



**EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS ON PUBLIC
AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE;
A CASE STUDY OF WORLD VISION GHANA'S END CHILD MARRIAGE
CAMPAIGN IN FANTEAKWA DISTRICT**

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I, Nathaniel Tettey Abadji 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.

SIGNATURE..... DATE.....

CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

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

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of World Vision's End Child Marriage communication campaign on public awareness and behaviour change in the Fanteakwa District. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, the study explores community members' perspectives on child marriage and evaluates the effectiveness of the campaign messages. A case study design provides an in-depth understanding of the campaign's impact within the specific context of Fanteakwa District. The target audience includes parents, youth, teachers, and local leaders exposed to the campaign, with a purposive sample of 20 participants selected to ensure the collection of relevant information. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns and themes in the data.

Findings indicate that the campaign successfully raised awareness about child marriage among participants, leading to significant changes in attitudes and behaviours. However, challenges persist in fully transforming traditional mindsets.

The study recommends enhancing community engagement by continuing public dialogues and involving religious and traditional leaders to reinforce campaign messages. It also suggests leveraging digital platforms to reach a broader audience, particularly youth, through innovative online campaigns.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of providing comprehensive support services, such as counselling, life skills training, and economic empowerment programs for vulnerable girls and their families. Additionally, establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is crucial to track the campaign's impact and optimize future interventions.

Finally, the study advocates for policies that protect girls' rights, promote gender equality, and criminalize child marriage, emphasizing collaboration with government and civil society organizations to influence legislation and ensure its effective implementation.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God, whose guidance and strength enabled me to overcome all obstacles on this journey. To myself, for the perseverance, dedication, and passion that carried me through to the end. To my supervisor Dr. V. Brown for her guidance and unwavering support. I couldn't have achieved this without you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Child marriage, as defined by Rizkianti and Sari (2024), refers to both formal marriages and informal unions where a girl lives with a partner as if married before the age of 18. This practice is a significant issue in many developing countries, including Ghana. Girls under 18 are often married off to men they may not be interested in, and this usually occurs without the girl's consent due to stringent traditional and religious beliefs.

While boys are also affected, girls are predominantly the victims of child marriage. Some societies perceive child marriage as a means to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, premarital sex, and unwanted pregnancies, which are considered shameful.

According to recent research by World Vision International, 22 young girls are married off worldwide every minute. Early child marriage deprives these young girls of their freedom of choice, future education, and dreams. The practice is becoming more prevalent, and it is estimated that over 100 million young girls will be married due to the pressures exerted on parents by the COVID-19 pandemic (Muham, 2024).

In Ghana, child marriage is a discriminatory act, that primarily affects girls. It is prevalent in the northern part of the country, where young girls under 18 are often married off to older men. Violence, which affects over 1 billion children worldwide, destroys their dignity, rights, potential, and future. According to World Vision International, it costs the world about US\$7 trillion a year. Child marriage, a devastating form of violence against children, is on the rise, with the greatest surge in child marriage rates over the last 25 years occurring in 2020. (It Takes A World , n.d.)

Child marriage is a pervasive issue in Ghana, with at least one party being below the age of 18 in most cases. Despite the Children's Act setting the minimum age for marriage at 18, the practice is still prevalent across all regions of Ghana, posing a developmental threat to the country if not addressed.

Over the years, efforts have been made to combat child marriage. Government institutions like CHRAJ, Social Welfare, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and Non-Governmental Organisations like ActionAid, World Vision, and UN Agencies have made significant efforts to drastically reduce or end child marriage through diverse strategies and approaches, including communication campaigns and advocacy. (UNFPA, UNICEF, 2020)

The AU Campaign to End Child Marriage project, initiated in 2014, calls on African nations, including Ghana, to intensify efforts in combating child marriage. ActionAid Ghana has also identified child marriage as a human rights violation and a developmental challenge since 2010. In the Upper West Region, 57 community-based anti-violence teams called COMBAT were formed to address this issue, with marriage by abduction being identified as a common form of child marriage. Other forms of socio-cultural practice that perpetuate child marriage in the six regions where ActionAid Ghana works include teenage marriage, pregnancy leading to force, exchange marriage, betrothal (almost extinct), marriage by elopement, and adoption.

Approximately 14 million adolescent and teen girls are forced into child marriage each year. Around 400 million women aged 20-49 were married as children. Child marriage rates remain high in some regions, particularly in rural areas and among the poorest. Poverty, gender-based violence, and gender discrimination are major factors driving child marriage. Child brides are more likely to experience domestic violence and suffer from mental health issues. Girls who marry early are often denied education, reducing their earning potential and perpetuating poverty. Ending child

marriage is crucial for achieving the MDGs and should be a priority in the post-2015 Development Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063 (AU, 2013).

Child marriage is caused by gender inequality, tradition, poverty, insecurity, and lack of alternatives for girls. It leads to violations of human rights, increased risk in pregnancy and childbirth, HIV infection, domestic violence, reduced access to education, and continued cycles of poverty. It is now recognised as a global development priority in the Sustainable Development Goals. So far, the movement to end child marriage has gained international recognition and support. Child marriage has been a long-standing issue that undermines the potential of girls worldwide. Recent analysis shows a modest decline in child marriage rates globally, especially for girls under age 15. The absolute number of child marriages will continue to increase if efforts are not accelerated due to growing populations. Projections suggest that without further action, staggering numbers of girls will continue to be married as children. (Girls Not Brides, 2006)

Child marriage is a global problem affecting girls worldwide, with 1 in 4 girls married before the age of 18. The highest rates are found in South Asia (45%) and sub-Saharan Africa (39%). 15 million girls worldwide marry before their 18th birthday. 41,000 girls get married every day, 28 girls every minute, and a girl every two seconds. Child marriage denies girls' and boys' rights to education, health, and security. 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa marry before age 18. African countries account for 15 of the 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage (WVG, University of Ghana, 2017).

