



ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS ON GENDER –
BASED VIOLENCE IN GHANA – A CASE OF CHORKOR COMMUNITY IN ACCRA.

BY

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DECLARATIONS

STUDENT’S DECLARATION

I, Louisa Sarfowaa Antwi, declare that this dissertation except quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere. Therefore, I bear the responsibility for any shortcomings.



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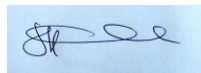
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SUPERVISORS’ DECLARATION

We, the undersigned supervisors, declare that we supervised the preparation and presentation of this work in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision.



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Date

DEDICATION

To God Almighty, my source of strength, wisdom, and purpose.
To my family and loved ones for their unwavering support and love.
And to every woman and girl who has endured or continues to endure gender-based violence in Ghana this work is in honor of your voice, dignity, and fight for justice.

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ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant human rights and public health concern in Ghana, with women and girls disproportionately affected despite ongoing interventions. Communication campaigns have become central to national and community-level prevention efforts; however, questions persist about their cultural relevance, effectiveness, and long-term influence in marginalized communities. This study examines the impact of GBV communication campaigns on community attitudes in Chorkor, a densely populated low-income coastal community in Accra. Guided by Social Norms Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory, the study explores the communication strategies employed, community reception, perceived attitudinal changes, and contextual factors shaping campaign effectiveness.

A qualitative research design was used, involving 30 purposively selected participants, including traders, artisans, students, religious leaders, opinion leaders, and representatives of community-based organizations. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, and analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework.

Findings show that mass media, particularly radio and television, remain the most influential source of GBV messaging, while community durbars, drama performances, and NGO-led engagements also contribute meaningfully. Although general awareness of GBV is high, comprehension varies due to language barriers, literacy limitations, and perceived lack of cultural relevance. Campaigns have supported increased awareness and some positive attitudinal shifts, especially among youth, yet entrenched gender norms, stigma, economic dependency, and fear of social backlash continue to limit behavioural change and reporting.

The study concludes that sustained, culturally grounded, and community-driven communication strategies are essential for long-term impact. It recommends strengthening participatory approaches, enhancing local partnerships, ensuring consistent messaging, and addressing socio-economic constraints to improve GBV prevention efforts in Ghana.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED

CBO – Community-Based Organization

CPC – Community Protection Committee

CSE – Comprehensive Sexuality Education

FCC – Focused Communication Campaign

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

GBV – Gender-Based Violence

GSS – Ghana Statistical Service

IEC – Information, Education, and Communication

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organization

MoGCSP – Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

SEM - Social-Ecological Model

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SNV – Social Norms and Values

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

UN Women – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

VAG – Violence Against Girls

VAW – Violence Against Women

VAC – Violence Against Children

WHO – World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter lays the foundation for the study by introducing the research context and rationale. It begins with a detailed background to the study, highlighting the global and national significance of gender-based violence (GBV) and the increasing role of communication campaigns in addressing such violence. It then presents the problem statement, which identifies the gaps in the effectiveness and local reception of these campaigns in Ghana, with a focus on the Chorkor community. The chapter outlines the main and specific research objectives, followed by the corresponding research questions. It further explains the scope and limitations of the study, the purpose and significance of the research, and defines key operational terms relevant to the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background to the Study

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive human rights violation affecting individuals across all demographics, particularly women and girls (UN Women 2020). It manifests in various forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuses. Globally, one in three women experience intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, cultural and systemic gender inequalities continue to perpetuate GBV, undermining efforts to promote gender equity and social justice (Hornuvo et al., 2022).

In Ghana, gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious public concern, with intimate partner violence being the most reported form. The 2017 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey revealed that 27.7% of women had experienced physical violence since the age of 15, while 18.2% reported emotional abuse (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2019). Although the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) in 2007 marked a significant legal milestone, enforcement challenges and entrenched patriarchal norms have hindered progress (Agyekum 2019). Societal acceptance of male dominance, victim blaming, and silence surrounding abuse further complicate this issue (Cantalupo et al., 2020).

Communication campaigns have emerged as a critical tool for addressing GBV, using advocacy, public education, and behavioral change communication to influence social norms and attitudes. Organizations such as the UNFPA, ActionAid, and local NGOs have

implemented campaigns in Ghana that utilize mass media, drama, community dialogue, and peer education to raise awareness and promote non-violent gender relations (Ankomah et al., 2021). Theories such as the Health Belief Model (Rosenstock, 1974) and Social Norms Theory (Cialdini & Trost, 1998) support the view that carefully designed messages can shift individual risk perceptions and reshape social expectations.

However, there is limited localized empirical evidence on how these campaigns influence attitudes in specific communities, such as Chorkor, a densely populated fishing community in Accra. Chorkor is characterized by low literacy rates, youth unemployment, poverty and rigid traditional gender norms (ModernGhana, 2014). Although some communication efforts have been made in the area, their actual reception, influence, and effectiveness remain underexplored. This study therefore seeks to assess the role of communication campaigns in shaping attitudes toward GBV in Chorkor, focusing on their strategies, reception, and sociocultural dynamics.

1.2 Problem Statement

Communication campaigns are globally recognized as powerful tools for influencing public attitudes and behaviors, especially in addressing sensitive issues such as gender-based violence (GBV). Ideally, these campaigns should function as catalysts for raising awareness, transforming harmful social norms, and mobilizing communities to act against the GBV (UN Women, 2020). Through targeted messaging and participatory engagement, communication campaigns can reshape perceptions, encourage reporting, and foster a culture of accountability.

Despite considerable efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to address GBV through communication campaigns in Ghana, the prevalence of violence against women and girls is alarmingly high. Numerous campaigns have been rolled out through mass media, community mobilization, and school-based programs; however, societal attitudes and behaviors often remain unchanged (Appiah & Mensah, 2020). In communities like Chorkor, traditional beliefs that support male dominance and female submissiveness continue to perpetuate GBV (UN Women, 2020).

Empirical studies highlight that communication campaigns in Ghana often fail to address deeply rooted gender norms, are not contextually grounded, and lack participatory mechanisms that foster community ownership (Alo 2018; Hornuvo et al. 2022). Consequently, these campaigns may raise awareness but fall short of inspiring genuine behavioral and attitudinal

changes. Moreover, little is known about how community members perceive and internalize campaign messages or how these messages interact with prevailing cultural values.

In the Chorkor community, socio-economic hardships and limited educational access further exacerbate the issue. With a high proportion of residents involved in informal economic activities and traditional fishing practices, engagement with formal communication platforms is limited (GSS, 2019). Thus, assessing the reception, effectiveness, and limitations of GBV communication campaigns in Chorkor is essential for developing more effective, culturally resonant strategies.

1.3 Research Objectives

Main objective:

To assess the effectiveness of communication campaigns in shaping community attitudes toward gender-based violence in the Chorkor community.

Sub- Objectives:

- To assess the perceptions and understanding of gender-based violence among the residents of Chorkor.
- To investigate the influence of existing communication campaigns on residents' attitudes towards gender-based violence.
- To identify barriers and facilitators impacting the effectiveness of gender-based violence communication campaigns in the Chorkor community.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the perceptions and understanding of gender-based violence among the residents of Chorkor?
- How have communication campaigns influenced residents' attitudes towards gender-based violence?
- What are the barriers and facilitators impacting the effectiveness of gender-based violence communication campaigns in the Chorkor community?

