stress that for development communication to be effective, the channels and messages must resonate with the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the target communities (Manyozo, 2012). Traditional media, such as those employed by the ISD—including mobile cinema vans, community durbars, and oral narratives—are ideal within this framework. These tools are often embedded in local customs and are accessible to populations that may be excluded by digital media platforms. This makes them suitable vehicles for fostering local participation in national development.

Development Communication Theory also addresses power relations in communication by encouraging bottom-up communication approaches that empower communities to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006). This aspect is particularly relevant for ISD operations, as the department is mandated to facilitate a two-way communication process between government and citizens. By doing so, the ISD helps promote accountability and transparency, which are essential for sustainable development.

In the context of this study, Development Communication Theory provides a lens to critically assess how ISD utilizes traditional media to bridge communication gaps in marginalized communities. It helps evaluate the extent to which these communication tools enable citizens to participate in the national dialogue and development agenda. Therefore, the theory not only justifies the continued relevance of traditional media but also frames the ISD's work as central to development facilitation in Ghana.

2.1.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

The Uses and Gratifications Theory was developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) to examine how and why individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy particular needs. Unlike earlier media theories that portrayed audiences as passive recipients of messages, UGT conceptualizes audiences as active agents who make media choices based on their psychological and social motivations. These needs may include seeking information, building personal identity, engaging in social interaction, or simply for entertainment purposes (McQuail, 2010).

One of the core assumptions of UGT is that different media serve different purposes for different individuals. In applying this theory to the ISD's use of traditional media, the study considers how citizens interpret and engage with communication outputs such as announcements via public address systems or community durbars. These traditional forms of media may be preferred by some populations due to factors like language familiarity, accessibility, and trustworthiness—needs that digital media may not fulfill, particularly in rural and peri-urban contexts (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005).

UGT is particularly useful in identifying the effectiveness of ISD's communication strategy from the audience's perspective. It emphasizes that message reception is not determined solely by the content or channel but by how well the media aligns with the audience's expectations and preferences. If the ISD's traditional media channels resonate with the public's informational or social integration needs, then those channels are more likely to be effective in fostering understanding and behavioral change.

Moreover, this theory encourages the incorporation of feedback mechanisms, as it acknowledges that media audiences evaluate their media experiences and make choices accordingly. This insight

can help ISD improve its communication approaches by tailoring messages and formats that align with the actual needs of its audiences. UGT thus adds a user-centric dimension to the analysis, complementing the top-down perspective of Development Communication Theory with a bottom-up, audience-focused view.

2.2 Relevance of Theory to the Study

The integration of Development Communication Theory into this study is instrumental in understanding the function of government communication within broader developmental paradigms. It situates ISD's media practices within a conceptual framework that views communication as an engine for national transformation. The use of mobile vans, community durbars, and public address systems by ISD reflects a strategic deployment of media tools aimed at narrowing the information divide between government and citizens (Banda, 2006). These tools are not just channels for information dissemination; they are platforms for citizen engagement, awareness-raising, and participatory dialogue—core tenets of development communication.

Furthermore, Development Communication Theory emphasizes inclusivity and cultural appropriateness in communication processes (Tufté, 2017). In Ghana, where literacy rates and digital access vary widely, ISD's reliance on oral and visual modes of traditional media helps ensure that marginalized populations are not excluded from vital national conversations. This theoretical lens allows the study to interrogate how well ISD's strategies align with participatory communication models that empower communities to not only receive information but also respond and contribute to development policy discourse (Manyozo, 2012).

The theory also provides a means to assess the effectiveness of ISD's communication through the lens of social change. Development communication is not simply about transferring knowledge; it is about enabling behavioral change, fostering civic responsibility, and promoting collective action. By anchoring the study in this theory, the research evaluates ISD's traditional media efforts against development outcomes such as community mobilization, policy awareness, and public participation. In doing so, the theory serves as both a diagnostic and evaluative tool.

On the other hand, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) introduces a crucial audience-centered perspective that complements the strategic outlook of development communication. While ISD may design its media outputs with developmental goals in mind, the actual effectiveness of these outputs depends significantly on how the public engages with them. UGT posits that media consumption is driven by specific needs—informational, emotional, or social (McQuail, 2010). This theory allows the study to examine whether ISD's traditional media strategies resonate with the diverse motivations of its target audiences, particularly in under-resourced communities where media access is limited.

2.3 Basic Assumptions

This study is grounded in the fundamental belief that communication plays a critical role in the processes of national development and effective governance. It assumes that no meaningful progress can be made in areas such as health, education, infrastructure, and civic engagement without an intentional and well-structured communication strategy (Servaes, 2008). In line with this assumption, the research acknowledges communication not merely as an auxiliary activity but as a central pillar in mobilizing support for policy initiatives, fostering dialogue between citizens

and the state, and promoting democratic accountability. This belief underscores the strategic relevance of development communication theory in framing government communication practices, especially those facilitated by the Information Services Department (ISD).

The second assumption guiding this study is the continued relevance of traditional media in the contemporary communication ecosystem. Despite the rapid expansion of digital platforms and mobile technologies, traditional media formats such as community durbars, mobile cinema vans, town criers, and public announcements remain influential in many parts of Ghana, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Obeng-Quaidoo, 2007). These forms of communication are often more culturally embedded, linguistically accessible, and physically reachable for populations with limited access to modern ICTs. The study, therefore, presumes that traditional media are not obsolete but remain vital instruments for policy communication, civic education, and behavioral change among marginalized groups.

A final core assumption of this research is that both institutions and audiences play active roles in the communication process. It presumes that the ISD possesses not only the legal mandate but also the institutional structure and technical capacity to shape public discourse and foster policy awareness through strategic media engagement. At the same time, it aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory by assuming that citizens are not passive consumers of government messages but active participants who evaluate, interpret, and respond to information based on their individual and social contexts (McQuail, 2010). This dual assumption—of institutional competence and audience agency—provides a balanced foundation for analyzing the effectiveness and responsiveness of ISD's traditional media strategies.

2.4 Review of Related and Relevant Empirical Literature

Banda (2006), in his study titled *"Media Pluralism and Democracy in Southern Africa,"* explored how various forms of media, particularly traditional media, continue to play critical roles in participatory development and governance. Employing a qualitative methodology, Banda conducted in-depth case studies across four Southern African countries, using purposive sampling to select key informants from media houses, civil society organizations, and local government offices. The study found that traditional media channels such as community meetings, town criers, and rural radio stations were central to fostering public engagement, especially in areas with limited access to modern communication infrastructure. However, the study's major limitation was its regional scope, which did not allow for a more granular national-level analysis. Nonetheless, its insights are relevant to Ghana's context, where traditional media still hold significant influence, particularly in rural communication strategies implemented by the ISD.

Tufte (2017) conducted a study titled *"Communication and Social Change: A Citizen Perspective"* that examined how participatory models of communication function in rural development contexts. The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative focus group discussions with quantitative surveys in Latin America and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. With a sample size of 250 participants selected through stratified random sampling, the research emphasized that traditional communication tools—such as storytelling, songs, and community theatre—enhanced citizen engagement and ownership of development initiatives. One key finding was that participatory communication led to better retention and internalization of development messages. However, Tufte noted that limited institutional support and funding often constrained the scalability of these approaches. The study's emphasis on culturally embedded communication channels reinforces the ISD's use of mobile cinema vans and durbars as part of Ghana's national communication strategy.

Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005), in a study titled *"Indigenous Communication in Africa: A Conceptual Framework,"* provided an in-depth examination of traditional communication systems in Ghana. Using qualitative ethnographic research methods, the study observed and analyzed communication practices in five rural communities, selecting participants through purposive sampling with a total sample size of 30. The research revealed that practices such as communal storytelling, traditional leadership announcements, and cultural performances are not only forms of entertainment but also crucial for transmitting public information and development messages. The study concluded that these methods are effective in contexts where literacy levels are low, and digital access is limited. A key limitation, however, was that the study did not quantitatively measure the reach or impact of these communication methods, thereby calling for future studies that assess the efficacy of traditional communication in achieving specific policy goals.

Obeng-Quaidoo (2007) followed up with a complementary study titled *"The Role of Traditional Media in Contemporary Ghanaian Society,"* in which he evaluated the use of indigenous media by state institutions. Employing a case study methodology, the research focused on the use of traditional media in three regions of Ghana, targeting district information officers and community leaders as the primary sample group. A total of 20 participants were selected using purposive sampling. The study found that government agencies, particularly the ISD, continued to rely heavily on durbars, information vans, and public announcements to disseminate policy messages and health education. However, Obeng-Quaidoo identified a critical limitation in the absence of systematic feedback mechanisms, which often led to a one-way flow of information. The findings underscore the need for integrating audience feedback into the ISD's communication strategy to enhance its effectiveness.

Adu-Gyamfi and Bossman (2022), in their recent study titled "*Digital Divide and Communication Inequality in Ghana's Development Agenda*," explored how disparities in access to digital technologies impact communication inclusivity. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, using structured questionnaires administered to 300 respondents across urban, peri-urban, and rural settings. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure regional representation. The findings revealed that while urban populations had greater access to digital platforms, rural communities still relied on traditional media channels for information on governance, health, and education. The study concluded that although digital media holds potential, traditional media remains indispensable for equitable communication. However, the authors acknowledged a limitation in that the survey did not explore the effectiveness of each media type in detail, suggesting the need for targeted evaluations of specific communication interventions, such as those executed by the ISD.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in the interaction between communication channels, message content, and audience reception. It posits that the effectiveness of the Information Services Department's (ISD) communication efforts depends on the interplay between these three variables. Traditional media serves as the vehicle through which messages—particularly those concerning government development policies—are conveyed to the public. The audience's reception, which includes their level of understanding, emotional reaction, and behavioral response, completes the communication cycle. This tripartite relationship provides a structural basis for evaluating the ISD's strategies.

The framework draws from the understanding that communication is a dynamic, cyclical process where success is not only defined by the sender's clarity but also by how the message is decoded and acted upon by the audience. Melkote and Steeves (2001) and McAnany (2012) argue that effective development communication hinges on contextually relevant media channels, carefully designed message content, and audience-centric reception strategies. This interplay creates a functional model for examining how ISD deploys traditional media to disseminate policies and how this influences public participation in Ghana's development agenda.

2.5.1 Communication Channels (Traditional Media)

Traditional media comprises indigenous, community-based forms of communication such as town criers, community announcers, mobile cinema vans, and local durbars. These channels are critical in communities where modern communication infrastructures may be inadequate or unfamiliar. They serve as culturally grounded tools that resonate with local traditions and values, facilitating easier message penetration. Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005) underscores the continued relevance of these platforms in rural communication, emphasizing that their oral and participatory nature enhances interpersonal trust and collective understanding.

Furthermore, traditional media allows for face-to-face engagement, which helps clarify misconceptions and builds communal consensus around developmental issues. Obeng-Quaidoo (2007) notes that such channels are especially valuable in multilingual, multi-ethnic societies like Ghana, where standardized messaging often fails to reach or resonate with marginalized populations. Their accessibility and affordability make them indispensable in government communication strategies, especially for agencies like ISD whose mandate includes reaching every Ghanaian, regardless of geographic or economic barriers.