Global and regional efforts are being made to end child marriage, including UN resolutions and campaigns in Africa. In 2014, the Government of Ghana accepted the universal call to end child marriage and took measurable steps to address the issue comprehensively. A national campaign to end child marriage in Ghana was officially launched in 2016 with support from UNICEF-Ghana.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection played a leading role in coordinating national efforts to end child marriage by 2030 (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014).

The minimum legal age for marriage in Ghana is 18, but girls below 15 are pushed into marriage. 1 in every 5 girls in Ghana gets married before 18, with a national prevalence rate of 21%. Child marriage disproportionately affects girls over boys, with 21% of girls and 2% of boys married before 18. Prevalent rates are higher in the northern regions, rural areas, and among girls from poorer households (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014).

In Ghana, child marriage poses negative impacts on education, mental health, and social isolation. Child marriage is a violation of human rights and is associated with the loss of educational and economic opportunities. It leads to poorer mental health and increased psychosocial pressures for children who are married. Child marriage is particularly detrimental to females, increasing their risk of social isolation and domestic violence. Early marriage also leads to early childbirth.

Communication Campaigns have been one of the key strategies used to tackle issues of Child Marriage and this is what the research seeks to achieve. How have Communication Campaigns affected or influenced Public Awareness and behavioural change towards child marriage?

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Communication campaigns are pivotal tools for addressing complex social issues, such as child marriage, by raising public awareness and driving behaviour change. However, while these campaigns often generate significant attention and engagement, there is limited research evaluating their long-term impact on societal behaviour, especially in rural and socio-culturally entrenched communities. In Ghana, child marriage remains a persistent issue, particularly in regions like the Fantakwa District, where poverty, cultural traditions, and gender inequalities drive this harmful practice (UNICEF, 2019). Despite national and international efforts to combat

child marriage, including the legal age for marriage being set at 18, the practice continues to affect 21% of girls in Ghana, raising concerns about the effectiveness of communication campaigns aimed at ending this practice (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020).

World Vision's "End Child Marriage Now" campaign, implemented in the Fanteakwa District, sought to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of child marriage and promote behaviour change within communities. However, despite these efforts, child marriage rates remain high, and there is a growing need to critically assess the impact of such communication strategies. Existing literature has explored the role of socio-economic factors in sustaining child marriage, but there is a noticeable gap in understanding how communication campaigns contribute to behaviour modification at the community level (UNFPA, 2020). The lack of empirical evidence evaluating the effectiveness of these campaigns, particularly in rural settings, highlights a significant research gap that this study seeks to address.

Research has shown that communication campaigns can create short-term awareness, but their success in fostering long-term behaviour change is less clear. Studies by Kaye (2021) and Amegbor (2020) indicate that while campaigns often achieve high visibility and generate public discourse, they do not always lead to the dismantling of deep-rooted cultural norms. In the case of child marriage in Ghana, the question remains: to what extent have World Vision Ghana's efforts influenced lasting changes in behaviour and attitudes towards child marriage in Fanteakwa District? Furthermore, while awareness-raising is a crucial first step, behaviour change requires sustained engagement and follow-up interventions, which are often lacking in communication campaigns (Amegbor, 2020).

The problem this study seeks to address is the limited understanding of how communication campaigns, specifically World Vision's End Child Marriage campaign, have affected public

awareness and behaviour change in the Fanteakwa District. While several studies have explored the socio-economic drivers of child marriage, few have investigated how communication strategies can effectively disrupt these drivers and lead to measurable behaviour change. Additionally, the sustainability of these campaigns, particularly in communities with strong cultural adherence to child marriage, has not been sufficiently examined. This research will evaluate the impact of World Vision's campaign in fostering both immediate and long-term changes in public awareness and behaviours related to child marriage.

By addressing this problem, the study will contribute to the broader discourse on the role of communication campaigns in driving social change, offering insights into the strategies that work and identifying the gaps that need to be filled for such campaigns to be more effective. Thus, the study sought to evaluate the impact of communication campaigns on public awareness and behaviour change; a case study of World Vision's end child marriage campaign in Fanteakwa District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of World Vision's "End Child Marriage" communication campaign on public awareness and behaviour change in the Fanteakwa District. The study seeks to understand how the campaign has influenced community members' perceptions of child marriage and whether it has successfully led to a reduction in the practice. By analyzing the campaign's strategies, messages, and community engagement efforts, the study aims to assess the effectiveness of communication as a tool for social change in addressing deep-seated cultural practices like child marriage.

Furthermore, this research will explore whether the campaign has resulted in sustainable behavior change, or if the impact has been temporary and insufficient to significantly curb child marriage rates in the region.

In addition to measuring the immediate outcomes of the campaign, the study will also investigate the factors that may enhance or limit its effectiveness. These factors include the cultural relevance of the messages, the level of community involvement, and the sustainability of the campaign efforts post-implementation. The findings from this study will provide valuable insights into how communication campaigns can be better designed and implemented to foster long-term social and behavioural change, specifically in areas where child marriage remains prevalent. Moreover, the study aims to contribute to the broader body of knowledge on the role of communication strategies in addressing harmful cultural practices and human rights issues.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the impact of communication campaigns on public awareness.
2. To evaluate the impact of communication campaigns on behavioural change.
3. To evaluate the key communication strategies adopted in public awareness and behavioural change.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were proposed to guide the study of the problem under investigation.

1. How have communication campaigns impacted public awareness about child marriage in the Fantekwa District?
2. What effect have communication campaigns had on behavioural change regarding child marriage in the Fantekwa District?