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the Chorkor community in the Greater Accra Region and focuses on communication campaigns implemented within the last five years (2019–2024). It is restricted to GBV campaigns that use communication strategies, whether through the mass media, community-based outreach, or peer education. The study employed a qualitative approach, which may limit generalizability but allows for an in-depth understanding of local perceptions and experiences. Challenges may include recall bias among participants and potential reluctance to discuss sensitive issues. Nevertheless, this study aims to provide nuanced insights into the communication and behavioral dynamics surrounding GBV in Chorkor.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to evaluate how communication campaigns influence attitudes and behaviors toward gender-based violence in Chorkor. It seeks to determine the effectiveness of different strategies, explore the interaction between campaign messages and local norms, and offer recommendations for designing culturally responsive communication interventions in the future.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the body of knowledge on GBV communication in Ghana by providing community-specific insights into campaign reception, challenges, and impact. This will help policymakers, NGOs, and development agencies understand how to tailor messages that resonate with local audiences and challenge harmful gender norms. Academically, this study will enrich the application of communication and behavior change theories in the Ghanaian context, particularly within underserved urban communities.

1.8 Scope of Study

This study is focused on assessing the influence of communication campaigns on attitudes toward gender-based violence (GBV) within the Chorkor community in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study is limited to the Chorkor community due to its demographic diversity, high population density, and reported incidences of GBV, making it a relevant setting for such research. The scope is restricted to communication campaigns that have been implemented by government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based groups, and international partners between 2019 and 2024.

The study is qualitative and will primarily explore community members' awareness, perceptions, and behavioural responses to selected GBV-related campaigns. It will also

examine the role of media channels (radio, TV, social media, community engagements, etc.) in disseminating campaign messages, as well as the extent to which these messages challenge prevailing social norms around gender and violence. The research will not seek to measure the actual reduction of GBV cases, but rather assess shifts in attitudes, knowledge, and discourse among residents.

While the findings may provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of communication interventions in similar urban communities in Ghana, they may not be entirely generalizable to rural or other socio-culturally distinct settings due to differences in exposure levels, infrastructure, and communication accessibility.

1.9 Operational Definitions

- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Any act of violence or abuse physical, sexual, psychological, or directed at an individual based on their gender identity or role (UN Women, 2020).
- **Communication Campaigns:** Planned efforts using media, interpersonal communication, and community engagement to disseminate messages intended to inform and influence public attitudes and behaviors.
- **Attitudes:** A person's thoughts, feelings, and predispositions toward a particular issue or behavior, in this case, gendered violence.
- **Social Norms:** Shared community beliefs and expectations that shape behavior, including those that sustain or discourage GBV (Cialdini and Trost, 1998).
- **Behavior Change Communication (BCC):** An interactive process that uses communication to promote and sustain positive behavior among individuals and communities.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters.

- **Chapter One** introduces the study, providing the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, purpose, significance, and operational definitions of the study.
- **Chapter Two** reviews the relevant empirical and theoretical literature on GBV and communication campaigns.

- **Chapter Three** outlines the research design and methodology, including sampling, data collection, and analysis.
- **Chapter Four** presents the findings and discusses them in relation to the research questions and the literature.
- **Chapter Five** concludes the study and offers recommendations and suggestions for future research.

1.11 Conclusion/Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the study and laid the foundation for understanding the significance of communication campaigns in shaping public attitudes toward gender-based violence in Ghana. It has presented the background of the study, identified the research problem, and outlined the objectives and research questions. The rationale for focusing on the Chorkor community was also explained, along with the scope within which the research will be conducted.

As Ghana continues its fight against GBV, understanding the impact of communication campaigns at the grassroots level is essential for shaping more effective, context-specific interventions. The next chapter will review relevant literature on gender-based violence, communication for social change, and past studies related to the effectiveness of media campaigns in altering public attitudes and behaviours.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing scholarly work and theoretical perspectives relevant to the study, particularly literature on gender-based violence (GBV), communication campaigns, behaviour change theories, and empirical findings on the impact of communication interventions on social norms and attitudes. The literature review is organized thematically to provide a critical overview of key concepts and identify gaps this research seeks to address.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Understanding Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive social problem that manifests as any harmful act directed at individuals based on their gender. It encompasses a broad spectrum of abuses, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence, as well as harmful traditional or cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, and dowry-related abuse. The underlying cause of GBV is rooted in gender inequality, power imbalances, and discriminatory societal norms that place one gender—typically women and girls—at a disadvantage. GBV is not only a violation of human rights but also a critical public health issue that has long-term physical, psychological, and socio-economic consequences. Victims of GBV often suffer from injuries, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, depression, anxiety, and social isolation, which perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization.

Globally, GBV remains one of the most widespread human rights violations. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), approximately one in three women worldwide experiences either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Such statistics highlight the severity and universality of the problem. While GBV affects all societies, its prevalence and forms are influenced by local cultural, social, and economic contexts. For instance, patriarchal systems that normalize male dominance, along with traditional practices that devalue women, often contribute to the perpetuation of GBV.

In Ghana, the challenge is equally pronounced. The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2023) reports that 27.7% of women aged 15–49 have experienced some form of violence, ranging

from physical assault to sexual harassment. Specific forms of GBV in the Ghanaian context include intimate partner violence, forced marriages, widowhood rites, and sexual abuse of minors. These practices not only violate individual rights but also hinder women's access to education, economic opportunities, and full participation in civic life. Additionally, GBV imposes a significant burden on public health systems and social services, with survivors often requiring medical care, psychosocial support, and legal assistance.

Understanding GBV also requires an examination of its structural and social dimensions. Gender norms, socio-economic inequality, and limited legal enforcement mechanisms often intersect to create environments where violence is tolerated or goes unreported. Stigma and fear of retaliation prevent many victims from seeking help, further entrenching cycles of abuse. Consequently, addressing GBV is not merely about responding to individual incidents but involves tackling systemic inequality, promoting gender-sensitive policies, and creating safe spaces for survivors to access support.

In summary, GBV is a complex, multi-dimensional issue that reflects broader social inequalities. It is both a consequence and a perpetuator of gender-based discrimination. In Ghana, like in many parts of the world, concerted efforts are needed at individual, community, and institutional levels to prevent abuse, protect victims, and challenge the societal norms that sustain it. A comprehensive understanding of GBV provides the foundation for effective interventions, advocacy, and the promotion of gender equality.

2.1.2 Communication Campaigns for Social Change

Communication campaigns for social change are strategic efforts designed to influence public attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors on specific social issues. These campaigns employ a combination of media channels, messaging strategies, and community engagement approaches to achieve desired social outcomes. Unlike conventional marketing campaigns aimed at promoting products or services, social change communication focuses on altering societal norms, reducing harmful behaviors, and fostering positive practices. They are grounded in communication theories and behavioral change models, which highlight the role of information, persuasion, and social influence in shaping individual and collective action (McQuail, 2010).

Effective social change campaigns often incorporate multiple communication channels, including mass media, social media, community radio, print materials, public service announcements, and interpersonal communication. Mass media can reach large audiences

quickly and raise awareness about critical issues, while participatory approaches, such as workshops, focus group discussions, and community dialogues, encourage active engagement and local ownership of the message. Interpersonal communication, such as peer education or community champions, is particularly effective in reinforcing behavioral change, as it leverages trust and social networks to challenge entrenched norms.