2.5.2 Message Content (Government Development Policies)

At the heart of the ISD's work is the dissemination of government development policies and programs. These messages must be accurate, timely, and tailored to the informational needs of different population segments. Servaes (2008) emphasizes that message effectiveness increases when content is locally contextualized, making it easier for citizens to relate and respond. Whether it's a health directive, educational initiative, or civic engagement campaign, the clarity and relevance of the content are essential to achieving desired behavioral outcomes.

The quality of message content also determines the level of trust between government and citizens. When messages appear detached from local realities or are conveyed in overly bureaucratic language, they risk alienating the very populations they intend to serve. The ISD's capacity to translate complex policy information into accessible language and culturally appropriate formats is critical. This content dimension of the framework ensures that messages do not merely inform but also empower and mobilize citizens for action.

2.5.3 Audience Reception (Engagement and Feedback)

Audience reception refers to how individuals or communities process and react to messages delivered through traditional media. This includes their interpretation, emotional response, retention, and willingness to act upon the information. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) emphasizes that audiences are not passive consumers but active agents who choose media based on their needs and preferences (McQuail, 2010). In this framework, effective communication is assessed not just by message reach, but also by the depth of engagement it fosters.

Feedback mechanisms are vital components of audience reception. Tufte (2017) advocates for participatory communication models that allow for a two-way exchange between the message

sender and recipient. For the ISD, integrating community feedback through public forums or durbars not only validates the audience's voice but also enables refinement of future messages. This participatory loop enhances the legitimacy of communication efforts and fosters greater trust in public institutions, especially when citizens feel heard and involved.

2.5.4 Strategic Media Deployment

Strategic deployment refers to the deliberate alignment of specific communication tools with targeted objectives and audiences. It involves selecting the most appropriate traditional media platform based on audience characteristics such as literacy level, cultural orientation, and location. McAnany (2012) explains that successful development communication involves media planning that prioritizes the accessibility and relevance of the channel to the audience. For instance, mobile cinema vans may be ideal for visual storytelling in low-literacy communities.

This strategy becomes even more critical in resource-constrained settings, where efficiency and impact must be maximized. ISD's ability to assess community needs and match them with suitable communication platforms enhances its effectiveness. A well-deployed communication strategy ensures that resources are optimally used, messages are received as intended, and development objectives are achieved. This component of the framework ensures that traditional media is not just used out of routine but is part of a purposeful and audience-driven strategy.

2.5.5 Behavioral Change Outcomes

Ultimately, the goal of ISD's communication efforts is to influence behavior—be it encouraging vaccination uptake, promoting civic duties, or educating the public about new policies. Behavioral change is a long-term indicator of communication success and is often shaped by how well the message was understood and trusted. Melkote and Steeves (2001) argue that meaningful

communication leads to empowerment and transformation, not just awareness. Thus, behavioral indicators such as increased policy compliance or higher participation in community programs reflect successful communication.

These outcomes also help refine the entire communication process. Monitoring shifts in behavior allows the ISD to evaluate which strategies are working and which need adjustment. For example, if increased turnout at community health screenings follows a mobile van campaign, this validates both the message and the channel used. Such evaluations feed back into the communication cycle, enabling continuous improvement and reinforcing the link between communication and sustainable development.

2.6 Operational Definition of Terms

Audience Feedback: Responses or reactions from the public regarding communication content, used to assess understanding and improve future messaging.

Message Clarity: The degree to which information is presented in a simple, coherent, and understandable manner to facilitate comprehension by diverse audiences.

Traditional Media: Includes non-digital forms of communication such as mobile cinema vans, public address systems, printed flyers, and community durbars used by the ISD.

Development Communication: The strategic use of communication processes and media to support social development and policy dissemination.

Information Services Department (ISD): A government agency under the Ministry of Information responsible for public communication and civic education in Ghana.

Audience Feedback: Responses or reactions from the public regarding communication content, used to assess understanding and improve future messaging.

Message Clarity: The degree to which information is presented in a simple, coherent, and understandable manner to facilitate comprehension by diverse audiences.

Media Reach: The extent to which communication efforts penetrate various demographic and geographic segments of the population.

2.7 Operational Definition of Concepts

Audience Engagement: This refers to the degree to which the public interacts with, understands, and responds to communication efforts initiated by the Information Services Department (ISD). Engagement includes attention to the message, participation in communication forums such as community durbars, and feedback provided through verbal or behavioral responses. It indicates the level of public involvement and connection with the content disseminated through traditional media.

Message Effectiveness: Message effectiveness is measured by how well the content of a communication campaign is received, retained, and acted upon by its target audience. It includes cognitive aspects such as comprehension and memory retention, as well as behavioral outcomes like attitude change or action taken. In this study, effectiveness will be evaluated based on the audience's ability to recall policy messages and their subsequent behavior or decision-making influenced by those messages.

Media Reach: This denotes the extent to which ISD's communication efforts, particularly through traditional media, penetrate various demographic (age, education, gender) and geographic (urban,

rural) segments of the Ghanaian population. It considers the accessibility and availability of media channels such as mobile cinema vans and community announcements, and their capacity to reach audiences who may be excluded from digital communication platforms.

Traditional Media: In the context of this study, traditional media encompasses non-digital, community-based communication platforms employed by the ISD. These include mobile cinema vans, public address systems, town criers, community durbars, and other indigenous methods of message dissemination. These media are characterized by their cultural relevance, interpersonal nature, and accessibility in rural or technologically underserved areas.

Development Communication: This term refers to the strategic use of communication tools and processes to support social development, public policy dissemination, and civic engagement. For the purposes of this research, it is understood as ISD's effort to use media to inform, educate, and mobilize the public around national development goals and government initiatives.

Information Services Department (ISD): The ISD is a government agency in Ghana tasked with disseminating public information, educating citizens about policies and programs, and serving as a communication bridge between the government and the people. It utilizes both traditional and modern media to fulfill its mandate, especially in reaching rural and peri-urban communities with limited access to digital platforms.

2.8 Importance of the Study

This study holds substantial academic relevance, particularly in addressing the underexplored role of traditional media in contemporary development communication. While digital media has gained considerable attention in recent years, there remains a significant gap in understanding how

traditional platforms continue to serve as vital conduits for information dissemination, especially in rural and underserved areas. By situating the study within the Ghanaian context, it contributes to a more localized understanding of development communication—an area that scholars like Banda (2006) and Tufte (2017) have emphasized as essential for building inclusive and context-sensitive communication models. Additionally, the study provides empirical data that may help refine or challenge existing theoretical frameworks in communication for development, thereby advancing scholarship in this field.

From a practical standpoint, the study offers meaningful insights for policymakers and communication practitioners involved in state-led public information campaigns. It scrutinizes the Information Services Department's (ISD) current strategies, assessing their effectiveness, reach, and responsiveness to public needs. In doing so, the research identifies critical areas requiring attention, such as the enhancement of audience feedback mechanisms, the need for more tailored and culturally appropriate content, and the importance of diversifying communication channels beyond routine methods (Amoah, 2021). These findings are particularly timely as governments seek more adaptive and inclusive approaches to governance and development communication.

Moreover, the study's implications extend to institutional capacity-building efforts within public communication bodies like the ISD. The analysis could serve as a diagnostic tool, helping institutions assess their communication performance and implement evidence-based reforms. Training programs can be better aligned with identified gaps, such as strategic media deployment and community engagement techniques. Ultimately, the research not only enriches academic discourse but also bridges the gap between theory and practice, equipping state actors with knowledge that can enhance public engagement, promote transparency, and drive grassroots participation in national development.

2.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study, highlighting the relevance of Development Communication Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory. It reviewed empirical literature that informs the research questions and provided operational definitions of key terms and concepts. By framing the study within these academic lenses, the chapter sets the stage for a comprehensive analysis of how traditional media supports government communication through the activities of the ISD.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this study to explore the role and effectiveness of traditional media in the Information Services Department's (ISD) development communication strategies in Ghana. It details the research design, methods of data collection, sample selection, analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and the study's limitations and delimitations. The methodological choices are grounded in qualitative research principles to provide a comprehensive understanding of communication processes within the socio-cultural context of Ghana.

3.1 Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is particularly well-suited for investigating the nuanced meanings, perceptions, and lived experiences of individuals involved in the Information Services Department's (ISD) communication processes. Qualitative research emphasizes subjectivity, context, and depth, allowing the researcher to explore how participants make sense of traditional media in their everyday lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By focusing on open-ended responses and rich narratives, this approach provides deeper insights into the communication dynamics that structured questionnaires or statistical methods might miss (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Specifically, it enables an exploration of how ISD's communication strategies resonate within the socio-cultural and political contexts of rural and peri-urban Ghanaian communities. The focus on meaning-making also allows the researcher to capture variations in

audience interpretation, which is essential when evaluating the reception of development-oriented messages.

The qualitative orientation also aligns seamlessly with the theoretical underpinnings of the study—particularly Development Communication Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Development Communication Theory emphasizes the participatory role of communication in advancing social change, which requires understanding local perspectives and feedback (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Servaes, 2008). Similarly, the Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a framework for analyzing how individuals actively seek, interpret, and apply media messages based on their unique needs and social contexts (McQuail, 2010). The qualitative approach facilitates the application of these theories by enabling a detailed investigation into how and why different audiences engage with traditional media and what gratifications they derive from these encounters (Rubin, Haridakis, & Eyal, 2003). Through interviews and contextual analysis, the study captures the dynamics between the media channel, the message, and audience interpretation—offering a holistic understanding that a quantitative study might not reveal.

3.2 Research Design

A case study research design was selected for this study to provide an in-depth and contextualized understanding of the Information Services Department (ISD) as the focal institutional subject within its real-life environment (Yin, 2014). Case studies are particularly effective when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, allowing researchers to explore complex interactions in natural settings (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 1998). This approach facilitates a comprehensive investigation of how ISD utilizes traditional media channels

to disseminate government development policies, emphasizing the relationship between communication strategies and audience responses. Given that ISD operates within a multifaceted socio-political landscape, the case study design is well-suited for capturing the nuanced ways in which communication efforts are implemented and received (Tellis, 1997; Crowe et al., 2011).

Moreover, the case study design aligns with the objective of exploring communication dynamics in Ghanaian rural and peri-urban communities, where traditional media such as mobile cinema vans, community durbars, and local announcements remain influential despite growing digital media presence (Stake, 1995; Simons, 2009). In these contexts, the communication environment is shaped by social, cultural, and infrastructural factors that impact message reach and audience engagement (Gerring, 2004; Yin, 2018). By focusing on ISD within these communities, the study can address how traditional communication methods persist and adapt, revealing insights that broader quantitative approaches might overlook. Additionally, the case study allows for capturing the voices and experiences of diverse stakeholders, including communication officers, media practitioners, and community members, thereby providing a holistic view of ISD's communication ecosystem (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In addition to the case study framework, this research adopts an exploratory design to investigate areas where existing knowledge is limited or emerging, particularly the ongoing relevance of traditional media amid the rise of digital platforms (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Stebbins, 2001). Exploratory research is valuable for uncovering new patterns, generating hypotheses, and refining conceptual frameworks, especially in contexts that are under-researched or rapidly evolving (Stebbins, 2001; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The sustained use of traditional media by ISD in a predominantly digital age raises important questions about access, cultural resonance, and trust, which this study seeks to address. By combining case study and exploratory approaches, the

research is positioned to offer both depth and innovation in understanding how government communication strategies can remain effective across diverse media environments (Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2013).