3. What key communication strategies have been adopted in public awareness and behavioural change campaigns, and how effective have they been in addressing child marriage?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, particularly in addressing the pressing issue of child marriage in Ghana.

First, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the role that communication campaigns, such as World Vision's "End Child Marriage Now" campaign, play in raising public awareness and promoting behavioural change.

By evaluating the effectiveness of these campaigns, the study will provide valuable insights for NGOs, government agencies, and policymakers on how to design more impactful interventions that target deeply entrenched cultural practices like child marriage. Understanding the successes and limitations of existing communication strategies can guide future campaigns aimed at eradicating child marriage not only in Fantekwa District but also in other regions where the practice remains prevalent.

Moreover, the study holds practical significance by offering recommendations for improving the sustainability of such campaigns. While many communication initiatives create short-term awareness, their long-term impact on behaviour change is often limited. This research will identify key factors that contribute to or hinder the sustainability of behavioural changes following the conclusion of the campaign.

The findings will be instrumental for development agencies, educators, and community leaders who seek to address human rights violations through communication. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to global efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

particularly Goal 5, which emphasizes gender equality and the elimination of harmful practices such as child marriage.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited to the Fantekwa District in Ghana, focusing specifically on the impact of World Vision Ghana's "End Child Marriage Now" communication campaign. It will assess the campaign's influence on public awareness and behavioural change within this district. The study will not include other districts or regions where similar campaigns may have been conducted, limiting the scope to Fantekwa. Additionally, while the issue of child marriage is influenced by various socio-economic and cultural factors, this research will concentrate primarily on communication strategies and their effectiveness. It will not explore in detail other interventions such as legal reforms, economic programs, or education initiatives aimed at ending child marriage, although these may be mentioned as part of the broader context.

Furthermore, the study is limited to the period during and immediately following the World Vision campaign, meaning that any long-term effects outside this timeframe may not be fully captured. The study will rely on data gathered from community members, stakeholders, and campaign implementers within the district, and will not include perspectives from external regions or international bodies. The focus will remain on evaluating the specific strategies employed in the communication campaign and their immediate and short-term impacts, rather than the overall success of child marriage eradication efforts in Ghana.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction of the study which consists of the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitation of the study. Chapter two is the

literature review on the topic. The review of the literature is linked with the research questions. Chapter three is the research methodology which includes the following: research design, study area, target population, sampling technique, sample size, source of data collection procedure and data analysis techniques. Chapter four is the analysis of the results and discussion of research findings. Lastly, Chapter Five deals with the summary of the findings of the study, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the existing literature on key areas relevant to the study, focusing on the prevalence and causes of child marriage, its health and developmental consequences, interventions and advocacy campaigns aimed at addressing the issue, and the ongoing challenges in eradicating the practice. Drawing on local, regional, and global studies, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to child marriage in Ghana, particularly in the Fanteakwa District, as well as the efforts made by stakeholders such as World Vision to raise awareness and foster behaviour change.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on two main theories that help explain how communication campaigns work and how behaviour changes regarding child marriage. These are the Social Learning Theory and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. These theories are well-suited for understanding how communication campaigns, like World Vision's "End Child Marriage" campaign, raise public awareness and aid in behaviour change at both individual and community levels.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

As stated by Muro and Jeffrey (2008), "Social learning theory is crucial in fostering sustainable management of natural resources and facilitating positive changes in behaviour" (p. 157). This theory elucidates that individuals acquire knowledge through their interactions with others, whereby observing the behaviours of others can lead to the adoption and imitation of comparable actions. This hypothesis proposes that we learn through social interactions. Observing others' actions leads to the development of similar ones. Observing others' behaviour can lead to

assimilation and imitation, especially if the experience is favourable or involves incentives. Bandura (1977) defines imitation as the real duplication of observed motor activity.

Social Learning Theory has become one of the most important theories of learning and development. It incorporates fundamental elements from traditional learning theory. This theory combines behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, focusing on attention, memory, and motivation (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008). Bandura argues that direct reinforcement cannot account for all forms of learning. In his theory, he included a social element, claiming that individuals might learn new ideas and behaviours by observing others.

In this study, Social Learning Theory serves as a core framework for understanding how World Vision's "End Child Marriage" communication campaign promotes public awareness and behaviour change in the Fantekwa District. Muro and Jeffrey (2008) contend that Social Learning Theory is necessary for long-term behavioural change, particularly in community-based therapies. In this setting, the campaign aims to effect a cultural shift by utilizing social interactions, a fundamental part of Social Learning Theory in which people observe others' actions and attitudes toward child marriage and adopt similar behaviours.

The program uses a variety of communication strategies, including community activities, media broadcasts, and engagement with role models, to promote anti-child marriage behaviours and attitudes. "Individuals are more likely to imitate behaviours they observe, particularly when such actions are positively reinforced or linked to favourable outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 89). The initiative inspires community members to demonstrate behaviours that protect girls from early marriage by stressing the detrimental impacts of the practice and showcasing the positive advantages of putting an end to it. Furthermore, Social Learning Theory's emphasis on attention, memory, and motivation is consistent with the campaign's goals. For example, using engaging

narrative and visual assets in the campaign catches people's attention, whereas consistent messaging aids memory recall. The motivating factor is addressed by showing how abolishing child marriage will benefit both girls and the community in the long run. Thus, Social Learning Theory explains how, by seeing and participating in these interventions, community members can internalize new concepts and progressively transform their views and behaviours about child marriage.

Furthermore, Bandura's theory that people might learn by observing others without receiving direct reinforcement is very pertinent here (Bandura, 1977). Community members in the Fanteakwa District can be inspired to follow in the footsteps of respected persons, such as religious leaders or peers, who oppose child marriage. The theory also emphasizes the social aspect of learning, highlighting how interactions within the community play an important part in propagating the campaign's message.