In the context of gender-based violence, communication campaigns serve several critical functions. Firstly, they educate communities about the nature, forms, and consequences of GBV. This awareness helps demystify the issue and encourages victims and bystanders to recognize and respond to abusive behaviors. Secondly, campaigns advocate for social and policy change by challenging cultural norms that perpetuate violence. For instance, messaging that promotes gender equality, respect for women's rights, and the unacceptability of domestic violence can gradually shift societal attitudes. Thirdly, such campaigns mobilize communities to take action reporting abuse, supporting survivors, or participating in local interventions. Organizations such as UN Women have demonstrated that well-designed campaigns can significantly increase community engagement in GBV prevention and support initiatives (UN Women, 2017).

In Ghana, communication campaigns have played a vital role in tackling GBV at the community level. Initiatives often blend traditional and modern media strategies, including radio dramas, TV spots, social media messaging, and community theater, to reach diverse populations. These campaigns are often tailored to local contexts, incorporating local languages, culturally relevant narratives, and trusted community figures to ensure the message resonates with the target audience. Furthermore, campaigns frequently collaborate with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local leaders to amplify impact and sustain behavioral change.

The success of communication campaigns for social change lies in their ability to create dialogue, foster reflection, and encourage collective action. By making invisible problems visible and normalizing conversations around sensitive issues, campaigns empower individuals and communities to challenge harmful practices. Over time, such interventions contribute to broader social transformations, including improved gender equality, reduced violence, and enhanced community resilience.

In conclusion, communication campaigns are essential tools for promoting social change, particularly in addressing complex issues such as GBV. By combining strategic messaging with

participatory engagement, these campaigns not only inform and educate but also catalyze shifts in attitudes, behaviors, and societal norms. Their effectiveness depends on cultural relevance, consistency, and the ability to connect with communities at both emotional and cognitive levels, making them indispensable in the fight against GBV in Ghana and beyond.

2.1.3 Community-Based Interventions in Ghana: Evidence of What Works

Community-based interventions, combining communication, grassroots mobilization, and support for survivors, have shown promising results in reducing intimate partner violence and altering social norms in Ghana. A notable example is the Rural Response System (RRS), which uses community-based action teams (COMBATs) to conduct awareness raising, counselling, support referral, and community mobilization (Ghana) (Authoring organisation).

A community-randomised controlled trial of RRS in Ghana's Central Region found that, in intervention communities, women's past-year experience of sexual IPV decreased significantly from 17.1% to 7.7%, compared to a marginal decrease in control communities (from 9.3% to 8.0%) (differenced-in-differences = -9.3 , $p = 0.03$) (García-Moreno et al., 2020). Emotional IPV, male controlling behaviour, and women's depression scores also declined significantly in intervention areas (García-Moreno et al., 2020). These findings suggest that well-structured, community-based, participatory GBV interventions can produce measurable reductions in violence and improvements in psychosocial well-being.

Similar integrated interventions combining community mobilization, media outreach, youth engagement, and support mechanisms have been implemented by NGOs (e.g., ActionAid Ghana) and have reported improved awareness, shifts in attitudes, and enhanced support for survivors (ActionAid Ghana project reports).

Such evidence underscores the importance of locally grounded, participatory interventions in achieving meaningful results reinforcing the rationale for assessing the effectiveness of communication campaigns in urban communities like Chorkor.

2.1.4 The Role of Media Framing and Message Delivery

Mass media and local media outlets, including radio, television, print, and social media, play crucial roles in shaping public perceptions of GBV, influencing discourse, and potentially shifting community norms. However, how media frames GBV significantly affects outcomes: framing can either reinforce stigma and victim-blaming or promote understanding, empathy, and collective responsibility.

In Ghana, a content analysis of 48 news articles on violence against women and girls (VAWG) found that media coverage was largely “episodic,” presenting GBV incidents as isolated events without reference to structural causes or broader social context; victim-blaming language was pervasive (Owusu-Addo et al., 2018). This kind of framing undermines the potential of media to foster deeper normative change by situating GBV within larger socio-cultural and structural frameworks, reducing public perception of GBV as a systemic issue requiring collective action. Therefore, for communication campaigns especially in urban contexts like Chorkor message framing must be deliberate and structural: emphasizing social norms, gender inequality, systemic power imbalances, rights, and community responsibilities, rather than portraying GBV solely as discrete, individual cases.

2.1.5 Socio-Demographic Factors, Media Exposure, and Differential Reception

Individual and community socio-demographic characteristics significantly influence how GBV communication campaigns are received, interpreted, and internalized. Factors such as education level, wealth status, urban/rural residence, and frequency of media exposure are associated with varying attitudes toward intimate partner violence (IPV). For instance, analysis of Ghanaian survey data revealed that women with higher education, higher income, and greater exposure to media (radio, TV, newspapers) were more likely to reject IPV.

In densely populated but economically stratified urban communities such as Chorkor, this heterogeneity means that campaign effects may vary substantially across sub-groups. Residents with better access to media and education may respond more positively to messages, while those with limited literacy or media access may be less influenced.

Therefore, when evaluating effectiveness of GBV communication campaigns in Chorkor, it is important to account for socio-demographic variables to understand both overall impact and differential effects across population sub-groups.

2.1.6 Challenges and Limitations of Communication Campaigns in Ghana

Despite documented successes, communication and community-based GBV interventions in Ghana face several significant challenges limiting their impact and sustainability.

- Structural and institutional constraints: Many interventions struggle with underfunded social services, inadequate shelters, limited legal enforcement, and poor coordination among state agencies. These structural weaknesses reduce the ability of survivors to

seek help, limiting follow-through after awareness campaigns (García-Moreno et al., 2020; ActionAid Ghana reports).

- Sustainability issues: Many interventions are donor-driven, short-term, and reliant on external funding; once the program ends, momentum often dissipates. Evaluations indicate that without continuous support and community reinforcement, attitudinal gains may not translate into long-term behavior change (García-Moreno et al., 2020).
- Media framing pitfalls: As noted, prevalent episodic and victim-blaming framing in media coverage undermines the potential for structural and normative change (Owusu-Addo et al., 2018).
- Socio-demographic inequalities: Variations in education, wealth, media access, and social capital mean that campaigns may benefit only certain segments of the population, leaving out the most marginalized.
- Cultural resistance and entrenched norms: Deeply rooted patriarchal values and traditional gender roles may resist change, especially when campaigns are short-term or externally driven.

These limitations must be acknowledged in any evaluation of campaign effectiveness particularly in complex urban environments such as Chorkor.

2.1.7 Conceptualizing “Effectiveness” of GBV Communication Campaigns in Chorkor

For purposes of this study, "effectiveness" of communication campaigns was understood along multiple dimensions:

- Awareness and knowledge gains increased understanding of GBV forms, consequences, legal rights, and support services.
- Attitude change — shifts in perceptions: reduced acceptance of violence, increased empathy and support for survivors, willingness to challenge abusive behaviours.
- Normative change and social acceptance — evidence of shifting social norms: community disapproval of GBV, increased bystander support, improved social support structures, reduction of stigma.
- Behavioral intentions and actual actions — reporting of abuse, support for survivors, male-ally behaviour, community mobilization, engagement with support services.

- Sustainability and institutionalization — integration of anti-GBV messaging and practices into local institutions (schools, faith-based organizations, community groups), continuous community engagement, and availability of support services (legal aid, counselling, shelters).