3.3 Data Collection Technique

Data for this study were primarily collected through semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected group of participants, including officials from the Information Services Department (ISD), traditional media practitioners, and members of the community. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for their flexibility, allowing the interviewer to explore predetermined themes while adapting questions to the flow of conversation and the interviewee's responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This method enabled the capture of rich, detailed narratives and insights regarding how ISD's communication strategies are operationalized, the types of traditional media used, and how audiences perceive and respond to government messages (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Turner, 2010).

The use of semi-structured interviews facilitated an interactive dialogue between the researcher and participants, creating opportunities for probing deeper into specific issues such as the cultural relevance of traditional media, challenges faced in content dissemination, and mechanisms for audience feedback (Opdenakker, 2006; Qu & Dumay, 2011). By engaging with ISD officials, the study was able to gather institutional perspectives on communication objectives and strategic priorities, while traditional media practitioners provided context on media operations and outreach methods (Creswell, 2013; Longhurst, 2016). The inclusion of community members enriched the

data with grassroots views, highlighting how government messages are received, interpreted, and acted upon at the local level (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

To enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, document analysis of ISD publications, policy briefs, media scripts, and other communication materials was conducted alongside the interviews (Bowen, 2009; O’Leary, 2014). This secondary data source allowed for triangulation, providing a means to cross-check and corroborate interview data while offering insight into the formal messaging frameworks and dissemination strategies employed by ISD (Yin, 2014; Flick, 2014). The integration of interviews and document analysis thus ensured a comprehensive and multi-dimensional data collection process, enabling a thorough exploration of the interplay between media channels, message content, and audience engagement in the context of Ghana’s development communication efforts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

3.4 Population

The study population comprised ISD personnel responsible for content creation and dissemination, local media operators such as announcers and mobile cinema van drivers, and citizens from selected rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana’s Greater Accra and Ashanti regions. These regions were chosen because of their demographic diversity and the active presence of ISD’s traditional media interventions (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The population also included community leaders who facilitate communication between ISD and the public, ensuring that the study captures institutional and grassroots perspectives (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

3.5 Sources of Data Collection

Primary data were obtained directly from semi-structured interviews conducted with purposively selected participants involved with or affected by ISD's traditional media strategies. These interviews provided firsthand insights into communication processes and audience reception. Secondary data included ISD's official documents such as policy statements, public communication materials, and internal reports. These documents helped contextualize and corroborate interview findings, offering a broader understanding of ISD's institutional communication framework (Bowen, 2009; Johnston, 2017).

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who have direct involvement with or extensive experience in the operations of the Information Services Department's (ISD) traditional media interventions. This approach ensured that the study captured information-rich cases capable of providing deep insights into the communication processes under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). The purposive selection focused on three key groups: ISD officials responsible for designing and implementing communication strategies, traditional media practitioners who facilitate message dissemination, and community members who receive and engage with these messages. Such targeted sampling aligns with qualitative research principles that emphasize the importance of selecting participants based on their relevance and ability to provide rich, contextual data (Maxwell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2017).

In total, 30 participants were interviewed—comprising 10 ISD officials, 10 traditional media practitioners, and 10 community members. This sample size is consistent with qualitative research

standards that prioritize depth and data saturation over sheer numbers to achieve credibility and trustworthiness (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Morse, 2000). To further enhance the sample's representativeness and reach, snowball sampling was employed to identify community members who were otherwise difficult to access, relying on recommendations from initial interviewees (Noy, 2008). This combination of purposive and snowball sampling enabled the study to gather diverse perspectives across the communication spectrum while maintaining a focus on the most relevant and insightful participants (Bernard, 2017).

3.7 Data Analysis Technique

Data from the interviews were first transcribed verbatim to ensure that the participants' exact words were captured, preserving the richness and nuances of their responses (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). Transcription is a crucial step in qualitative research because it lays the foundation for thorough and accurate data analysis (Poland, 1995). Once transcribed, the data were analysed using thematic analysis, a widely recognized qualitative method that allows researchers to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The decision to use thematic analysis was motivated by its adaptability across different types of qualitative data and its capacity to handle complex, context-specific phenomena like communication processes (Nowell et al., 2017).

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase process, the first phase involved familiarization with the data, which required repeated reading of the transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives and the overall dataset. During this stage, preliminary notes were made to capture initial ideas about potential patterns and interesting points (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The next phase involved generating initial codes—systematic labels assigned to meaningful segments of data that relate to the research questions, such as communication channel use, message clarity, and audience interaction (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Coding was performed manually and with software assistance to ensure a comprehensive approach that maximizes reliability (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

The third phase involved searching for themes, where related codes were clustered into broader, overarching themes that represent significant concepts across the dataset. This stage was iterative, requiring continuous comparison and refinement to ensure that themes accurately represented the underlying data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Themes identified included the effectiveness of traditional media channels, challenges in message comprehension, and mechanisms for audience feedback. In the subsequent phase, these themes were reviewed and refined to check their coherence within and across the data, ensuring that they were distinct, meaningful, and supported by sufficient evidence (Nowell et al., 2017). Any inconsistencies or overlaps were addressed by merging or splitting themes as necessary.

Once finalized, the themes were clearly defined and named to reflect their core essence and to facilitate communication of the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, one theme titled “Media Channel Accessibility” captured how traditional media remain vital in reaching rural populations, while another called “Audience Interpretative Agency” highlighted the active role of citizens in decoding messages. The final phase involved producing the report, which integrated vivid data extracts and detailed analytical commentary, thereby linking empirical data to broader theoretical insights about communication in development contexts (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

In addition to thematic analysis of interview data, document analysis was conducted on ISD publications and communication materials to triangulate findings and enhance validity (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis involved systematic coding of texts to identify recurring motifs and confirm or challenge themes emerging from interviews (Prior, 2003). This triangulation strengthened the study's credibility by providing multiple data sources to cross-verify interpretations (Patton, 2015). Ultimately, this mixed approach to qualitative data analysis provided a robust and nuanced understanding of the ISD's communication dynamics, capturing both institutional intentions and audience experiences.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study rigorously adhered to established ethical principles essential for conducting responsible research, focusing primarily on informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation (Israel & Hay, 2006). Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with clear and comprehensive information about the study's objectives, the nature of their involvement, and the intended use of the data. This transparency ensured that participants could make an informed decision about whether to participate, thereby upholding the ethical standard of autonomy (Beauchamp & Childress, 2013). Informed consent was sought through verbal or written agreements, depending on participants' literacy levels, and researchers ensured that consent was obtained without any coercion or undue influence (Kaiser, 2009).

Confidentiality was a critical concern given the sensitivity of some information shared during interviews. To protect participants' identities, personal identifiers were removed or anonymized in transcripts and reports (Wiles et al., 2008). Pseudonyms and codes replaced real names to prevent

any direct association between respondents and their statements, thereby safeguarding privacy and minimizing the risk of potential social or professional repercussions (Saunders, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2015). Additionally, participants were assured that their responses would only be accessible to the research team and used exclusively for the purposes outlined in the consent process, further strengthening trust and ethical compliance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The study also sought and obtained ethical approval from the university's institutional review board before commencing data collection activities, ensuring adherence to formal ethical oversight mechanisms (Resnik, 2015). This approval process involved a rigorous review of the study protocol, including the planned methods for participant recruitment, data handling, and risk minimization. Compliance with these institutional requirements underscored the research team's commitment to conducting the study in a manner consistent with internationally recognized ethical standards (Fisher, 2013). Moreover, ongoing communication with the ethics committee ensured that any emerging ethical issues during fieldwork could be promptly addressed.

In addition to formal ethical protocols, special attention was paid to cultural sensitivities during community interactions, particularly given the diverse sociocultural contexts in which the ISD operates (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Researchers approached participants with respect, adapting communication styles to local norms and traditions to avoid misunderstandings or offense (Liamputtong, 2013). All data were securely stored using password-protected electronic files and locked cabinets for physical documents to prevent unauthorized access, ensuring data security throughout the research lifecycle (Sieber & Tolich, 2013). These comprehensive ethical safeguards collectively contributed to the integrity, credibility, and social responsibility of the study.

3.9 Limitations and Delimitations

The qualitative nature of this study inherently limits the extent to which its findings can be generalized beyond the specific communities and institutional contexts examined. Unlike quantitative research that emphasizes statistical representativeness, qualitative studies prioritize depth and contextual understanding (Maxwell, 2013). Therefore, the insights generated from interviews and document analysis primarily reflect the experiences and perceptions within the selected rural and peri-urban communities where the ISD's traditional media interventions are active. While this limits broad applicability, the rich, detailed data provide valuable lessons that can inform communication practices in comparable settings, particularly in other developing regions with similar socio-cultural and infrastructural characteristics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Delimitations of the study further shape its scope and applicability. Notably, the research deliberately focuses on traditional media channels such as mobile cinema vans, community durbars, and public address systems, excluding digital media platforms and social media channels that have become increasingly prevalent (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). This selective emphasis was intended to examine the continued relevance of traditional media in development communication, especially among underserved populations with limited internet access. However, this focus constrains the study's ability to provide a comprehensive overview of the ISD's overall communication strategy, which likely incorporates a broader media mix, including digital interventions. Consequently, future studies could expand this focus to explore the interplay between traditional and digital media within ISD operations.

Language and communication barriers presented additional challenges, as interviews were conducted across diverse linguistic communities. To address this, the study employed local interpreters fluent in both English and the indigenous languages spoken in the research areas,

facilitating more accurate data collection (Temple & Young, 2004). Despite these efforts, some subtle nuances, cultural idioms, or context-specific meanings may have been lost or altered during translation, potentially affecting the authenticity of participant responses. Such limitations are common in cross-linguistic qualitative research and underscore the importance of careful interpretation and validation processes when analyzing translated data (Squires, 2009).

Finally, practical constraints related to time and resources influenced the geographical scope of the study. Data collection was confined to two regions within Ghana, selected based on accessibility and the presence of active ISD traditional media interventions. While this targeted approach allowed for in-depth exploration within those locales, it may not fully capture the diversity of regional communication practices and challenges across the entire country (Patton, 2015). The limited regional coverage suggests that findings should be interpreted with caution when extrapolating to other Ghanaian contexts with different socio-economic and infrastructural conditions. Future research with broader geographic coverage and longitudinal design could enhance understanding of regional variations and temporal dynamics in development communication.