As a result, Social Learning Theory, as applied to this study, helps to explain how World Vision's communication efforts contribute to behaviour change by utilizing observational learning, imitation, and social reinforcement of good actions that challenge the acceptance of child marriage. The campaign promotes a long-term shift in community norms by making refusing child marriage a socially acceptable and rewarded behaviour.

2.2.2 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Everett Rogers' (1962) Diffusion of Innovations Theory describes how new concepts, customs, or inventions gradually permeate civilizations. According to this hypothesis, innovations in a social system spread through particular channels over time, such as beliefs opposing child marriage. It highlights how influential people, early adopters, and change agents can aid in the acceptance of

novel concepts. The innovation-decision process consists of five steps: knowledge, persuasion, decision-making, implementation, and confirmation.

“Innovations that are perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability, and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly than other innovations” (Rogers, 2003, p. 16).

World Vision’s “End Child Marriage” campaign can be considered an innovation that tries to transform deep-rooted cultural behaviours surrounding child marriage. According to this approach, the campaign's messages are novel concepts meant to alter people's perceptions and actions. The effectiveness with which these messages are received by various segments of the community, particularly influential individuals such as educators, religious leaders, and traditional leaders who can serve as early adopters or opinion leaders, will determine how successful they are. When these leaders embrace the message against child marriage, they help disseminate it throughout the community, promoting broader acceptance and behavioural change.

2.3 Literature Review

2.3.1 The Prevalence and Causes of Child Marriage

“Despite a central focus of research and policies on interventions that decrease child marriage, this phenomenon is still prevalent in many places. Therefore, further specific interventions are required to improve education and reduce poverty and inequality. This may help achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals” (Pourtaheri, Tavakoly Sany, Aghaee, Ahangari, & Peyman, 2023).

Child marriage, also known as marriage before the age of 18, is a human rights violation that severely lowers literacy and educational attainment while raising the risk of adult poverty (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2017; UNICEF, 2005;

Field & Ambrus, 2008; Sunder, 2019; Dahl, 2010). Gender differences in educational outcomes are exacerbated by the disproportionate impact on girls (Koski et al., 2017; Gastón et al., 2019).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals include child marriage as a sign of gender inequality and call for its abolition by 2030 (United Nations, 2018). Child marriage is still common in many regions of the world despite increased international efforts to stop it (Girls Not Brides, 2021).

Child marriage remains a major global issue, with socio-cultural and economic reasons that are consistent throughout regions, including Ghana. “More than 12 million females marry before the age of 18, with Niger, Bangladesh, and India having the highest rates. Child marriage is still a big problem around the world, influenced by social and economic factors that are similar in different places, including Ghana” (UNICEF, 2020).

UNICEF (2020) reports that over 12 million girls marry before they turn 18 each year, with countries like Niger, Bangladesh, and India having the highest numbers. Even though there have been recent global efforts, the information about child marriage has grown significantly in recent years, but there are still important gaps in what we know, especially about how to effectively prevent and respond to it. This includes figuring out how to tackle child marriage in situations of conflict and crisis, as well as understanding how to reduce the specific risks that girls and young people face when they experience different kinds of discrimination (Plan International, n.d.; UNICEF, n.d.).

Recent studies, looking at information collected from 2020 to 2022, review effective and promising ways to stop child marriage and help girls who have been married, divorced, separated, widowed, or are young mothers. These studies also suggest ideas for future research, programs, and policy improvements (UNICEF, 2021a). Child marriage is a global problem that endangers

the lives, health, and futures of girls and young people everywhere. Currently, 650 million girls and women are married before they turn 18 (UNICEF, 2020a). While there has been a drop in child marriage rates from 25% to 19% between 2008 and 2022, the practice continues, with 12 million girls marrying before 18 each year (UNICEF, 2021a; Plan International, n.d.).

Child marriage is rooted in gender inequality and is driven by poverty, harmful social norms, insecurity, and obstacles to education. Girls who face multiple types of discrimination are often the most at risk of child marriage and are the least likely to receive help once they are married (UNICEF, n.d.). The effects of child marriage can be terrible and long-lasting, putting girls at higher risk of violence and abuse. Those who marry or form unions often have to leave school and struggle to return because of increased household duties, social stigma, and legal barriers. This greatly affects their chances of getting steady jobs, making informed choices, accessing health services, and living independently (UNICEF, n.d.).

Furthermore, child marriage continues cycles of poverty across generations, with teenage pregnancy carrying serious short- and long-term health risks for both girls and their children. In some instances, delaying pregnancy can result in more stigma, isolation, and violence (UNICEF, 2021a; World Health Organization [WHO], 2022).

Over 20% of Ghanaian girls marry before reaching maturity, with greater rates in rural regions due to traditional norms, poverty, and restricted educational prospects (UNICEF, 2020). According to the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS, 2014), ingrained cultural ideas that view girls as economic assets are important determinants in places where traditional practices are strongly adhered to.

Similarly, Nour (2006) posits that in areas such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, child marriage is frequently viewed as a means of ensuring a family's financial stability or social

standing. Economic vulnerability is a major driver of child marriage in Ghana, where families frequently marry off their daughters to relieve financial obligations. "Many households in Ghana's economically impoverished regions consider early marriage as a critical technique for decreasing household expenses" (Asante, 2018, p. 112).