This multidimensional framework moves beyond simple awareness measures, enabling a more nuanced assessment of campaign outcomes in a context like Chorkor.

2.1.8 Gaps in Existing Literature & Justification for This Study

A review of existing literature and interventions reveals several gaps, especially relevant to urban, informal, and economically vulnerable communities like Chorkor:

- Most empirical evidence stems from rural or peri-urban interventions (e.g., RRS), with limited focus on urban-poor, densely populated communities. Findings may therefore not be directly transferable to contexts like Chorkor.
- There is a lack of mixed-method, longitudinal studies combining quantitative outcome measures (e.g., IPV prevalence, reporting) with qualitative insights (norms, perceptions, lived experience) especially in urban Ghana.
- Media framing studies (e.g., Owusu-Addo et al., 2018) identify shortcomings in media coverage, but there is little research on how alternative, norm-based framing (structural, rights-based, gender equity) in campaigns affects long-term attitudes or behavior.
- There is insufficient attention to intra-community variation how socio-demographic differences (education, age, gender, economic status, media access) affect reception and impact of campaigns.
- The sustainability and institutional integration of GBV communication campaigns remain under-explored few studies examine how community-based interventions are embedded into local institutions for long-term change.

Given these gaps, this study on Chorkor will contribute to the field by providing context-specific empirical evidence, assessing not only awareness but normative and behavioral outcomes, and exploring differential effects among community sub-groups. This will help understand whether communication campaigns can be effective in urban-poor coastal communities, and under what conditions.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Social Norms Theory

Social Norms Theory has emerged as a critical framework in understanding and addressing persistent societal challenges such as gender-based violence (GBV). Rooted in social psychology, this theory suggests that individuals' behaviors are strongly influenced by their perceptions of what is considered typical (descriptive norms) and acceptable (injunctive norms) within their community (Cislaghi & Heise, 2018). In many societies, including Ghana, GBV is sustained not merely by individual beliefs or behaviors, but by deeply entrenched social norms that tacitly condone or even endorse violence against women and girls (Cantalupo et al., 2020).

Descriptive norms refer to perceptions of what most people do, while injunctive norms relate to beliefs about what most people approve or disapprove of (Tankard & Paluck, 2016). In the context of GBV, individuals may refrain from challenging abusive behaviors if they believe such practices are widely accepted or expected within their community, even when they privately disagree. This phenomenon, known as pluralistic ignorance, can entrench harmful norms by creating a false consensus around violent practices (Bicchieri, 2017). For example, in patriarchal Ghanaian communities like Chorkor, societal expectations around masculinity, authority, and family honor may discourage open resistance to domestic abuse, particularly when these norms are passed down through generations and reinforced through cultural or religious institutions (Asante & Adomako Ampofo, 2021).

Communication campaigns that aim to reduce GBV can benefit significantly from grounding their strategies in Social Norms Theory. Instead of focusing solely on increasing awareness or delivering factual messages, norm-based campaigns seek to correct misperceptions about what others believe or do, thereby reshaping community attitudes. Such interventions often involve highlighting that non-violent behaviors are more common and more socially supported than people may think. According to Berkowitz (2004), campaigns that successfully align perceived norms with actual positive behaviors can significantly influence public attitudes and personal decision-making.

Evidence from global and regional interventions shows that when community members especially influential figures like religious leaders, elders, or local authorities publicly challenge harmful norms and endorse gender equality, the normative environment begins to shift. In Uganda, for instance, community dialogues facilitated through media and grassroots outreach helped reduce the social acceptability of wife-beating by correcting assumptions about

its prevalence and by fostering collective commitments to change (Kyegombe et al., 2014). Similarly, in Ethiopia and Senegal, norm-shifting communication campaigns embedded in community theater and storytelling were able to challenge dominant narratives about gender roles and catalyze attitudinal change (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019).

In the Ghanaian context, although several anti-GBV campaigns have been launched by government agencies and non-governmental organizations, few have explicitly targeted the normative dimensions that perpetuate violence. By applying the Social Norms Theory, this research investigates whether campaigns in Chorkor effectively engage with both descriptive and injunctive norms surrounding gender and violence. Moreover, the study seeks to determine whether these campaigns not only inform but empower individuals and communities to question and reconstruct shared beliefs about gender relations.

In essence, Social Norms Theory offers a robust lens through which to evaluate the effectiveness of communication campaigns in shifting attitudes toward GBV. Its emphasis on peer influence, community perception, and collective behavior makes it particularly relevant in contexts where silence, stigma, and social cohesion play a powerful role in sustaining harmful practices. As such, grounding campaign design in this theory provides a pathway for sustainable behavioral change that is not only individual but systemic and cultural.

2.2.2 Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory, developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), posits that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. This theory suggests that the salience of issues in the public mind is largely influenced by the frequency and prominence with which those issues are presented in the media. In other words, when an issue is repeatedly highlighted, audiences begin to perceive it as more important than those that receive less attention (McCombs, 2005). This is particularly relevant in shaping public discourse around gender-based violence (GBV), a complex societal issue often underreported or misrepresented in traditional media.

In the context of communication campaigns targeting GBV, the Agenda-Setting Theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how media content can influence public attitudes and priorities. When GBV is consistently featured in news coverage, radio discussions, or televised public service announcements, it can elevate the issue in the minds of the public and policymakers alike (Framingham, 2018). The theory is particularly applicable in Ghana, where issues surrounding domestic violence and sexual abuse are often marginalized in mainstream

discussions due to cultural stigma, victim-blaming, and patriarchal norms (Owusu-Addo et al., 2022).

In communities like Chorkor an urban fishing community in Accra agenda-setting through communication campaigns can be a powerful tool for shaping societal norms and prompting collective reflection on GBV. Campaigns that use local radio stations, drama series, social media, or town hall meetings to repeatedly frame GBV as a pressing public health and human rights concern can gradually shift public attention toward the issue. According to Adegbola and Gearhart (2019), the ability of media campaigns to influence not only individual awareness but also policy discussions is a central feature of agenda-setting, especially when coupled with advocacy from civil society organizations.

Moreover, agenda-setting works in tandem with the second level of the theory, often referred to as *framing*. While the first level focuses on issue salience, the second level deals with how the issue is presented. For GBV campaigns, the way violence is framed as a legal issue, a moral concern, or a gender equity matter can significantly influence how audiences interpret the problem and their motivation to act (Entman, 2007). A campaign that frames GBV as an issue of dignity and societal well-being, rather than solely as a private or domestic concern, is more likely to mobilize community-level support and engagement (Maxwell & McCombs, 2015).

Despite its utility, the effectiveness of agenda-setting in influencing attitudes toward GBV also depends on access to media, literacy levels, and trust in information sources. In lower-income settings like Chorkor, where traditional and informal communication networks such as community durbars, peer groups, or faith-based gatherings remain powerful, it is essential for campaigns to localize media messages and use culturally resonant symbols to reinforce their agenda-setting potential (Boateng, 2020).

In summary, Agenda-Setting Theory underscores the strategic role of media and communication campaigns in prioritizing GBV as a critical issue. By consistently highlighting the prevalence, impact, and injustice of GBV, campaigns can reshape public consciousness and direct societal attention toward advocacy, support systems, and prevention efforts. When integrated with culturally relevant platforms and voices, agenda-setting becomes a transformative mechanism in the fight against gender-based violence in Ghana and similar contexts.