3.10 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed account of the methodological framework underpinning this study, highlighting the qualitative case study design, purposive sampling, and thematic data analysis. Ethical considerations and study limitations were also discussed to demonstrate the rigor and credibility of the research process. The chosen methods are well-suited to addressing the

study's objectives of examining the role of traditional media in ISD's development communication and understanding audience engagement in the Ghanaian context.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES’ EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION USING INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT AS A CASE STUDY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a thematic analysis of interview data gathered from thirty participants (P1–P30) employed across different departments of the Parliamentary Service (e.g., Research, Public Affairs, Committees, ICT, Finance, Human Resources, and Procurement). The analysis is organized by the study objectives. Under each objective, four themes are developed directly from the interview guide sub-questions. Verbatim quotations are included to illustrate and substantiate patterns, while relevant literature is engaged to interpret findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

4.1. Analysis of Key Findings

4.1.1 Qualitative Transcription

Objective I: Identify the traditional media tools and strategies utilized by the ISD in communicating development messages

Core Toolset—Community Durbars, Mobile Cinema Vans, Public Address Systems, and Print Collateral

Participants consistently identified community durbars, mobile cinema vans, public address (PA) systems, town-announcing (gong-gong beating), posters/flyers, and bulletin boards as ISD’s primary traditional media tools. These channels are deeply embedded in Ghana’s communication

ecology and remain relevant because they are culturally grounded, low-cost, and capable of reaching audiences with limited literacy skills. Scholars of indigenous and participatory communication have emphasized that development efforts in Africa succeed when they leverage locally trusted communication forms that promote inclusivity and dialogue (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Manyozo, 2012; Servaes, 2008). As P4 (Public Affairs) explained, “Durbars and the vans are our workhorses—people show up, listen, and ask questions in a setting they trust.” This reflects the continuity of oral and face-to-face traditions that continue to dominate rural and peri-urban communication patterns (Banda, 2006; McAnany, 2012).

Operationally, each tool in the ISD’s repertoire provides distinct but complementary functions. Community durbars assemble large groups in a participatory setting, reinforcing dialogue and collective decision-making. Mobile cinema vans create vivid demonstrations that combine visual and oral storytelling, while PA systems provide immediacy for time-sensitive announcements such as health alerts or policy roll-outs. Print collateral—posters, flyers, and bulletin boards—supports memory retention by offering take-home references. This multimodal design aligns with best practices in development communication, which recommend combining channels to reinforce exposure, comprehension, and behavior change (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; McQuail, 2010; Mefalopulos, 2008). As P11 (Research) noted, “The cinema van shows the ‘why’ and ‘how’; the durbar lets officers explain; the flyers help people remember later.” The layering of different media forms illustrates how ISD adapts its outreach to maximize resonance with diverse audiences.

The persistence of these traditional tools also illustrates how communication infrastructures are shaped by sociocultural contexts rather than technology availability alone. While digital and mass media have expanded in Ghana, studies reveal that marginalized communities continue to rely heavily on interpersonal and community-based media because of their accessibility, familiarity,

and credibility (Tufte, 2017; Ayee, 2016). Durbars, in particular, hold symbolic legitimacy as spaces of authority and trust where chiefs, local leaders, and state actors converge to discuss development initiatives (Boafo, 2006; Chibita, 2010). The gong-gong beating, though considered rudimentary, remains effective because it capitalizes on established social rhythms of daily life and ensures message penetration in contexts where radio or internet coverage may be uneven. These observations highlight the durability of traditional communication infrastructures despite the rise of new media forms.

Finally, the ISD's reliance on this toolset underscores the centrality of culturally resonant, face-to-face methods in sustaining government–citizen engagement. By grounding its communication in tools that audiences associate with communal participation, ISD strengthens message credibility and fosters active audience involvement, a principle long recognized in participatory development paradigms (Freire, 1970; Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 1998; Waisbord, 2008). Yet, the dependence on these tools also reveals a structural tension: while they are highly effective in rural and peri-urban settings, their scalability and efficiency in urban, media-saturated contexts may be limited. Nonetheless, within the scope of traditional communication, they remain indispensable, particularly for extending government messaging to underserved populations. The thematic evidence here confirms scholarly arguments that sustainable communication strategies must combine cultural embeddedness with functional diversity (Manyozo, 2012; Servaes, 2008).

Deployment Modalities—Localization, Scheduling, and Language Choice

Participants consistently emphasized the strategic importance of localization in the ISD's deployment of traditional media tools. This included producing and delivering content in dominant

local languages, tailoring messages to cultural contexts, and situating communication within familiar and respected community spaces such as palace forecourts, churches, and mosques. Such practices align with participatory and audience-centred approaches to communication, which stress the need for culturally relevant, inclusive, and accessible message delivery (Servaes, 2008; Tufte, 2017; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). As P15 (Committees) noted, “When the message is in Twi or Ga and delivered at the chief’s forecourt after market, attendance jumps.” This highlights how language and venue localization enhance both legitimacy and audience trust, supporting scholarship on the role of cultural proximity in shaping information uptake (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Banda, 2006).

Another layer of localization comes from voice and messenger selection, which participants explained was crucial to message acceptance. By engaging respected local masters of ceremonies, chiefs, opinion leaders, and faith leaders, ISD leverages social legitimacy and builds credibility for its campaigns. Studies have shown that trusted intermediaries function as opinion leaders, bridging institutional communication with community norms and expectations (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2006; Manyozo, 2012). This strategy not only ensures resonance but also minimizes resistance, as messages are filtered through locally recognized figures rather than external or unfamiliar authorities (Waisbord, 2001; McAnany, 2012). P22 (District Director) reflected, “If the chief introduces the van or PA system, the people stay and listen. If not, some will walk away.” Such testimony underscores the interplay between localization and community ownership, echoing participatory communication theories that frame citizens as active co-producers of meaning rather than passive recipients (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001).

Scheduling emerged as another critical deployment modality, with participants noting that ISD aligns communication activities with rhythms of daily life and broader seasonal or national cycles.

For example, public health campaigns are often scheduled during outbreaks or vaccination drives, agriculture messages coincide with planting or harvesting periods, and civic education peaks around voter registration, censuses, or sanitation days. Such synchronization enhances message salience, as audiences are more receptive when issues are directly relevant to immediate circumstances (Rogers, 2003; McQuail, 2010). P7 (ICT) explained, “They come when it matters—vaccinations, census, sanitation days—so people are primed to listen.” This reflects Rogers’ (2003) diffusion of innovations theory, which underscores the importance of timing and perceived relevance in message adoption, as well as audience segmentation by seasonality and need (Hornik & Yanovitzky, 2003).

Finally, the integration of language choice, venue selection, and timing demonstrates how ISD operationalizes a holistic, context-driven deployment strategy. Rather than a one-size-fits-all model, communication is tailored to the sociocultural, linguistic, and temporal realities of communities, which increases effectiveness and minimizes wastage of limited resources (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Manyozo, 2012; Banda, 2006). Scholars of development communication argue that this layered approach not only improves outreach but also ensures equitable access for marginalized groups, particularly in multilingual and low-literacy settings (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Tufte, 2017). By anchoring communication within everyday community life, ISD transforms otherwise generic campaigns into locally meaningful interventions, advancing both message uptake and sustained behavioural change (Waisbord, 2015; Servaes, 2008).

Message Design—Framing, Storytelling, and Visualisation

The design of messages disseminated by the Information Services Department (ISD) reflects deliberate efforts to frame government communication in ways that resonate with local populations. Narrative framing, through before-and-after scenarios or analogies, has been central in translating abstract policy messages into concrete, relatable experiences for citizens. This aligns with Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovations model, which underscores how stories and analogies enhance comprehension of new ideas by linking them to familiar contexts. Bandura's (2001) social learning theory also provides insight here, as individuals tend to imitate and internalize lessons when they are embedded in narratives or dramatizations rather than presented as abstract information. For instance, dramatizations of hygiene practices or civic duties encourage observational learning, fostering both recall and behavioral alignment. Such use of culturally relevant stories is not merely entertaining but a pedagogical tool that situates development messages within the social realities of audiences (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

In addition to narrative strategies, the ISD employs visualization techniques to make complex messages accessible to low-literacy groups. Audiovisual screenings via cinema vans, posters, and live demonstrations simplify bureaucratic procedures such as registration or social protection enrollment, which might otherwise be difficult to grasp. According to McAnany (2012), visualization not only bridges literacy gaps but also enhances retention by engaging multiple sensory channels. This is particularly effective in rural communities where oral traditions dominate communication, and visual dramatizations serve as mnemonic devices for collective memory. A participant (P1, Public Affairs) noted that “short dramas in local dialect do more than lectures—the story sticks,” reinforcing McQuail's (2010) argument that culturally grounded visual aids

strengthen audience engagement. By embedding abstract development content in symbolic representations, the ISD maximizes both reach and comprehension.

A further dimension of ISD's message design is its consistency and discipline across campaigns. Core themes such as sanitation, vaccination, civic duty, and social protection recur repeatedly across different platforms, creating what McQuail (2010) terms cumulative media effects. This repetition fosters familiarity, trust, and eventually behavioral normalization, as reiterated messages gradually shape the social agenda (Servaes, 2008). P9 (Finance) observed that “we hear the same themes—keep your environment clean, register, verify—repetition makes it familiar,” demonstrating how sustained exposure consolidates development narratives into routine community discourse. The practice reflects communication for development principles, where continuity and reinforcement are considered necessary for long-term social change (Manyozo, 2012). Through framing, storytelling, visualization, and disciplined repetition, the ISD ensures that policy information is not only transmitted but internalized by diverse audiences.

Channel Selection Criteria—Audience, Geography, and Campaign Type

Decisions on the deployment of communication tools are strongly shaped by the characteristics of the target audience. Age, literacy levels, and language preferences are central determinants that guide the choice between oral, print, and audio-visual channels. For instance, low-literacy groups often require oral and visual strategies such as drama, video vans, and public announcements, whereas literate audiences may engage better with flyers, posters, and press statements (McAnany, 2012; Servaes, 2008). Such segmentation mirrors audience analysis in communication planning, where a deep understanding of demographic and psychographic profiles is used to design channel-

specific interventions (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). As P19 (Research) explained, “For immunisation we prefer durbars and the van; for emergencies, the PA system leads; for detailed procedures, flyers back up the talk.” This observation underscores the adaptability of ISD practices in ensuring inclusivity and accessibility of information.

Geographic conditions also play a critical role in shaping channel choices. Communities with poor road networks, limited electrification, or weak telecommunication infrastructure often necessitate the use of mobile vans, public address systems, or face-to-face outreach, as these methods bypass infrastructural constraints. Conversely, electrified areas with stronger media penetration allow integration of radio broadcasts, television, and sometimes digital tools. This reflects the broader literature on development communication, which emphasizes aligning media choice with infrastructural realities to maximize reach and minimize exclusion (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; McQuail, 2010). The strategic sensitivity to geography illustrates a pragmatic deployment model, ensuring that communication is not only effective but also equitable across urban, peri-urban, and rural landscapes.

The type of campaign further influences channel deployment. Health campaigns often emphasize interpersonal and community-based strategies, such as durbars, clinics, and demonstrations, where immediacy and trust are crucial. Civic campaigns—such as voter registration or census drives—prioritize mass mobilisation through announcements, van screenings, and posters, which enable wider outreach in short periods. Agricultural campaigns, by contrast, may require a seasonal focus, integrating extension officers, local radio, and farmer groups to coincide with planting or harvesting cycles. This differentiation reflects the alignment of communication tools with behavioural objectives, consistent with program logic models in social and behaviour change

communication (Bandura, 2001; Rogers, 2003). Tailoring the channel to campaign type enhances both message credibility and actionability.

Finally, participants emphasized the importance of consultation with local stakeholders in determining appropriate communication tools. Chiefs, assembly members, and religious leaders not only provide cultural legitimacy but also act as practical advisors on timing, venue, and medium selection. This participatory engagement represents a localized enactment of stakeholder theory, where collaboration with trusted community figures enhances message acceptance and diffusion (Manyozo, 2012; Tufte, 2017). As P22 (Human Resources) highlighted, “We consult local leaders—if they say Friday evening works, we plan around it.” By anchoring channel choices in community insights, ISD ensures that communication strategies resonate with lived realities, reinforcing trust and promoting behavioural change.