Wodon et al. (2017) also posit that economic pressure frequently forces rural families to marry their daughters young due to inadequate financial security options. Dowry and bride price systems in countries like Bangladesh and India worsen the practice of child marriage by providing instant financial relief to families (UNICEF, 2020). The economic motives for child marriage are not unique to any one country, but rather part of a larger pattern that exists in many developing countries. Child marriage has far-reaching implications, according to the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW, 2007). Child marriage frequently perpetuates intergenerational cycles of poverty, poor health, and restricted educational possibilities, ultimately keeping families in a state of socioeconomic disadvantage. This cyclical nature of child marriage is most visible in rural areas, where a lack of educational and employment prospects further restricts families' options for escaping poverty. WiLDAF Ghana (2014) notes that weak legal enforcement and insufficient community-level education contribute to the perpetuation of this harmful practice. Despite legal frameworks created to safeguard girls, a lack of regular enforcement and cultural norms make it difficult to successfully oppose child marriage.

Similar patterns can be seen around the world, as legal gaps and cultural resistance impede efforts to end child marriage. "Legal reforms alone are insufficient and must be supplemented by community involvement and shifts in cultural notions of marriage and gender roles" (Lee-Rife et al., 2012, p. 145).

Birech (2013) emphasizes that child marriage will continue to exist unless the underlying economic and social causes are addressed, even with legal reforms. Thus, while laws and rules are necessary, they must be part of a larger strategy that includes economic empowerment, education, and cultural change to effectively reduce the occurrence of child marriage in Ghana and around the world.

2.3.2 Child Marriage as a Human Rights Violation

When we take a closer look at the substantial consequences that child marriage has on the development of both communities and entire nations, it becomes incredibly important to acknowledge that this practice serves as a profound infringement on fundamental human rights that should be universally protected and upheld. This critical issue has been tackled in numerous legal frameworks that exist at both continental and international levels, reflecting a growing awareness of the need for change. According to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), a child is defined as any individual who is under the age of 18 years old, whereas the African Youth Charter assigns the classification of a minor to those individuals who fall within the age range of 15 to 17 years (United Nations, 1989; African Union, 2001).

“Child and forced marriage represent a violation of virtually all human rights. It deprives women and girls of autonomy and choice over their bodies and their lives” (Birga, 2016).

As of now, it is estimated that around thirty-two African nations have set the minimum legal age for marriage at 18 years for both girls and boys alike, with specific countries such as Algeria, Lesotho, Libya, and Rwanda even opting to establish a higher minimum age requirement for marriage (World Bank, 2020). In stark contrast to this progress, there are still eighteen African countries that either uphold discriminatory minimum ages, allowing for different marriage ages for girls compared to boys, or they have established a minimum marriage age that is below the age

of 18 years (UNICEF, 2021). Despite the existence of these legal frameworks designed to protect children, millions of young girls throughout Africa continue to suffer the consequences of child marriage on an annual basis, which results in distressing outcomes, including but not limited to elevated birth rates, increased maternal and child mortality rates, and various health complications like obstetric fistulas, premature births, stillbirths, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as issues such as cervical cancer and domestic violence (Girls Not Brides, 2019).

This deeply concerning scenario stands in direct opposition to the rights and provisions that are delineated in the African Youth Charter, the ACRWC, and the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa, particularly concerning the dynamics of gender and the protection of women and girls. Additionally, this situation further complicates the pressing need for significant investment in the youth of Africa, which is vital for achieving a demographic dividend that can effectively foster sustainable growth and promote human development by the year 2063 (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017).

Tackling the issue of child marriage not only necessitates legal reforms aimed at eliminating this practice but also requires the implementation of comprehensive educational initiatives, active community engagement, and empowerment programs designed specifically for girls, all of which have been proven to significantly decrease the prevalence of early marriages and enhance the overall wellbeing of society as a whole (Plan International, 2020). By addressing this critical issue, we have the opportunity to not only promote gender equality but also to improve the health and economic prospects for generations to come.

2.3.3 Implications of Child Marriage for Health and Development

Child marriage, in addition to its detrimental effects on education, is increasingly recognized as a significant global development issue that poses serious health risks. The potential negative health

effects, such as early pregnancy, increased rates of maternal and infant mortality, and mental health problems, are highlighted by organizations such as the World Bank, UNFPA, and UNICEF (UNICEF, 2014; Wodon, 2015; United Nations Population Fund, 2012; UNICEF, 2021). Child marriage is a very troubling issue with far-reaching consequences for the health and overall development of young girls in Ghana and around the world. “Early marriage is consistently associated with several adverse health effects, which include but are not confined to maternal mortality, obstetric fistula, and a range of childbirth complications” (Raj & Boehmer, 2013, p. 395).

Furthermore, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2016) reinforces this alarming trend by stating that girls who marry before the age of 18 are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing pregnancy-related complications, owing to their bodies' biological inability to cope with the challenges of childbirth. This alarming trend is not limited to one region but rather is a global phenomenon, with similar health hazards reported in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. Also, Nour (2006) mentions that in countries such as Niger and Bangladesh, where child marriage is widespread and prevalent, the risks of maternal death and severe health complications are alarmingly higher than in regions where child marriage is less common.

In Ghana, the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS, 2014) establishes a direct link between early marriage and a variety of reproductive health challenges, including, but not limited to, significantly higher rates of infant mortality, HIV infection, and adolescent pregnancy complications.

Erulkar (2013) emphasizes that girls who become child brides are frequently denied access to essential sexual and reproductive health services, making them more vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and serious maternal health risks. Furthermore, UNICEF (2019)

reveals the alarming reality that child brides worldwide, including those in Ghana, are significantly more likely to experience intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, and restrictions on their reproductive autonomy, all of which increase their vulnerability to a variety of physical and mental health problems. Child marriage has far-reaching developmental consequences that go beyond health difficulties, disrupting girls' education as well as their future economic opportunities. “The occurrence of child marriage compels girls to leave their education, thereby restricting their literacy skills and future job prospects, a detrimental trend observable worldwide” (Mouli et al., 2019, p. 45). This alarming trend is consistent with similar situations in other countries, such as India, where Jain and Kurz (2007) found that child marriage has a significant negative impact on educational attainment, resulting in lower literacy rates and reduced economic mobility for affected individuals.