2.2.3 Participatory Communication Theory

Participatory Communication Theory is rooted in the idea that meaningful development and social change occur most effectively when individuals and communities are actively involved in the communication processes that affect their lives. This theory shifts from the traditional top-down model of communication where messages are disseminated from authorities to passive recipients toward a more inclusive, bottom-up approach that values dialogue, local knowledge, and co-creation of meaning (Freire, 1970; Servaes, 2008). In the context of gender-based violence (GBV), participatory communication offers a transformative framework through which marginalized communities can collectively reflect, challenge harmful norms, and foster sustainable behavioral change.

At its core, Participatory Communication Theory emphasizes dialogue, inclusion, and empowerment (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006). Rather than relying solely on mass media messages that may not fully resonate with local realities, participatory strategies involve community members in identifying the problem, crafting messages, and deciding how these messages should be disseminated. This approach is particularly crucial in communities like Chorkor, where GBV is influenced by deeply rooted socio-cultural norms, poverty, and gender inequality (Appiah & Mensah, 2020). Campaigns that fail to engage the target audience in meaningful conversation often risk being perceived as externally imposed and irrelevant.

Freire's (1970) concept of "dialogical communication" underpins this theory, highlighting the role of critical consciousness (*conscientização*) in helping oppressed individuals understand their social reality and take collective action to transform it. Through participatory methods such as community forums, storytelling, participatory theater, and peer education, communication campaigns can move beyond mere information dissemination and toward real social transformation (Manyozo, 2012). These approaches not only provide platforms for expression but also allow community members to articulate their experiences with GBV and co-develop culturally sensitive solutions.

In Ghana, and specifically in Chorkor, evidence suggests that participatory communication models have been used effectively in public health and gender equity campaigns. For instance, NGOs have deployed community-based drama groups, focus groups, and radio call-in programs to facilitate conversations about domestic violence, early marriage, and reproductive health (Owusu-Addo & Smits, 2020). These interventions have shown greater potential in transforming harmful gender norms compared to one-way communication channels that fail to engage the lived realities of target audiences.

Participatory communication is also closely linked with empowerment theory. As people gain the tools to express themselves, analyze their situations, and influence decision-making processes, they become agents of change. In GBV interventions, this empowerment aspect is critical, particularly for women and youth who may otherwise lack platforms for their voices to be heard (Servaes, 2008). It encourages local ownership of the campaign's goals, increasing the likelihood of long-term behavioral and attitudinal shifts.

Nevertheless, there are challenges in applying participatory communication approaches. These include power imbalances within communities, literacy barriers, and limited resources to sustain engagement over time (Tufte, 2017). Additionally, tokenistic participation where community involvement is superficial can undermine the objectives of the campaign. For participation to be meaningful, it must be genuine, inclusive, and sustained throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages.

In summary, Participatory Communication Theory provides a compelling framework for designing and evaluating GBV communication campaigns in Chorkor and similar settings. It emphasizes the need for community dialogue, shared ownership, and empowerment, ensuring that the voices of those most affected by GBV are not only heard but also central to the process of social change. By adopting participatory methods, stakeholders can foster deeper community engagement, challenge entrenched norms, and build a more gender-equitable society from the ground up.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 GBV Communication Campaigns in Africa and Ghana

Studies across sub-Saharan Africa have shown that communication campaigns can shift attitudes and reduce tolerance for GBV. For example, the "Soul City" campaign in South Africa significantly influenced public attitudes toward domestic violence and increased awareness of legal protections (Usdin et al., 2005). In Ghana, the "Orange the World" campaign has sought to mobilize communities annually against GBV through a mix of media, advocacy walks, and school-based programs (UNFPA Ghana, 2021).

Research by Tsikata and Seini (2004) revealed that deeply entrenched cultural norms often hinder the effectiveness of GBV interventions. However, programs that integrate local voices, such as "Communication for Change" (C4C), have seen improved outcomes through storytelling and radio drama that reflect lived experiences (C4C Ghana, 2018).

2.3.2 Community-Level Interventions and Impact

A study by Adomako Ampofo (2008) found that community dialogue programs in Accra, including Chorkor, helped improve community understanding of the forms and consequences of GBV. These programs also increased bystander intervention and reporting. Similarly, the Gender Centre's Safe Spaces project documented improved attitudes toward survivors after a year of community engagement and media sensitization (Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre, 2019).

2.3.3 Challenges in Communication Campaigns

Several barriers limit the success of GBV communication interventions. These include low literacy rates, especially among women in low-income communities; limited access to mass media; gender norms that silence women's voices; and distrust in state institutions (Coker-Appiah & Cusack, 1999; GSS, 2023). Moreover, one-off campaigns without sustained engagement often result in short-lived attitude changes (Heise, 2011).

2.3.4 Role of Local Media and Influencers

Local radio stations and community leaders are instrumental in shaping public attitudes. A study by Aboagye and Osei (2020) noted that involving opinion leaders, including chiefs and faith-based organizations, enhances the credibility and reach of GBV campaigns. In Chorkor, such stakeholders play a crucial role in either challenging or reinforcing existing gender norms.

2.4 Synthesis of Literature Gaps

While several studies acknowledge the potential of communication campaigns to influence attitudes toward GBV, there remains a gap in localized studies that examine how these campaigns are received in urban poor communities. Furthermore, the effectiveness of participatory communication methods over mass media approaches in Ghanaian urban settings remains underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on Chorkor as a case study.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed existing literature on gender-based violence and the role of communication campaigns in addressing it. Key theories such as Social Norms Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory have been discussed to provide a framework for analyzing campaign effectiveness. The review also highlighted gaps in localized research, particularly within communities like Chorkor.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research approach and design employed in the study. It describes the methodological framework adopted to investigate how communication campaigns influence perceptions and attitudes toward gender-based violence (GBV) within the Chorkor community. The research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations guiding the study have also been outlined in this chapter.

3.1 Research Approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach, which is appropriate for exploring complex social issues such as GBV and communication campaigns. Qualitative research emphasizes meaning-making and seeks to understand how individuals interpret their social reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach enabled the researcher to capture rich, nuanced data about residents' perceptions, lived experiences, and the influence of campaigns on attitudes toward GBV in Chorkor.

3.2 Research Design

The research employed a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive design. An exploratory design was chosen because GBV is a sensitive topic, and limited empirical work exists on how residents of Chorkor respond to GBV communication campaigns. Descriptive design allowed the researcher to document the lived experiences, attitudes, and behaviours of participants in detail, while providing contextual explanations of communal dynamics (Yin, 2018). This design also made it possible to integrate multiple methods of qualitative inquiry, namely in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations.