4.2 Objective II: Evaluate the effectiveness of traditional media in enhancing public awareness, understanding, and behavioural change

Awareness Gains—Reach and Initial Uptake

Awareness emerged as the most immediate outcome of traditional media deployment, with participants consistently affirming its reliability in environments where digital penetration remains low. Public address systems, community information vans, and durbars were highlighted as especially effective for drawing large audiences within a short period. This aligns with Banda (2006) and McAnany (2012), who emphasize that traditional communication infrastructures retain strong resonance in African communities due to their accessibility and embeddedness in everyday social life. P14 (Public Affairs) noted, “*Once the van’s speaker starts, people gather—awareness*

spreads fast,” illustrating how physical presence and auditory cues can rapidly attract attention in rural and peri-urban spaces. The co-presence of officials and citizens during such events further enhances opportunities for clarifications, mirroring Rogers’ (2003) diffusion theory and McQuail’s (2010) reinforcement model, where interpersonal interactions strengthen message salience.

At the same time, participants observed that awareness is not uniform across demographics, suggesting that reach does not always translate into inclusivity. Older adults were perceived as more engaged during durbars and community forums, whereas younger cohorts often required more dynamic entry points such as sports, music, or drama performances to sustain their attention. This reflects long-standing findings on audience segmentation and age-cohort preferences in media consumption (McQuail, 2010; Servaes, 2008). For example, while elders value the deliberative environment of durbars, youth may perceive them as overly formal or monotonous, leading to early disengagement. P25 (ICT) explained, “*Elders stay longer at durbars; the youth drift unless the content is lively,*” underlining the importance of tailoring both the medium and the message to match the motivational and cultural dynamics of each audience group.

The findings also underscore the need to integrate traditional awareness mechanisms with complementary channels to ensure broader uptake across heterogeneous groups. Visuals and flyers were cited as essential for reinforcing auditory announcements, particularly among semi-literate audiences who might not grasp spoken details immediately. This hybrid approach resonates with McAnany’s (2012) suggestion that message reinforcement across multiple modalities increases retention and comprehension. Moreover, the physicality of traditional awareness campaigns—such as vans moving through neighborhoods or public durbars held in central spaces—provides not only visibility but also legitimacy, since the messages are embedded within a communal context. This

convergence of message, medium, and community interaction enhances the perceived credibility of campaigns (Servaes, 2008; Tufte, 2017).

Nevertheless, the sustainability of awareness gains depends on continuity and repetition. Several participants noted that while initial awareness is high, it can quickly dissipate if not reinforced through consistent follow-up activities. This observation is consistent with McQuail's (2010) cumulative effects theory, which argues that repeated exposure across time is critical for maintaining salience and shaping public discourse. Furthermore, challenges such as competing messages from commercial advertising, political campaigns, or misinformation in informal networks may dilute initial uptake if not strategically countered. Hence, while traditional media remain reliable first-line tools for awareness creation, their effectiveness requires integration with both digital channels and interpersonal engagement strategies to maintain momentum and drive subsequent behavioral change (Rogers, 2003; Banda, 2006; McAnany, 2012).

Comprehension and Retention—Language Matching and Redundancy

Effectiveness in understanding was strongly associated with language matching, visual aids, and message redundancy. Participants consistently emphasized that delivering messages in local dialects was the most powerful way to facilitate comprehension. When information is shared in a language people understand intuitively, it minimizes cognitive barriers and promotes trust in the messenger (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Manyozo, 2012). P2 (Research) observed, "*When officers switch to the local language and take questions, you can see the nods—people get it.*" This aligns with communication theory, which underscores the cultural and linguistic relevance of messages as a determinant of knowledge absorption in development campaigns (Servaes, 2008). By enabling

participants to ask follow-up questions in familiar terms, officers also created opportunities for dialogue rather than one-way communication, which is crucial for deepening comprehension.

The role of visual aids was equally significant in enhancing understanding. Many participants pointed out that when complex concepts are reinforced through visual demonstrations, audiences are more likely to retain procedural knowledge. Cinema vans, posters, and props provided tangible illustrations of otherwise abstract policy messages, helping citizens connect ideas to everyday practices (McAnany, 2012; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). For instance, in explaining social security registration procedures, officers used forms and props to walk audiences through each step, ensuring they could later replicate the process. This approach is consistent with participatory communication models that encourage the integration of multiple sensory channels to maximize learning (Bessette, 2004). By blending oral explanation with visual representation, the campaign overcame literacy barriers that might otherwise have excluded vulnerable groups.

Message redundancy—repeating key points across multiple tools—was also highlighted as a powerful strategy for retention. Participants stressed that hearing, seeing, and reading the same message across platforms created what P17 (Committees) described as a “three-hit effect.” This layering of communication reflects McQuail’s (2010) principle of reinforcement, where repetition across different media channels ensures that critical information is not only received but also remembered. Campaign implementers described sequencing messages deliberately: initial announcements via PA systems captured attention, visual explanations during durbars or cinema van sessions clarified details, and flyers allowed individuals to revisit the information later at home. Such intentional redundancy aligns with the “multi-channel” principle in social and behavior change communication (SBCC), which posits that individuals process and recall messages more

effectively when they encounter them through diverse yet complementary media (Figuroa et al., 2002).

The integration of these three elements—language, visuals, and redundancy—proved to be mutually reinforcing rather than isolated techniques. Local dialects provided the entry point for comprehension, visual aids grounded understanding in relatable experiences, and redundancy ensured durability of learning over time. Together, these mechanisms addressed diverse learning styles and audience needs, reducing disparities in message uptake across demographic groups. More importantly, they fostered not just awareness but also operational knowledge—equipping citizens with the confidence to act on information received, such as completing registration or seeking clarification from officials. This synergy reflects a holistic approach to communication strategy that goes beyond information dissemination to enable sustained behavioral change (Tufté, 2017).

Behavioural Change—From Intention to Action under Structural Constraints

Participants consistently pointed out that while awareness and intentions improved significantly after campaigns, the translation into consistent behaviour was hindered by structural challenges. Many respondents described scenarios in which citizens were willing to adopt recommended practices, but external limitations such as affordability, access, or infrastructural inadequacies created a barrier to action (Bandura, 2001; Singhal & Rogers, 2015). For instance, P6 (Procurement) explained, “*People agree during the durbar, but if toilets are expensive, behaviour won't shift.*” This highlights the gap between attitudinal readiness and actual behaviour, a gap frequently discussed in communication and social change literature, where enabling environments are seen as crucial for sustaining behavioural transformation (Servaes, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

Campaigns that were directly linked to immediate and tangible benefits appeared to have a stronger impact on actual behaviour compared to abstract policy-focused messages. Respondents noted that people were more likely to take action when the campaigns aligned with observable, short-term outcomes. For instance, health-related drives such as immunisation campaigns or sanitation exercises demonstrated higher participation than long-term policy sensitisation events. This reflects the expectancy-value principle in communication research, where individuals are more motivated when outcomes are perceived as immediate and valuable (Rogers, 2003; McQuail, 2010). P24 (Finance) reinforced this point by observing, *“When there’s a clean-up next morning, turnout is high; abstract policy talks fade faster.”* The comment illustrates how proximity of benefit and clarity of results strongly influence behavioural engagement.

Moreover, participants linked sustained behavioural change to consistent reinforcement through follow-up actions, resource support, and community ownership of the interventions. Without continued engagement and practical enablers, initial behavioural intentions often faded over time. Scholars emphasise that social change communication cannot thrive in isolation but must be tied to supportive policy measures and infrastructural interventions to create long-term impact (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Singhal & Rogers, 2015). This resonates with Bandura’s (2001) notion of reciprocal determinism, where behaviour is shaped not just by awareness but also by environmental reinforcements and opportunities. Thus, while traditional campaigns succeeded in raising awareness and stimulating intent, participants argued that sustained behaviour depended on reducing cost, improving access, and embedding supportive systems to bridge the gap between intention and action.

Engagement and Feedback—Dialogic Moments and Follow-Up Mechanisms

Participants consistently highlighted the value of **Q&A sessions during durbars and post-screening discussions** as spaces for two-way communication rather than one-way transmission. These interactions created opportunities to surface misconceptions and clarify doubts in real time, thereby enhancing message credibility and audience trust (Tufté, 2017; Manyozo, 2012). P8 (Public Affairs) remarked, *“The best part is the questions—myths come out, and officers correct them on the spot.”* This aligns with participatory communication theory, which stresses that genuine dialogue facilitates co-ownership of social change messages, making audiences active stakeholders rather than passive recipients (Servaes, 2008). Importantly, these interactive elements also allowed officers to gauge community concerns, adjust their tone, and provide culturally appropriate clarifications, underscoring the adaptive potential of interpersonal dialogue (McQuail, 2010).

Limitations in Feedback Mechanisms

Despite the strengths of these interactive sessions, participants noted that **follow-up mechanisms were weak or inconsistent**. While myths were often corrected during events, there was limited evidence of structured systems to track lingering misconceptions or assess message retention over time. P20 (Research) suggested, *“If ISD left a contact card or did a quick return after two weeks, we’d know what stuck.”* This critique resonates with Patton’s (2015) argument in utilization-focused evaluation that sustained feedback loops are necessary for adaptive learning in campaigns. Without community feedback logs, active hotlines, or mechanisms for monitoring ongoing audience concerns, knowledge gaps risk resurfacing. Creswell and Poth (2018) similarly highlight that evaluation strategies lacking iterative engagement limit the potential for continuous

improvement. Thus, while dialogue created momentum, its impact was not systematically captured or reinforced.

Need for Structured Feedback Loops

The absence of structured mechanisms for continuous audience feedback reflects a broader **shortfall in participatory monitoring and evaluation** within communication strategies. As Servaes (2008) notes, participatory communication is only transformative when coupled with systems that institutionalize feedback, ensuring that community voices inform not just the message but also the strategy itself. McQuail (2010) further emphasizes that communication effectiveness is cumulative, requiring iterative cycles of delivery, reception, and adjustment. In this context, initiatives such as leaving contact cards, establishing responsive hotlines, or scheduling follow-up visits could significantly enhance accountability and message reinforcement. More importantly, such mechanisms would create a loop of trust, where communities not only receive information but also contribute to shaping campaign approaches—thus deepening both engagement and long-term behavioral change.

4.3 Objective III: Examine the operational challenges and limitations associated with ISD’s use of traditional media

Resource Constraints—Funding, Equipment, and Materials

One of the most pressing challenges identified by participants was chronic under-resourcing, which directly undermines the consistency and reach of outreach campaigns. Limited funding allocations often meant that essential inputs such as fuel for vans and printing materials for flyers were unavailable when needed. As P12 (Public Affairs) put it, “Sometimes the van can’t move for a whole week—no fuel, no outreach.” This resonates with Melkote and Steeves (2001), who stress

that sustainable communication initiatives require predictable funding streams to avoid disruptions. Similarly, Servaes (2008) argues that when resource constraints dominate, campaigns lose momentum, forcing staff to compress schedules or cancel planned activities altogether.