Furthermore, *Girls Not Brides* (2017) effectively shows that the implications of child marriage extend beyond the individual experiences of afflicted girls; the practice also serves as a significant obstacle to national economic growth by lowering labour force participation and productivity. Ghana, Nepal, and Pakistan all share a significant worry about the incidence of early marriage, which severely impedes long-term development efforts.

“The role of social media in reaching young audiences highlights how digital platforms can be used to challenge harmful norms and promote positive messages regarding gender equality and girls’ rights” (Khandkar et al., 2020, p. 42).

In summary, while communication campaigns have made strides in combating child marriage, integrating local influencers, economic empowerment strategies, and participatory approaches can further enhance their effectiveness. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential for

understanding their long-term impact and facilitating meaningful behaviour change within communities.

2.3.3 Interventions and Advocacy Campaigns to Combat Child Marriage

"Ending child marriage requires a multi-sectoral approach that includes education, health, protection, and empowerment of girls, as well as engagement with families and communities" (UNICEF, 2014).

Child marriage remains a major challenge across Africa, prompting various global and local interventions to combat this practice. In Ghana, notable successes have been achieved through initiatives aimed at addressing the numerous causes of child marriage, including poverty, gender inequality, and cultural norms. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF Ghana) has been at the forefront of advocating for legal reforms and education to combat early and forced marriages. Their scoping study on parliamentary advocacy emphasizes the need for stronger laws and enforcement mechanisms to protect girls from being married off at a young age (WiLDAF Ghana, 2014). On an international level, the African Union (AU) has recognized child marriage as a violation of human rights and an obstruction to sustainable development. In 2014, the AU adopted Agenda 2063, which promotes inclusive development across the continent and emphasizes the elimination of child marriage as essential for ensuring gender equality and empowering women and girls (African Union, 2014).

The AU's campaign "End Child Marriage in Africa" mobilizes governments, civil society, and communities to take collective action against this harmful practice. UNICEF plays a pivotal role in advocating for children's rights and implementing programs aimed at preventing child marriage. Their various initiatives, such as the "Girls in Crisis" program, focus on providing educational opportunities, vocational training, and health services to empower girls and delay marriage

(UNICEF, 2020). By prioritizing education, UNICEF aims to shift social norms and equip girls with the skills needed to pursue better economic opportunities, thereby reducing the likelihood of early marriage. Another key player in this effort is the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which has implemented the “Girl Empowerment” initiative across several African nations. This initiative raises awareness about the harmful effects of child marriage while providing resources for girls to obtain education and engage in community leadership roles. UNFPA emphasizes that empowered girls can change societal attitudes that condone child marriage and advocates for policy reforms that protect girls' rights (UNFPA, 2019).

"Child marriage is an appalling violation of human rights and robs girls of their education, health, and long-term prospects." Osotimehin, B. (2013).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also play a critical role in addressing child marriage through grassroots initiatives. For example, Plan International has implemented programs aimed at challenging and changing the social norms that perpetuate child marriage. Their "Because I Am A Girl" campaign seeks to end child marriage and promote girls' education by equipping communities with the knowledge and resources necessary to change traditional practices (Plan International, 2021). This initiative engages men and boys as allies in the fight against child marriage, recognizing that collective efforts are vital for initiating change within communities.

"Ending child marriage is critical to achieving gender equality and ensuring that girls can reach their full potential" (UNICEF, 2014).

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) underscores the significance of comprehensive strategies that include legal reforms, education, and economic opportunities for girls. Their research indicates that improving access to education, particularly for marginalized groups, significantly lowers child marriage rates (ICRW, 2017). The ICRW advocates for policy

changes that create an enabling environment for girls to pursue education and protect their rights. In Ghana, World Vision's "End Child Marriage" campaign has been instrumental in promoting these changes.

2.3.4 Communication Campaigns and Behaviour Change

Communication efforts are essential for changing public opinions and encouraging behaviour change towards child marriage. “Campaigns that integrate mass media and interpersonal communication channels are more effective in reaching a wider audience” (Lee et al., 2018, p. 102). Similarly, UNICEF (2015) underscores the importance of addressing underlying social norms as part of any effective communication strategy, arguing that sustainable change at the community level is necessary for long-term impact.

The success of these campaigns often hinges on engaging local influencers. Women Deliver (2016) argues that campaigns are most impactful when they involve community leaders, including religious figures and traditional chiefs, to help shift entrenched social norms. This aligns with ICRW and the World Bank (2015), which emphasize the integration of economic empowerment strategies into communication efforts, as poverty is a significant driving force behind child marriage.

For instance, in Fanteakwa, World Vision's "End Child Marriage" campaign has included vocational training for girls, aiming to alleviate the economic pressures that often lead families to marry off their daughters. However, despite the progress made through communication campaigns, significant challenges remain. Petroni et al. (2017) caution that changing behaviour is a gradual process, particularly in rural areas where cultural resistance is deeply rooted. The Ghana Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, along with UNICEF (2017), notes that without