3.3 Study Population

The study population comprised adult residents of Chorkor aged 16 to 60 years, including men, women, traditional leaders, and stakeholders such as representatives of NGOs and media institutions engaged in GBV prevention and advocacy campaigns. This population was chosen because they are both direct targets and active influencers of GBV-related messages in the community. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2021), Chorkor is a highly populated

coastal community, making it a suitable case for understanding how communication campaigns intersect with cultural norms and everyday experiences of GBV.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with relevant knowledge, experience, and engagement with GBV issues and campaigns. Purposive sampling is often used in qualitative studies to ensure inclusion of diverse perspectives while focusing on individuals who can provide in-depth insights (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Approximately 30 participants were targeted for the study, consisting of:

- Community residents (men and women across age groups)
- Traditional/community leaders
- NGO representatives working on GBV
- Media practitioners engaged in GBV campaigns

This sample size was considered adequate to ensure diversity while allowing for data saturation, where no new themes emerge from additional interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Three main instruments were used for data collection:

- a. **In-depth Interviews (IDIs):** Conducted using semi-structured interview guides to explore personal experiences, perceptions of GBV, and responses to communication campaigns. Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility for probing deeper into emerging themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).
- b. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** FGDs were held with selected groups, including community leaders, youth, and women's groups. This method allowed for collective reflection and highlighted shared norms and group dynamics in relation to GBV campaigns.
- c. **Participant Observation:** The researcher immersed themselves in the community to observe attitudes, social interactions, and community responses to GBV communication campaigns. This technique enriched the data by capturing contextual

details and non-verbal dynamics that interviews alone could not reveal (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

3.6 Data Analysis

Data collected was analysed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring patterns and themes across data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Interviews and FGDs were recorded (with participants' consent) and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were coded manually and with the aid of NVivo software to support systematic categorization of data. Emerging themes were then interpreted in relation to the research objectives and theoretical framework of the study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations formed a crucial part of this research, ensuring that all participants were treated with dignity, respect, and fairness throughout the study process. The study adopted a comprehensive ethical framework guided by the principles of confidentiality, informed consent, cultural sensitivity, and professional integrity. These measures aligned with the ethical standards of the University of Ghana and international guidelines for research involving human subjects, particularly those outlined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) for studies addressing gender-based violence (GBV).

To safeguard confidentiality and privacy, all data collected were anonymized, and identifying details were removed from transcripts, reports, and analyses. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in private, secure settings to protect participants from potential discomfort or harm. These precautions ensured that participants could share their experiences freely without fear of exposure or reprisal (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Informed consent was another central ethical pillar of this research. Before participation, individuals were thoroughly briefed on the study's purpose, scope, and procedures. They were informed of their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Consent either written or verbal was explicitly obtained from all participants, demonstrating respect for their autonomy and agency (Bryman, 2016).

To maintain anonymity, the study ensured that no information could be traced back to individual participants. Findings were reported in aggregate form, and pseudonyms were used where necessary to protect participant identity. This approach aligns with best practices in

qualitative research, where protecting participants' identities is paramount, particularly in studies addressing sensitive social issues such as GBV (Patton, 2015).

The researcher also disclosed all potential conflicts of interest, including institutional affiliations and sources of support, to maintain transparency and minimize bias. Fair representation of perspectives was emphasized, ensuring that the voices of men, women, youth, and community leaders were all equitably reflected in the findings. No data were manipulated or selectively reported, reinforcing the study's commitment to academic honesty and credibility (Silverman, 2020).

Cultural sensitivity guided every phase of the research. Given that Chorkor is a culturally diverse and close-knit community, questions and discussions were framed in ways that respected local norms and traditions. This approach helped ensure that participants felt respected and that the interpretations of their responses remained contextually appropriate and culturally relevant (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006).

Ensuring data integrity was also a priority. All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded with participants' consent, accurately transcribed, and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access or data breaches. This commitment to accuracy and reliability strengthened the credibility of the research findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Because of the sensitive nature of GBV, the study also accounted for possible emotional or psychological distress among participants. Individuals who disclosed experiences of violence were provided with referral information to appropriate counselling and support services. This measure reflected ethical sensitivity and a responsibility to minimize harm (WHO, 2021).

Throughout the research process, adherence to professional integrity remained paramount. The study followed the ethical standards set by the University of Ghana and international research ethics protocols for GBV-related studies. It also observed WHO's (2021) "Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence Against Women," which emphasize confidentiality, informed consent, and the protection of participants' well-being.

Finally, the principle of dual use was considered in analyzing and disseminating findings. The research ensured that its results were used constructively to advance GBV prevention and strengthen communication strategies, while avoiding misuse or misrepresentation of sensitive data.

By diligently adhering to these ethical considerations, the research upheld the highest standards of academic and professional integrity. It ensured that participants' safety, dignity, and rights were respected at all times, while contributing responsibly to the broader discourse on communication and gender-based violence in Ghana.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodological framework guiding the study, highlighting the qualitative research approach, exploratory and descriptive design, study population, sampling strategy, data collection methods, analysis procedures, and ethical safeguards. The chosen methodology was deemed appropriate for gaining a deep understanding of how communication campaigns influence perceptions and attitudes toward GBV in Chorkor. The next chapter presents the findings and analysis derived from the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study titled “*Assessing Communication Campaigns and Their Influence on Attitudes Toward Gender-Based Violence in Ghana: A Case of Chorkor Community.*” The chapter provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of participants, the methods used in analyzing the data, and a detailed interpretation of findings based on the themes emerging from the data. The discussion connects these findings to the theoretical frameworks: Social Norms Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory, and relevant empirical studies reviewed in Chapter Two.

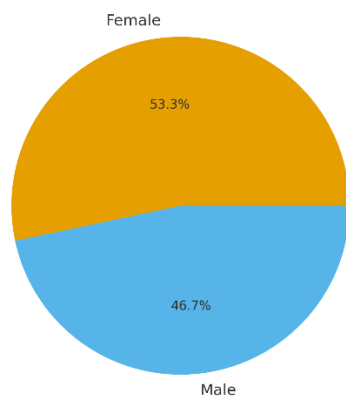
The data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations within the Chorkor community. The qualitative approach allowed for the exploration of participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of gender-based violence (GBV) and related communication campaigns. The findings are presented thematically in alignment with the study's objectives.

4.2 Demographic Representation

4.2.1 Gender Demographics

Out of the 30 participants engaged in this study, 16 were females and 14 were males. This gender distribution reflects the need to capture both male and female perspectives, as GBV affects individuals differently across genders. Women participants often provided experiential insights as either survivors or advocates, while men reflected on shifting attitudes, traditional expectations, and community responses to campaign messages. The inclusion of both genders aligns with UN Women's (2020) emphasis on inclusive engagement in GBV discourse to achieve balanced understanding and solutions.

Gender Distribution of Participants



4.2.2 Population of Participants

The population consisted of adult residents of Chorkor, including traders, artisans, students, religious leaders, local opinion leaders, and representatives from community-based organizations involved in GBV advocacy. Ages ranged from 18 to 60 years, ensuring the inclusion of youth and older adults who could provide diverse generational perspectives. Participants were purposively selected to ensure those with direct or indirect exposure to GBV campaigns contributed to the data. This demographic composition reflects the heterogeneity of Chorkor as a densely populated coastal community characterized by strong cultural traditions and socio-economic challenges (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2023).

4.2.3 Years of Service of Participants

For participants affiliated with NGOs or community groups, years of service ranged between 1 and 10 years. Individuals with longer service (5 years and above) offered historical perspectives on how GBV awareness has evolved within the community, while newer members contributed insights into the current state of communication strategies. This range allowed the researcher to identify both persistent challenges and emerging trends in GBV communication efforts in Chorkor.

4.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework: data familiarization, coding, theme development, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing up results. This approach was ideal for interpreting qualitative narratives and uncovering recurring patterns related to perceptions, awareness, and behaviour toward GBV.

Thematic analysis generated four major themes corresponding to the research objectives:

- Communication strategies employed in Chorkor.
- Reception and interpretation of campaign messages.
- Influence of campaigns on attitudes and behaviour.
- Barriers and facilitators affecting campaign effectiveness.