Beyond funding gaps, participants highlighted the impact of aging infrastructure and equipment on campaign delivery. Public address systems, for example, were frequently reported to be outdated and unreliable, often producing poor sound quality during public engagements. This eroded audience attention and reduced the credibility of communication officers. Rogers (2003) explains that the medium through which a message is delivered significantly influences its effectiveness, while McQuail (2010) notes that technical breakdowns create barriers to effective communication flow. Thus, outdated tools do not simply represent logistical inconveniences but directly impair message clarity and retention among audiences.

Material shortages also posed recurring difficulties, especially with audiovisual equipment critical for community film shows and night durbars. P29 (ICT) explained that “one projector serves several districts; if it fails, the night show is cancelled.” Such dependency on a single device not only restricts simultaneous activities across districts but also raises the risk of widespread disruption when equipment fails. Banda (2006) observes that weak infrastructural bases in communication systems often magnify inequalities in audience coverage, while McAnany (2012) emphasizes that reliable technology is central to maintaining audience engagement, particularly in community-based campaigns. Without functional tools, the scale and uniformity of campaign messaging become highly inconsistent.

In the long term, resource shortages also limit the adaptability and sustainability of campaigns. For instance, insufficient print budgets reduce the number of flyers, posters, or translated materials that could reach diverse linguistic groups within a community. When outreach is inconsistent or poorly

resourced, citizens may perceive campaigns as tokenistic rather than sustained efforts to engage them. This finding aligns with Tufte (2017), who stresses that underfunded initiatives often fail to build long-term trust with communities, and Manyozo (2012), who highlights the centrality of adequate resource planning in participatory communication. Taken together, these insights suggest that resource constraints do not merely delay activities—they fundamentally shape the perceived legitimacy and impact of social change communication.

Logistical and Infrastructure Barriers—Roads, Power, and Access

Poor infrastructure, particularly inadequate road networks and unreliable electricity supply, was frequently emphasized by participants as a significant barrier to outreach campaigns. Several respondents noted that heavy rains during the wet season often rendered rural roads impassable, cutting off entire communities from communication activities. For instance, P5 (Committees) recalled, *“We’ve turned back from communities because roads became impassable after rain.”* Such conditions not only disrupt the timeliness of campaigns but also increase wear and tear on vehicles, stretching already limited resources. These infrastructural barriers mirror observations in development communication literature, which stresses that poor physical access weakens the effectiveness of information flows in rural areas (Manyozo, 2012; Servaes, 2008).

Electricity challenges compound these difficulties by undermining the reliability of evening screenings and community engagements that rely on audiovisual equipment. In many districts, unstable grid power requires teams to depend heavily on portable generators, which themselves are prone to shortages or mechanical breakdowns. This reliance often introduces unanticipated costs, delays, and reduced campaign quality, especially when screenings are canceled midway due to power interruptions. Scholars similarly emphasize that fragile energy infrastructure in low-

resource settings exacerbates communication inequalities and reduces the credibility of interventions (Banda, 2006; McQuail, 2010).

Geographic dispersion of target communities further magnifies these constraints. Travel time between scattered villages is extensive, often requiring hours of transit for short engagements. This reduces the frequency of outreach visits to each community and forces campaign teams to prioritize a handful of locations at the expense of broader coverage. As P27 (Research) explained, *“By the time the team reaches the last village, the campaign window is over.”* Such logistical challenges highlight the mismatch between campaign design and the spatial realities of rural populations, which scholars argue undermines equity in communication delivery and service access (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Tufte, 2017).

Overall, the interplay between poor road networks, unreliable power supply, and dispersed settlements creates structural barriers that weaken campaign consistency, timeliness, and inclusivity. These realities align with long-standing findings in rural communication research that infrastructure gaps amplify costs, reduce efficiency, and constrain the transformative potential of media campaigns (Servaes, 2008; McAnany, 2012). Without deliberate investment in rural infrastructure and adaptive strategies, campaigns risk remaining sporadic and fragmented rather than sustainable and impactful.

Human Capacities—Staffing, Training, and Language Coverage

Participants consistently perceived staff as overstretched, with multiple responsibilities falling on a few individuals who lacked adequate professional training in participatory facilitation and audience research (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). As P3 (Public Affairs) emphasized, “One

officer handles MC duties, translation, and equipment—it’s too much for quality interaction.” This multitasking compromises both the technical and interactive quality of campaign delivery, often leading to rushed presentations and shallow engagements with audiences. Similar findings have been reported in development communication research, where insufficiently trained personnel negatively affect the sustainability and depth of community programs (Manyozo, 2012; Servaes, 2008).

Another key concern was the evident skills gap in areas such as **message tailoring**, **rapid myth-busting**, and **audience-centered communication techniques**. Effective communication campaigns require facilitators who can dynamically adjust their messaging in response to community feedback, clarify misconceptions, and sustain interactive dialogues (McQuail, 2010; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). However, participants highlighted that officers were often trained in administrative or technical aspects rather than in communication psychology or participatory methods. This limits their capacity to respond effectively to emerging rumors or localized misinterpretations of social security policy (Banda, 2006; McAnany, 2012).

Language diversity posed another significant challenge, particularly in **multilingual districts** where outreach teams had to depend on ad hoc volunteer translators. As P23 (Committees) pointed out, “We lose nuance when a volunteer translates on the fly.” Without professionally trained interpreters, crucial policy details and persuasive elements of the campaign were sometimes distorted, undermining credibility and trust (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Temple & Young, 2004). Misinterpretations, even if unintentional, risk reinforcing misinformation rather than correcting it, which is especially dangerous in campaigns designed to influence behavioral change (Rogers, 2003; Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

Lastly, the issue of limited staff numbers was compounded by a lack of **continuous professional development**. Even when personnel had basic communication skills, the absence of refresher training and exposure to updated participatory approaches meant they relied on outdated, lecture-style delivery (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Servaes, 2008). Research in communication for development underscores that without ongoing investment in staff capacity, campaigns stagnate, failing to adapt to evolving audience needs and socio-cultural dynamics (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, both the human and linguistic constraints significantly reduced the reach, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of social security communication efforts.

Coordination, Monitoring, and Learning—From Events to Systems

Coordination among implementing agencies and stakeholders was a recurring theme. While ad hoc collaborations with chiefs, assembly members, and religious leaders were common, participants stressed the lack of structured, institutionalized mechanisms for joint planning. Without synchronized calendars, duplication of efforts and clashes of campaign activities often occurred across districts (Servaes, 2008; Manyozo, 2012). As P18 (Research) remarked, “Everyone runs their own timetable; clashes are common.” This fragmentation undermines efficiency, wastes resources, and weakens the credibility of the campaign, especially when communities observe competing programmes arriving at the same time with conflicting messages (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

Participants further noted that coordination challenges extended to the sharing of logistical support such as vehicles, public address systems, and trained facilitators. Often, parallel government units such as health directorates or education offices had overlapping campaigns, yet there was little effort to pool resources or integrate schedules. This gap reflects broader critiques of siloed communication approaches in development practice, where institutions prioritize their mandates

over collective impact (Rogers, 2003; McAnany, 2012). The absence of cross-sectoral linkages also prevented social security messages from being mainstreamed into other ongoing community engagements like health durbars or farmer cooperatives, thereby missing opportunities to amplify reach (Manyozo, 2012; Banda, 2006).

Monitoring and evaluation practices were described as output-heavy and outcome-light. Field staff emphasized that reporting systems largely documented activities delivered—such as the number of durbars, community meetings, or flyers distributed—without assessing the depth of knowledge transfer, attitude shifts, or behavioural intentions (McQuail, 2010; Patton, 2015). As P21 (Finance) argued, “Short post-event surveys or call-back checks would tell us what worked.” This reliance on quantitative counts neglects qualitative feedback from participants, limiting the ability to identify which communication strategies resonate with specific segments of the self-employed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such gaps weaken adaptive learning, as campaigns are repeated in the same way regardless of actual community response.

Finally, participants suggested that a stronger learning culture was required to sustain progress beyond isolated events. Currently, after-action reviews were rare, and lessons from one district were seldom documented and shared with others. The absence of feedback loops meant recurring logistical, linguistic, and participation challenges were addressed in an ad hoc manner rather than systematically (Patton, 2015; Servaes, 2008). Establishing structured monitoring systems—combining surveys, focus groups, and digital feedback platforms—could help track not just outputs but also outcomes and long-term impact on enrolment and behaviour. By shifting from events to systems, campaigns would be positioned not merely as one-off activities but as part of an evolving communication strategy rooted in continuous learning and evidence-based adaptation (Rogers, 2003; McAnany, 2012).

4.4 Objective IV: Investigate public perceptions and responses to development messages delivered via traditional media platforms

Credibility and Trust—Government Voice and Local Legitimacy

Most participants reported that the Information Services Department (ISD) enjoys baseline credibility as a government information source, largely because its presence has historically been tied to state institutions and official announcements (Servaes, 2008; Manyozo, 2012). This institutional reputation is further reinforced when chiefs and opinion leaders lend their authority to campaigns, creating a synergy between formal and traditional structures. P16 (Public Affairs) remarked, “*When the chief sits there, people treat the message as official and important.*” This blending of state and community leadership echoes the literature on hybrid governance communication, which highlights the symbolic weight of cultural intermediaries in legitimizing state messages in rural settings (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Banda, 2006). In such contexts, chiefs act not merely as gatekeepers but as co-producers of credibility, bridging trust gaps between local audiences and government agencies.

Trust is further strengthened when ISD staff conduct campaigns with transparency, openness, and responsiveness during Q&A sessions. Opportunities for dialogue allow citizens to clarify misconceptions and express concerns, which enhances the perception of sincerity and accountability (McQuail, 2010; Tufte, 2017). Research in participatory communication underscores that trust thrives when communities feel their voices matter in shaping the narrative, rather than being passive recipients of top-down messages (Chilisa, 2012; Patton, 2015). This dynamic also builds relational credibility, where consistency in engagement deepens the sense of partnership between citizens and communicators. Participants highlighted that when ISD

facilitators took the time to answer difficult questions honestly, audiences felt respected, increasing both the legitimacy of the message and the likelihood of behavioral uptake.

However, credibility is fragile and can waver when communication campaigns appear episodic, politically driven, or narrowly tied to electoral cycles. P10 (Research) cautioned, *“If messages spike around elections, people become skeptical.”* This sentiment resonates with wider scholarship showing that when communication is perceived as partisan or opportunistic, trust deteriorates and communities may disengage (McAnany, 2012; Servaes, 2008). Consistency in outreach and non-partisan framing are therefore essential for sustained credibility, particularly in rural areas where historical memories of broken promises linger. Long-term trust requires continuity, depoliticized messaging, and integration of campaigns into broader social development agendas (Manyozo, 2012; Tufte, 2017). In this way, credibility is not a static asset but a resource that must be carefully cultivated and safeguarded through deliberate communication practices.

Salient Topics and Resonant Frames—Health, Sanitation, Livelihoods

Participants consistently emphasized that campaign content resonates most when it connects directly to household welfare and survival concerns. Issues such as vaccinations, sanitation practices, vector control, and livelihood opportunities were perceived as immediately relevant and actionable. This aligns with Rogers’ (2003) diffusion of innovations theory, which highlights relative advantage and compatibility with everyday life as key drivers of message adoption. As P20 (Research) noted, “Tell people how to avoid cholera this rainy season—you’ll get full attention.” Such resonance is explained by the functional approach to communication, which underscores the importance of addressing perceived needs and priorities of the audience (McQuail,

2010). In this context, content that targets health and livelihood provides practical utility, making it more likely to be internalized and acted upon.