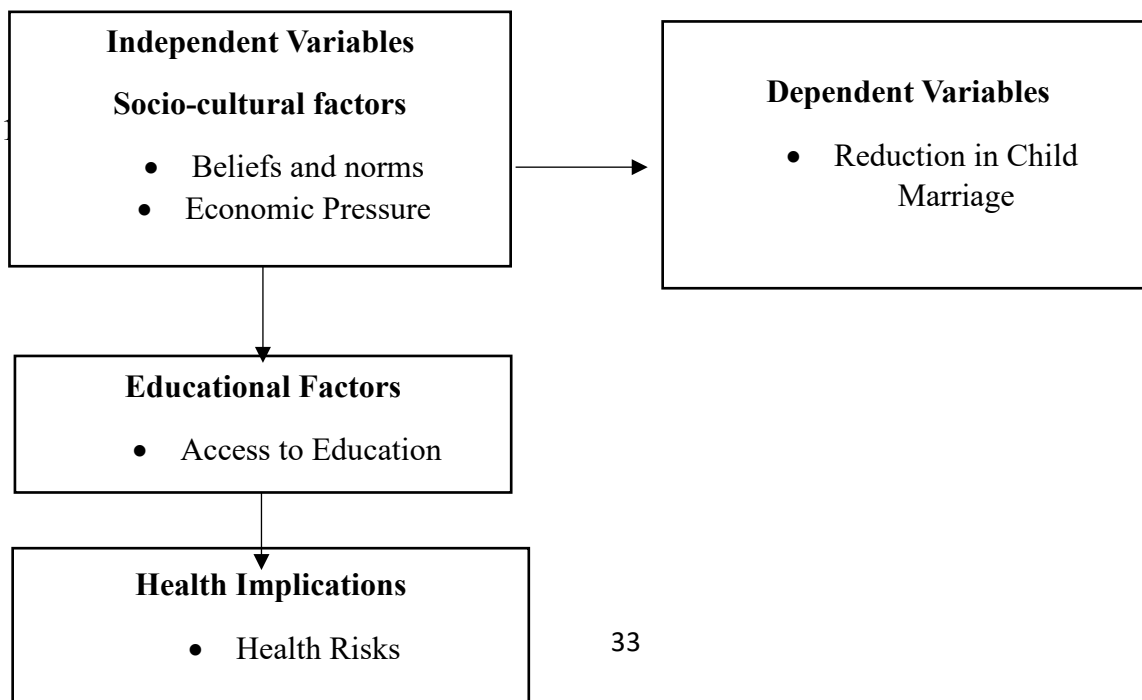
consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks, it is challenging to assess the long-term impact of these campaigns.

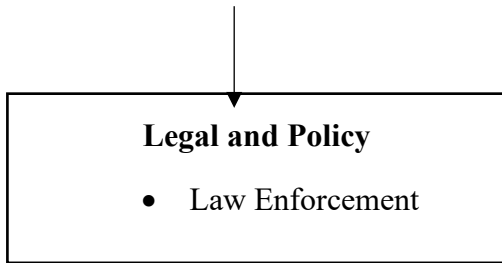
Furthermore, the literature suggests that incorporating feedback from community members can enhance the effectiveness of communication campaigns. According to O'Connor et al. (2019), participatory approaches that engage community members in the design and implementation of campaigns lead to greater ownership and sustainability of the interventions.

“The role of social media in reaching young audiences highlights how digital platforms can be used to challenge harmful norms and promote positive messages regarding gender equality and girls’ rights” (Khandkar et al., 2020, p. 42).

In summary, while communication campaigns have made strides in combating child marriage, integrating local influencers, economic empowerment strategies, and participatory approaches can further enhance their effectiveness. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential for understanding their long-term impact and facilitating meaningful behaviour change within communities.

1.3 2.4 Conceptual Framework





The conceptual framework shows the relationship between independent variables (factors influencing child marriage) and dependent variables (outcomes aimed at reducing child marriage and improving girls' health and education). The independent variables include socio-cultural factors (e.g., traditional beliefs and economic pressures), educational factors (e.g., access to education), health implications (e.g., reproductive health risks), and the legal and policy environment (e.g., law enforcement and advocacy efforts). These factors are the root causes driving child marriage.

"Changing social norms and behaviours around child marriage requires comprehensive community engagement and education efforts that address the root causes and empower girls." – (Greene, M. E., & Edmeades, J. (2022)

The **dependent variables** represent the intended outcomes of interventions targeting child marriage. These outcomes include changes in community attitudes, a reduction in the incidence of child marriage, and improved health and educational outcomes for girls. By addressing the independent variables through effective interventions (such as community education and legal reforms), the study aims to achieve positive outcomes that ultimately reduce child marriage.

The role of communication campaigns in addressing child marriage has gained significant attention in recent years. This empirical review examines studies that evaluate the impact of communication campaigns on public awareness, behavioural change, and the strategies employed to effectively reach and engage communities.

2.5.1 Impact of Communication Campaigns on Public Awareness

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of communication campaigns in raising public awareness about child marriage. For example, a study by McClain et al. (2018) employed a mixed-methods approach to assess the impact of a community-based campaign in rural India. “Pre- and post-campaign surveys revealed a notable rise in awareness levels among community members, with a documented 45% increase in understanding concerning the legal age of marriage and the health risks linked to early marriage” (McClain et al., 2018, p. 112).

Similarly, in Nigeria, a study conducted by Olasunbo et al. (2020) investigated the effectiveness of a nationwide media campaign aimed at reducing child marriage. Using a quasi-experimental design, the researchers analysed data from two regions before and after the campaign's implementation. Results showed that the campaign led to a 30% increase in awareness about child marriage and its implications. Participants reported that the campaign significantly changed their perceptions of child marriage, with many acknowledging its negative impact on girls' education and well-being.

2.5.2 Impact of Communication Campaigns on Behavioural Change

The impact of communication campaigns on behavioural change has also been a focal point of research. A longitudinal study by Chandra-Mouli et al. (2019) assessed the effectiveness of a comprehensive intervention in Bangladesh, which combined mass media campaigns with community dialogues. The study utilised pre- and post-intervention surveys to evaluate changes in attitudes and behaviours related to child marriage. “The results indicated a 25% decline in reported child marriages within households that engaged in the campaign when contrasted with control groups” (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2019, p. 78).