These themes were interpreted in line with existing theories and literature on communication, social change, and GBV prevention.

4.3.1 Interpretations of Findings

Theme 1: Communication Strategies in Chorkor

Findings revealed that television and radio remain the most common channels for disseminating GBV messages, cited by most participants. Other significant mediums included community durbars, posters, flyers, and social media platforms. Some respondents mentioned the role of NGOs and churches in promoting anti-GBV messages. However, several participants admitted to rarely seeing or recalling campaigns in recent times, suggesting irregular outreach.

These findings affirm McQuail's (2010) and Noar's (2006) argument that the effectiveness of campaigns depends on consistent, multi-channel dissemination. The prominence of television and radio is consistent with media consumption patterns in urban Ghana (GSS, 2023), while the limited memory of campaigns indicates a need for sustained messaging to maintain salience (McCombs, 2005).

Theme 2: Reception and Interpretation of Campaign Messages

Participants' understanding of GBV ranged from physical and sexual abuse to economic and psychological forms of violence. Although awareness levels were relatively high, trust in the sources of messages was moderate, many respondents said "maybe" when asked if they trusted campaign messages. Some cited language and literacy barriers that hinder comprehension, emphasizing the importance of messages in local dialects such as Ga.

This aligns with Tufte (2017) and Freire (1970), who advocate for participatory and culturally grounded communication to foster mutual understanding. The findings also support the Social Norms Theory premise that community trust and perceived approval from respected figures influence message acceptance (Cislaghi & Heise, 2018).

Theme 3: Influence of Campaigns on Attitudes and Behaviour

A modest proportion of participants indicated that GBV campaigns had influenced their attitudes positively, enhancing their understanding and willingness to report abuse. However, a larger portion felt that while awareness had increased, actual behavioural change remained limited due to stigma and social pressure.

This observation corroborates Noar (2006) and Heise (2011), who note that communication alone rarely produces immediate behavioural change without supportive environmental or normative shifts. The findings also reflect Agenda-Setting Theory, as repeated exposure may raise awareness but not necessarily reshape deep-seated beliefs unless reinforced through participatory dialogue (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Theme 4: Barriers and Facilitators to Campaign Effectiveness

Key barriers identified include illiteracy, language barriers, traditional norms, and limited trust in agencies. Facilitators mentioned were involvement of local leaders, the use of local dialects, sustained engagement, and culturally relevant drama.

These findings echo Heise (2011) and Kyegombe et al. (2014), who stress that transformative GBV communication must address structural inequalities and social norms. The Participatory Communication Theory further emphasizes local ownership and dialogue as crucial to campaign success (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006).

4.4 Discussion of Findings and Their Relationship to the Literature Review

The findings from the study reveal complex, interconnected perspectives on gender-based violence (GBV) and the influence of communication campaigns within the Chorkor community. Consistent with existing scholarship, participants' responses highlight the powerful role of communication in shaping attitudes, while also drawing attention to deep-rooted sociocultural norms that continue to hinder transformative change (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019; Adomako Ampofo, 2008).

A recurring theme across responses was that although communication campaigns have increased awareness of GBV, longstanding cultural expectations continue to limit their impact. For instance, Participant 1 noted, *“The messages are good, but culture is stronger than the campaigns. People still believe a man has the right to discipline his wife.”* Similar sentiments were echoed by Participant 16 who stated, *“Sometimes the campaigns make sense, but when you go home it is the same culture waiting for you. Change is slow in a place like this.”* These responses align with Bicchieri’s (2017) argument that social norms especially gender norms are often resistant to change unless both empirical and normative expectations shift simultaneously.

Many participants highlighted that communication campaigns were sometimes perceived as externally imposed rather than community-led. This perspective reinforces the Participatory Communication Theory, which emphasizes that sustainable social change emerges when the target audience becomes active participants in the communication process (Freire, 1970; Tufte, 2017). Participant 17 emphasized this gap, stating, *“The problem is that some of the messages sound foreign. If they will use our own people to talk to us, we will listen better.”* Participant 23, a community elder, expressed a similar view: *“We appreciate the education, but they should involve the traditional leaders more. Without us, the message will not sink.”* These comments affirm the literature arguing that participatory and community-driven approaches yield greater impact in GBV interventions (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006; Owusu-Addo & Smits, 2020).

The study also found generational differences in exposure and response to GBV campaigns. Younger participants were more influenced by digital campaigns, while older residents relied on radio or community-based activities. Participant 18 remarked, *“The social media campaigns help us the youth a lot, but my mother and aunties don’t really understand those ones.”* This finding supports the Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which proposes that media influence what people think about, though audience interpretation varies based on demographics and media access (McQuail, 2010). Furthermore, Participant 29 shared, *“My friends and I follow some of the GBV influencers on TikTok... but older folks don’t understand them,”* highlighting a digital divide that affects the reach of modern campaigns in low-income communities.

Despite increased awareness, the persistence of fear, stigma, and economic dependency continues to discourage reporting of GBV incidents. Participant 24 stated, *“When you report violence, the community will say you are a bad wife. That fear makes many women keep quiet*

even after learning from campaigns.” This aligns with Asante and Adomako Ampofo’s (2021) findings that social sanctions and patriarchal expectations reinforce silence around GBV in Ghana.

Poverty emerged as another significant theme, with several participants linking economic stressors to domestic conflict. Participant 21 observed, *“Campaigns can talk about GBV, but if people don’t have money, the problems will continue. Poverty brings plenty of tension in homes.”* This supports evidence from UN Women (2020) and Cantalupo et al. (2020), which demonstrates that economic vulnerability exacerbates women’s exposure to violence and limits their ability to seek help.

Participants also expressed concerns about the limited continuity and sporadic nature of campaigns. As Participant 28 explained, *“If the campaigns continued regularly, people would change more. But sometimes they come once and disappear for months.”* Literature on communication for development validates this concern, emphasizing that social change requires sustained, consistent engagement (Manyozo, 2012; Waisbord, 2018).

Nonetheless, some participants recognized that campaigns especially those using participatory drama or community meetings had begun shifting perceptions, particularly among children and youth. Participant 30, a teacher, noted, *“Even in my school, the children now report bullying and harassment. That means the campaigns have future impact.”* This observation supports the arguments of Usdin et al. (2005), who found that multi-level, sustained communication interventions can contribute to long-term attitudinal shifts.

While many men expressed resistance to the framing of campaigns as being “women-centered,” they also acknowledged receiving valuable information. Participant 27 remarked, *“Sometimes the campaigns don’t explain what men should also do. They focus too much on women. Maybe if they include men more, attitudes will change.”* This aligns with Heise’s (2011) call for GBV interventions that include men as partners in prevention rather than treating them solely as perpetrators.

Several participants emphasized that dramatized or storytelling-based campaigns resonated with them more than abstract messaging. As Participant 22 stated, *“I like when they use drama in the community. It touches the heart more than the radio announcements.”* This affirms findings by Kyegombe et al. (2014), who demonstrated the effectiveness of community drama and participatory storytelling in transforming harmful norms.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that communication campaigns have improved general awareness, yet their long-term influence on deep-seated norms remains limited without community ownership, cultural contextualization, and sustained support structures. As Participant 19 summarized, *“We learn many things from the NGOs, but the men here feel that these messages are trying to control them. That makes some people reject the message.”* This aligns with the literature that emphasizes norm change requires multilevel interventions individual, relational, community, and institutional (Cislaghi & Heise, 2018; Tankard & Paluck, 2016).