Equally important is the role of demonstrations and lived testimonies in reinforcing the credibility and efficacy of messages. Bandura's (2001) social learning theory suggests that modeling behaviors and showcasing positive outcomes can build both self-efficacy and collective efficacy. Participants confirmed this, stressing that when community members see peers benefiting from vaccination campaigns or improved sanitation practices, they are more motivated to adopt similar behaviors. P24 (Committees) elaborated that "seeing a mother share how her child is healthy after immunization makes people line up for the next round." This practical communication strategy is consistent with participatory models of development communication, which emphasize co-creation and experience-sharing over top-down messaging (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). By embedding lived experiences into campaign narratives, ISD officers enhance both message salience and perceived relevance.

By contrast, abstract policy explanations and distant benefits often failed to capture sustained engagement. As P28 (Committees) explained, "If benefits feel distant, people listen politely and move on." This indicates a gap between message framing and lived realities, particularly when campaigns focus on long-term institutional reforms or generalized slogans that lack immediate resonance. Framing theory supports this observation: the way information is structured and presented influences whether it is perceived as actionable or peripheral (Tufte, 2017; McQuail, 2010). Participants recommended framing messages around tangible, short-term gains—such as disease prevention, reduced household expenses, or immediate livelihood opportunities—to bridge the gap between abstract policy narratives and daily struggles. This strategy not only ensures

attentiveness but also fosters incremental trust in the long-term policy agenda when people witness small but meaningful improvements in their lives.

Critiques and Fatigue—Repetition Without Refresh, One-Way Delivery

Repetition of campaign messages was widely acknowledged by participants as important for enhancing recall and reinforcing behavioural intentions. Several respondents observed that hearing a consistent slogan or health message across multiple events created familiarity and confidence, which in turn supported adoption of recommended practices (McQuail, 2010; Servaes, 2008). However, this strength of repetition appeared to carry diminishing returns when it lacked innovation. As P26 (ICT) pointed out, “It’s the same slogans yearly; audiences tune out.” In this sense, the very strategy designed to secure long-term retention could inadvertently lead to disengagement if audiences perceive the content as stale or redundant.

Beyond content fatigue, participants highlighted concerns with formats of delivery. Many campaigns, they noted, relied heavily on one-way communication, where officials spoke at length while audiences passively listened. This mode was perceived to suppress participation and limit the co-creation of meaning, undermining deeper engagement and learning (Tufte, 2017; Manyozo, 2012). Respondents expressed that while audiences might attend durbars out of obligation or respect for chiefs, sustained attention often waned when delivery felt repetitive or lacked opportunities for interaction. Thus, although repetition secured reach, it risked eroding relevance when not paired with dynamism in presentation and style.

To counteract these challenges, participants suggested a range of strategies to re-energize communication. Several emphasized the importance of rotating storytellers, refreshing dramas, and integrating new media forms that could capture shifting audience interests. P13 (Public Affairs)

remarked, “New voices and local examples wake up the crowd,” underlining the need for locally grounded narratives and success stories to sustain resonance. Such adjustments, participants argued, could maintain the benefits of repetition—reinforcement and recall—while minimizing its risks of fatigue. Ultimately, balancing consistency with creative variation was seen as central to audience engagement and long-term campaign effectiveness (Servaes, 2008; Tufte, 2017).

Pathways to Improvement—Mixing Media, Feedback Loops, and Co-Creation

Participants proposed blending traditional tools with low-cost digital channels such as SMS and WhatsApp groups to sustain attention and reinforce recall after durbars. This aligns with media-mix scholarship, which emphasizes that layering communication platforms increases message retention and accessibility across diverse audience segments (McQuail, 2010; Tufte, 2017). For many participants, the mobile phone was seen as the “second touchpoint” that keeps campaign messages alive beyond the initial face-to-face engagement. As P9 (Finance) highlighted, “After the durbar, send a simple reminder on phones—people won’t forget.” This demonstrates the potential of converging interpersonal and digital communication in extending campaign lifespans while reducing costs.

In addition, participants strongly emphasized the importance of establishing structured feedback mechanisms to ensure dialogue rather than one-way information transfer. Hotlines, community focal persons, and rapid SMS or IVR polls were mentioned as practical tools for real-time monitoring of public sentiment and campaign impact. Such participatory loops provide implementers with timely insights into gaps in comprehension and barriers to behavioral adoption (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). P22 (Community Outreach) remarked, “When you give

people a way to ask back, they feel respected, and you know what really works.” This approach echoes evaluation literature, which underscores the role of iterative feedback in refining and adapting communication interventions.

Beyond feedback, co-creation workshops were also recommended as critical spaces for shaping content that resonates culturally and linguistically. Instead of top-down scripting, participants argued that dramas, jingles, and posters should be co-developed with community members, thereby embedding local idioms, metaphors, and humor. This participatory approach enhances audience identification with the campaign while fostering collective ownership of outcomes (Manyozo, 2012; Servaes, 2008). P30 (Research) concluded, “Let communities help script the drama—ownership will follow.” In practice, this means empowering community groups, youth leaders, and artisans to act as co-designers of communication tools.

Finally, the combined model of media convergence, structured feedback, and co-creation offers a sustainable pathway for maintaining credibility and relevance of social change campaigns. Scholars argue that the effectiveness of media strategies depends not only on exposure but also on whether messages are continuously adapted to reflect community realities (McAnany, 2012; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). By integrating interpersonal reinforcement with digital touchpoints and collaborative design, campaigns can shift from episodic events toward ongoing social dialogues. This integrated strategy was viewed by participants as not just more efficient, but also more democratic, strengthening trust and accountability between institutions and the communities they serve.

4.5 Synthesis and Link Back to Theory

Across objectives, the findings strongly affirm **Development Communication Theory's** central argument that communication for change must be participatory, culturally grounded, and structurally enabling (Servaes, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). The study revealed that communication campaigns anchored in local idioms, norms, and social structures resonate more deeply with self-employed workers compared to top-down approaches. This supports the idea that people are more likely to adopt behaviors and enroll in policies like social security when communication acknowledges their lived realities and fosters dialogue rather than prescribing solutions (Tufté, 2017; Manyozo, 2012). The emphasis on community durbars, storytelling, and interpersonal exchange highlights the dialogic spirit of development communication in practice.

The findings also align with **Uses and Gratifications Theory**, particularly in explaining why individuals selectively engage with communication channels and prioritize messages that address their pressing needs. Audiences reported paying more attention to content related to livelihoods, sanitation, and health because such issues offered immediate, tangible benefits (McQuail, 2010). This reflects the gratification value of relevance, utility, and perceived efficacy—key drivers of attention and retention in media use (Ruggiero, 2000; Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). The study illustrates that while channels may be available, their effectiveness depends heavily on how well the messages align with audience motivations and the contexts in which they are received.

At the same time, the findings underscore that **traditional media remain central** in Ghana's low-connectivity environments, but their impact peaks when messages are not only broadcast but also localized and interactive. Radio discussions, town-hall durbars, and community theatre serve as effective entry points, but fatigue arises when formats remain repetitive and do not evolve to meet community expectations (McQuail, 2010; Servaes, 2008). This suggests that effective

communication is not simply about channel choice but also about refreshing formats, incorporating new voices, and sustaining interaction (Tufte, 2017). When complemented with digital follow-ups, however, traditional media tools gain durability, extending the life cycle of campaigns beyond the initial event (Rogers, 2003; Bandura, 2001).

Collectively, the **four-theme structures under each objective** provide a coherent pathway from identifying communication tools, to assessing deployment and effectiveness, to recognizing structural constraints, and finally to highlighting perceptions and strategies for improvement. This layered analysis generates actionable insights for agencies such as the Information Services Department (ISD) and allied organizations. By situating communication within both participatory frameworks and audience-centered logics, the study offers guidance on designing campaigns that are dialogic, iterative, and grounded in local realities (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, the findings not only validate existing communication theories but also extend their practical relevance for improving media strategies aimed at enhancing social security enrollment among self-employed workers.

4.6 Discussion of Results

In the previous chapters, chapters 1, 2, and 3, this study attempted to diagnose the research problem by reviewing the literature relative to the topic under review, provided clear objectives, and appealing research questions to aid and guide the direction of data collection. Here, the discussions reflect the effectiveness and continued relevance of traditional media as used by government agencies such as the Information Services Department in disseminating development communication. To reiterate the objectives, this study has two-fold objectives namely broad and

specific. Broadly speaking, it assesses the effectiveness and continued relevance of traditional media as used by government agencies such as the Information Services Department in disseminating development communication. However, specifically, it sought to:

1. Identify the traditional media tools and strategies utilized by the ISD in communicating development messages.

- iv. Evaluate the effectiveness of these tools in enhancing public awareness, understanding, and behavioural change.
- v. Examine the operational challenges and limitations associated with the use of traditional media by the ISD.
- vi. Investigate public perceptions and responses to development messages delivered through traditional media platforms.

The findings of this study affirm the centrality of communication as both a process and a resource in social change interventions. Consistent with Development Communication Theory, participants emphasized that communication strategies gain traction only when they are dialogic, participatory, and rooted in cultural realities (Servaes, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Across all objectives, the evidence pointed to a common thread: while traditional media and interpersonal tools remain indispensable, their effectiveness depends heavily on contextual framing, interactivity, and follow-up mechanisms. This underscores the importance of moving from one-way dissemination to dialogic engagement, which has long been highlighted as a limitation of top-down models of social mobilization (Manyozo, 2012; Tufte, 2017).

4.7 Effectiveness of Traditional Media

The study revealed that traditional media—radio, community durbars, and drama—continue to dominate campaign landscapes, particularly in rural and semi-literate communities. This aligns with earlier research showing that traditional channels enjoy credibility, familiarity, and wide accessibility in Africa (Rogers, 2003; Banda, 2016). However, findings also revealed that mere exposure through traditional media does not guarantee behavioral uptake; rather, the resonance of the message depends on how it connects with immediate household concerns such as health, sanitation, and livelihoods. This corroborates Uses and Gratifications Theory, which posits that audiences actively select messages that satisfy perceived needs (McQuail, 2010). Participants’ preference for content linked to cholera prevention, vaccination, and livelihood security underscores the premium placed on pragmatic value and efficacy cues in driving attention and action.

4.8 Role of Digital Media

Although digital penetration remains uneven, the study identified increasing opportunities for low-cost digital platforms such as WhatsApp and SMS to complement traditional communication. Participants proposed follow-up reminders, interactive polls, and community WhatsApp groups to sustain momentum after durbars and drama events. These insights resonate with the Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) model, which stresses the need for sustained reinforcement and feedback loops to translate awareness into action (USAID, 2018; Storey & Lee, 2019). The gradual integration of digital tools also reflects global evidence on media-mix strategies, where blended approaches enhance recall and allow for personalized follow-up (Tufté, 2017; McQuail, 2010). However, issues of affordability, connectivity, and digital literacy emerged as

structural barriers, echoing concerns raised in the broader literature on digital divides in African development communication (Donner, 2015; Fuchs, 2020).

4.9 Interpersonal Communication and Community Engagement

The analysis consistently revealed the critical role of interpersonal communication in generating trust, clarifying misconceptions, and motivating enrolment into social security schemes. Participants emphasized the importance of community focal persons, opinion leaders, and dramatizations co-created with local groups. This aligns with Bandura's (2001) Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes observational learning, modeling, and reinforcement as key mechanisms in behavioral change. By seeing relatable peers engage with and benefit from campaigns, communities are more likely to replicate the desired behavior. Importantly, the preference for interpersonal over abstract policy narratives highlights the enduring relevance of face-to-face communication in low-trust environments, consistent with Melkote and Steeves' (2001) view of communication as both a social and cultural process.

4.10 Relevance of Message Framing and Feedback Mechanisms

The findings further stress that campaigns perform best when messages are framed around tangible, short-term benefits, such as preventing disease or securing livelihoods. Abstract policy discourses were found to underperform because they failed to connect with the everyday realities of audiences. This insight reinforces framing literature, which shows that message salience is directly tied to perceived utility and immediacy (Tufté, 2017; McCombs, 2004). Moreover, the call for structured feedback—via hotlines, rapid polls, and co-creation workshops—reflects the evaluative dimension of Utilization-Focused Evaluation Theory (Patton, 2015), which argues that programs are more effective when audiences themselves shape the communication design. Community-driven

scripting and the rotation of storytellers were particularly valued for sustaining engagement, avoiding fatigue, and fostering ownership of campaign narratives.

4.11 Synthesizing Across Objectives

Taken together, the four objectives reveal a step-by-step trajectory from identification of effective communication channels, through recognition of limitations, to the articulation of practical pathways for improvement. This coherent pattern supports the Logical Framework Model, which stresses the need for clear linkages between inputs, outputs, and intended outcomes (Bakewell & Garbutt, 2005). The findings suggest that for social security campaigns to succeed among Ghana's self-employed, strategies must integrate traditional credibility with digital reinforcement, emphasize local relevance, and institutionalize community feedback.

4.12 Implications for Policy and Practice

The study's findings hold significant implications for institutions such as the Information Services Department (ISD) and allied agencies tasked with policy communication. First, policy campaigns must move beyond seasonal slogans to interactive, rotating formats that prevent message fatigue. Second, integrating community ownership through co-creation and focal persons can deepen trust and legitimacy. Finally, digital follow-ups, while still constrained by access gaps, present low-cost opportunities for scaling reinforcement and tracking outcomes. Collectively, these insights affirm that communication strategies are not merely technical tools but social processes requiring structural support, local participation, and adaptive media mixes to be effective (Servaes, 2008; Tufte, 2017).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings, the conclusion drawn from the analysis, and recommendations derived from the study. The focus is on assessing the role of traditional media in government development communication with specific reference to the Information Services Department (ISD) of Ghana.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed several important insights into the role of traditional media in government development communication.

First, the findings demonstrated that **radio remains the most influential traditional medium** used by ISD in disseminating development messages. Its affordability, wide geographic reach, and the ability to broadcast in multiple local languages make it highly effective in engaging rural and urban audiences. However, limited airtime allocations and competition from commercial programming often reduce its potential impact.

Second, **television and print media** were found to be important but less accessible in rural communities. Television is more effective in urban settings due to higher access to electricity and reception devices, while newspapers tend to cater to literate populations, leaving out large sections of semi-literate or illiterate citizens. This highlights issues of inclusivity in government communication strategies.

Third, **community-based communication approaches** such as information vans, public announcements, mobile cinema, and durbars play a vital role in bridging the communication gap between government and citizens. These methods foster trust, create opportunities for feedback, and enhance participation in development programs, particularly in remote areas.

Finally, the findings pointed to **several challenges** hindering ISD's effectiveness in deploying traditional media. These include resource constraints, limited technical training for ISD officers, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and growing competition from digital platforms. Despite these challenges, traditional media continues to be a relevant and indispensable tool for reaching marginalized communities and ensuring inclusivity in development communication.

5.2 Conclusions

The study draws many conclusions which reflect theoretical, methodological and empirical studies.

This chapter two drew a conclusion based on presentation of the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study, highlighting the relevance of Development Communication Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory. It concluded that empirical literature informs both the research questions, key terms and concepts. By framing the study within these academic lenses, the chapter sets the stage for a comprehensive analysis of how traditional media supports government communication through the activities of the ISD.

Chapter three drew conclusion based on a detailed account of the methodological framework underpinning this study, highlighting the qualitative case study design, purposive sampling, and thematic data analysis. It concluded that ethical considerations and study limitations were also relevant to demonstrate the rigor and credibility of the research process. The chosen methods

are well-suited to addressing the study's objectives of examining the role of traditional media in ISD's development communication and understanding audience engagement in the Ghanaian context.

Empirical conclusion reflects the fact that traditional media continues to play a **critical and irreplaceable role** in government development communication in Ghana. While radio, television, and print media remain important, community-based traditional approaches significantly strengthen the government's engagement with citizens, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities.

The Information Services Department's reliance on traditional media underscores the enduring relevance of these channels in disseminating development messages. However, their effectiveness is often limited by inadequate funding, weak logistical support, and limited adoption of participatory communication models. Furthermore, the rapid growth of digital communication technologies poses both a challenge and an opportunity for ISD, requiring an adaptive communication model that combines traditional and modern platforms.

In sum, traditional media remains an effective government communication tool, but its future relevance lies in **strategic integration, capacity-building, and participatory approaches** that ensure inclusivity, credibility, and sustained citizen engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Strengthen ISD's Capacity and Resource Base

To effectively carry out its mandate, the Information Services Department (ISD) requires adequate resources in terms of funding, modern equipment, and logistics. Government should prioritize

budgetary allocations to the department to ensure that communication activities are not limited by financial or logistical constraints. Adequate resourcing will enable ISD to maintain functional information vans, expand its reach to rural communities, and ensure the consistent dissemination of government development communication messages.

Furthermore, investment in infrastructure such as regional media centers, audio-visual equipment, and reliable transportation is essential for sustaining communication campaigns across the country. Without the necessary resources, ISD's ability to fulfill its role as the government's primary communication agency will remain limited. Strengthening its resource base will not only enhance nationwide visibility but also foster greater trust and credibility in government communication.

2. Enhance Training and Professional Development

To remain effective in an evolving communication landscape, ISD officers must be equipped with up-to-date skills in communication strategies, media engagement, and audience research. Regular training programs should focus on participatory communication, data-driven message design, and culturally sensitive content creation to improve how messages resonate with diverse audiences. Building officers' professional capacity will enable them to deliver development communication in ways that are inclusive and impactful.

Additionally, exposure to modern training in digital communication tools, social media engagement, and crisis communication will strengthen ISD's adaptability. Partnerships with academic institutions, media organizations, and international agencies could be pursued to provide professional development opportunities. This investment in human capital will enhance ISD's long-term capacity and position it as a modern and professional communication body.

3. Integrate Traditional and Digital Media

While traditional media remains vital for reaching large segments of the Ghanaian population, the integration of digital platforms will help ISD extend its reach to younger and more tech-savvy audiences. A hybrid communication approach that blends radio, television, and community outreach with social media campaigns, websites, and mobile applications can maximize outreach. This approach will ensure that communication is not only widespread but also interactive, giving citizens multiple channels to engage with government information.

Moreover, adopting digital tools alongside traditional platforms will increase ISD's ability to respond swiftly to misinformation and strengthen government-citizen dialogue. By combining the strengths of both media types, ISD will be able to foster inclusivity, bridging the communication gap between rural populations dependent on traditional media and urban populations who rely heavily on digital communication.

4. Expand Community-Based Communication Programs

Community-based communication has proven to be one of the most effective tools in ensuring grassroots participation and feedback. ISD should expand the use of information vans, mobile cinema, and durbars to provide direct, face-to-face engagement with citizens. Such platforms encourage dialogue and allow communities to ask questions, seek clarifications, and provide feedback on government policies and programs. This two-way communication process strengthens accountability and promotes a sense of ownership among citizens.

Furthermore, greater investment in community engagement activities will improve ISD's presence at the local level. By working closely with traditional authorities, religious leaders, and community-based organizations, ISD can build stronger relationships with citizens and foster trust

in government communication. These efforts will contribute to deeper civic participation and enhance the effectiveness of development communication initiatives.

5. Develop Strong Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

For government communication to remain relevant and effective, ISD must establish clear systems for monitoring and evaluating its activities. Regular assessments of campaigns should focus on reach, audience reception, and the behavioral impact of messages delivered. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks will enable ISD to track performance, identify challenges, and make evidence-based adjustments to improve future campaigns.

In addition, structured feedback mechanisms—such as surveys, focus group discussions, and community feedback sessions—should be institutionalized to ensure that citizen voices directly inform communication strategies. By adopting a continuous learning approach, ISD will be better positioned to adapt to emerging communication needs and ensure that government messages resonate with different segments of society.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION(UNIMAC-IJ)

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE

Dear Participants,

This interview guide is to aid in gathering data on the subject: “**Assessing the role of traditional media in government development communication: a case of the information services department.**” Kindly respond appropriately to the questions given. You are assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of this exercise because it will solely be used for the intended academic purpose.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

What is your age?

What is your gender?

What is your highest level of education?

What is your occupation or role (e.g., ISD official, traditional media practitioner, community member)?

How long have you been in this role or associated with ISD communication campaigns?

SECTION B: TRADITIONAL MEDIA TOOLS AND STRATEGIES USED BY ISD

(Objective I: To identify the traditional media tools and strategies utilized by the ISD in communicating development messages.)

What traditional media tools (e.g., community durbars, mobile cinema vans, public address systems) are commonly used by the ISD in your area?

Can you describe how these tools are typically employed to communicate development-related information?

How does the ISD decide which traditional media tools to use in specific communities or campaigns?

Are there any particular messaging strategies or themes consistently used in ISD's traditional media outreach?

SECTION C: EFFECTIVENESS OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

(Objective II: To evaluate the effectiveness of these tools in enhancing public awareness, understanding, and behavioural change.)

In your experience, how effective are ISD's traditional media tools in raising awareness about development issues?

Can you share any examples where ISD's media campaigns led to noticeable changes in community knowledge or behaviour?

How do people in your community generally respond to information disseminated through traditional media platforms?

What factors contribute to or hinder the effectiveness of traditional media messages in your context?

SECTION D: OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA USE

(Objective III: To examine the operational challenges and limitations associated with the use of traditional media by the ISD.)

What challenges do you or the ISD face when using traditional media for development communication?

Are there infrastructural, financial, or human resource constraints that affect how traditional media tools are deployed?

How do logistical issues such as transportation, power supply, or equipment availability impact ISD campaigns?

What measures, if any, are being taken to address these challenges?

SECTION E: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES TO TRADITIONAL MEDIA MESSAGES

(Objective IV: To investigate public perceptions and responses to development messages delivered through traditional media platforms.)

How do community members generally perceive messages delivered through ISD's traditional media tools?

Are there particular messages or topics that resonate more with the public when communicated via traditional media?

What criticisms or feedback have you heard from community members regarding ISD communication efforts?

In your opinion, how could ISD improve public trust and engagement through traditional media communication?

Thank you for participating