In summary, the findings support existing scholarship that communication campaigns can influence attitudes but must be continuous, culturally grounded, and participatory to produce meaningful change. The study ultimately demonstrates that social norms, gendered power structures, and economic constraints continue to shape community responses to GBV interventions, reinforcing the need for integrated communication and development approaches.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the findings and analysis of data collected from the Chorkor community. Results indicate that while communication campaigns have raised awareness of GBV, challenges such as language barriers, literacy levels, and entrenched social norms continue to limit their impact. The discussion connected these findings to relevant theories and prior studies, emphasizing that transformative communication must go beyond information dissemination to involve participatory processes and norm-shifting strategies.

The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the research, conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of gender-based violence (GBV) communication campaigns in Chorkor. The chapter further highlights the implications of the study and suggests areas for future research.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine community perceptions of GBV and assess the effectiveness of communication campaigns aimed at addressing it in the Chorkor community. Guided by qualitative research principles (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015), the study applied Social Norms Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and Participatory Communication Theory to explain how communication interventions influence awareness, attitudes, and behaviours related to GBV.

Data collection involved interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, consistent with naturalistic inquiry traditions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Findings showed that although awareness of GBV was relatively high, patriarchal norms, cultural attitudes, and socioeconomic conditions continued to shape how violence is perceived and addressed in the community. These findings echo earlier evidence that social norms and cultural expectations strongly influence gendered behaviour and acceptance of violence (World Health Organization, 2021).

Furthermore, while communication campaigns have increased awareness and influenced attitudes to some extent, many participants felt the interventions lacked consistency, cultural grounding, and community ownership. This aligns with research suggesting that communication campaigns are most impactful when sustained, culturally appropriate, and participatory (UN Women, 2016).

5.3 Key Findings

5.3.1 Awareness and Perceptions of GBV

The study revealed that residents possessed a general understanding of GBV, particularly its physical and emotional dimensions. However, less visible forms such as economic or

psychological abuse were often normalized or overlooked. This reflects broader findings that certain forms of GBV remain invisible in many low-income communities due to cultural and structural factors (Ghana Statistical Service, 2023).

5.3.2 Influence of Communication Campaigns

Communication campaigns contributed meaningfully to awareness-raising through radio, social media, community durbars, and NGO-led activities. However, as Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize, awareness does not automatically translate to behavioural change, particularly where cultural and structural factors remain intact. Participants reported that although campaigns helped reshape understanding, they were not always relatable or consistent enough to dismantle entrenched norms.

5.3.3 Barriers to Effective Campaign Impact

Several barriers were identified, including low literacy levels, cultural beliefs, and limited campaign visibility. These barriers align with WHO's (2021) observation that GBV interventions often struggle in communities where patriarchal norms and weak support systems persist. Additionally, the absence of consistent campaign reinforcement undermined message retention, supporting Guest, Namey, and Chen's (2020) argument that repeated exposure strengthens message impact.

5.3.4 Facilitators of Effective Campaign Impact

Community dialogue spaces, peer education, local storytelling, and multi-channel communication were identified as effective facilitators. These community-grounded approaches are consistent with participatory communication principles described by Patton (2015) and Denzin and Lincoln (2018), which emphasize co-creation and collaboration with community members.

5.4 Conclusions

The study concludes that while GBV communication campaigns in Chorkor have increased awareness, they have not fully transformed behaviour due to underlying sociocultural barriers. This supports the assertion by the World Health Organization (2021) that sustainable behaviour change requires more than message dissemination it requires structural, cultural, and behavioural shifts.

Effective GBV communication in Chorkor therefore requires culturally sensitive, participatory, and consistent strategies that integrate local perspectives, challenge harmful norms, and empower both men and women to act against violence. The findings reaffirm the importance of contextualized, community-led approaches in GBV prevention.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the effectiveness of gender-based violence (GBV) communication campaigns in the Chorkor community. The evidence demonstrates that although awareness of GBV has improved, behavioural change remains limited due to the influence of cultural norms, inconsistent messaging, and insufficient community involvement. For communication interventions to be more impactful, practitioners, government agencies, and community actors must adopt more coordinated, culturally sensitive, and participatory strategies.

To begin with, communication practitioners and NGOs need to adopt participatory communication models that engage community members directly in the design, development, and dissemination of campaign messages. When residents feel ownership of the narrative, messages become more relatable and contextually grounded, increasing their potential influence. Campaigns should therefore incorporate local languages, community storytelling techniques, and examples that reflect everyday realities of people in Chorkor. Furthermore, sustained and consistent messaging is critical for reinforcing new attitudes and behaviours. Short-term interventions often fade quickly, but repeated exposure across radio, social media, community events, and peer education strengthens retention and encourages gradual norm shifts. It is also recommended that practitioners actively collaborate with influential community leaders, including religious heads, youth leaders, and traditional authorities, who play significant roles in shaping social norms and behaviour.

For government agencies, especially the District Assembly and the Department of Social Welfare, there is a need to strengthen local GBV education through continuous public sensitization programs. Integrating GBV communication into broader community development initiatives, school programs, and health outreach activities would help normalize conversations around violence prevention. Government bodies must also ensure strong enforcement of existing GBV legislation to complement communication efforts. When legal systems function effectively, they reinforce the idea that GBV is not only socially unacceptable but also

punishable by law, thereby supporting the behavioural change targeted by communication campaigns.

Community stakeholders also have an important role to play in sustaining anti-GBV efforts. The creation of community dialogue spaces whether through durbars, youth group meetings, or women's circles provides opportunities for open conversations about harmful norms and safety practices. Such spaces can also foster peer learning, where individuals who have adopted positive behaviours encourage others to do the same. Additionally, the establishment of safe and confidential reporting channels within the community can empower victims and bystanders to speak up without fear of stigma or retaliation. Youth-centered peer education programs should equally be promoted, as young people tend to be early adopters of change and can serve as influential ambassadors for nonviolence.

Finally, future researchers should explore behavioural change outcomes over longer periods to determine the sustainability of communication interventions. Comparative studies involving both urban and rural communities would also provide deeper insight into how local context influences campaign effectiveness. Further inquiry into the role of digital media especially among young populations could offer new strategies for enhancing GBV prevention in increasingly digital communities.

In summary, the recommendations emphasize the need for culturally grounded, participatory, and sustained communication approaches that go beyond awareness creation to challenge deep-seated norms and promote long-term behavioural change. When practitioners, government officials, community stakeholders, and researchers work collaboratively, communication campaigns can become transformative tools in the fight against GBV in Chorkor and beyond.

5.6 Contribution to Knowledge

The study expands existing literature by demonstrating how communication campaigns interact with local sociocultural systems in an urban Ghanaian context. It contributes to debates on the effectiveness of awareness-based versus participatory communication and aligns with global evidence emphasizing culturally sensitive, community-driven GBV interventions (WHO, 2021; UN Women, 2016).

5.7 Summary

This chapter has summarized the key findings, discussed their implications, and provided recommendations for improving GBV communication campaigns in Chorkor. The findings

highlight the need for culturally grounded, participatory, and sustained communication strategies to address GBV effectively. These recommendations aim to support policymakers, NGOs, and practitioners in strengthening GBV prevention and promoting community resilience.

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