In another study, Karam et al. (2021) evaluated the impact of a communication campaign in Ethiopia that focused on educating parents about the benefits of delaying marriage for girls. Using a randomized control trial design, the researchers found that families exposed to the campaign were significantly more likely to delay their daughters' marriages compared to those not exposed. The study reported a 40% decrease in the number of girls married before the age of 18 in the intervention group, demonstrating the campaign's effectiveness in facilitating behavioural change.

2.5.3 Key Communication Strategies Adopted in Public Awareness and Behavioural Change

Research has identified key communication strategies that enhance the effectiveness of campaigns targeting child marriage. For instance, a study by Zinsou et al. (2020) explored the use of storytelling and peer education as central strategies in a campaign in Benin. The researchers conducted focus group discussions and interviews with participants to gather qualitative data on their experiences with the campaign. As noted by Zinsou et al. (2020), “Participants indicated that peer education sessions encouraged conversations within families and communities, successfully altering perspectives on child marriage” (p. 45).

Additionally, a meta-analysis by Osei et al. (2022) reviewed various communication campaigns across sub-Saharan Africa. The analysis found that campaigns employing multi-channel approaches integrating social media, community radio, and in-person engagements were particularly successful in reaching diverse audiences. The study concluded that campaigns that tailored messages to local cultural contexts and included influential community leaders were more effective in promoting awareness and behavioural change regarding child marriage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the empirical evidence indicates that communication campaigns significantly influence public awareness and behavioural change concerning child marriage. Through various

methodologies, these studies demonstrate that effective strategies, including multimedia approaches and community engagement, are vital in fostering understanding and shifting behaviours. Continued research and investment in targeted communication efforts are essential for sustaining progress in the fight against child marriage.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of World Vision's "End Child Marriage" communication campaign on public awareness and behaviour change in the Fanteakwa District. By using a qualitative method, the research focused on understanding community views, experiences, and how well the campaign's messages worked. This chapter describes the research approach, study design, target population, sampling methods, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Approach

The research employed a qualitative approach, which was effective in grasping the complexities of social issues and capturing the detailed opinions of participants (Creswell, 2013). This method enabled a thorough investigation of community members' feelings about child marriage and their views on the communication campaign's success.

3.3 Research Design

A case study design was utilized, with a focus on World Vision's campaign in the Fanteakwa District. This design allowed for a thorough analysis of the campaign's effects within a particular setting, enabling a detailed comprehension of how the campaign was viewed and experienced by community members.

3.4 Target Population

Community members in the Fanteakwa District were the study's target population, specifically parents, youth, teachers, and local leaders who had been exposed to the campaign. This varied group was crucial to gathering a broad range of viewpoints regarding the problem of child marriage and the campaign's influence.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures

A sample of 20 participants was recruited to ensure a rich variety of insights while maintaining manageability for data analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were relevant to the research topic. This method allowed for the selection of participants who had specific knowledge or experience related to child marriage and the campaign (Patton, 2015).

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' opinions, while focus group discussions encouraged interaction and brought out a variety of perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The interviews and discussions were held in local languages to ensure better understanding and comfort for the participants. Document analysis was used to enhance the qualitative data collected from participants. This involved reviewing relevant campaign materials, reports, and media coverage to provide context for the "End Child Marriage" campaign.

Bowen (2009) notes that document analysis is an effective qualitative method that helps researchers analyze existing texts to uncover themes and messages from the campaign, thereby enriching the overall analysis. Additionally, combining document analysis with interviews

supports triangulation, which boosts the credibility of the findings by comparing different information sources (Yin, 2014). Using these methods together, the study aimed to thoroughly evaluate the campaign's effect on public awareness and behaviour change.

3.7 Instruments for Data Collection

An interview guide was developed, consisting of open-ended questions about participants' awareness of child marriage, perceptions of the campaign, and any behavioural changes they had noticed. The focus group discussion guide includes prompts to encourage debate about community views and campaign messaging tactics (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003). In addition to these core data-gathering techniques, a document analysis process was developed to analyze pertinent campaign materials, reports, policy documents, and media coverage for the "End Child Marriage" campaign. Document analysis enables a systematic study of texts, which helps to contextualize interview and focus group data by detecting trends in campaign messages and how they match with community perceptions (Bowen, 2009). This strategy is especially beneficial for confirming and triangulating data gathered through interviews, resulting in a more comprehensive assessment of the campaign's effects. By integrating interview and document analysis approaches, the study ensured a comprehensive assessment of both the planned and perceived effects of the communication effort.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and report patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A systematic process was followed, including data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation of findings concerning research questions.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study was primarily concerned with ethical considerations. All participants provided informed permission, ensuring that they understood the study's goal and could withdraw at any moment. The study followed the ethical requirements established by relevant institutional review boards, and participant data was anonymized to ensure confidentiality (American Psychological Association, 2017).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter delves into the data related to World Vision's "End Child Marriage" campaign in the Fanteakwa District. The findings from interviews, discussions, and document analysis are presented thematically to address the research questions. Insights from various community members regarding child marriage and the campaign are analysed. This chapter identifies patterns and evaluates the campaign's impact on local attitudes and behaviours by synthesising multiple data sources.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Research Question 1: In What Ways Have Communication Campaigns Influenced Public Awareness of Child Marriage in the Fanteakwa District?

Understanding of Child Marriage Before the Campaign

Several responses emerged when parents were asked about their understanding of child marriage. A notable reaction was that child marriage was seen as a normal practice within the community, often tied to economic survival and cultural traditions. One parent shared, *"We believed that marrying off our daughters early would protect them from unwanted pregnancies and bring some relief to the family's financial burden."*

Youth responses revealed that many grew up thinking child marriage was inevitable. One youth remarked, *"I thought it was something every girl eventually went through; I never questioned it."*

Teachers explained that many parents and youth lacked awareness of the legal and human rights implications of child marriage, which was deeply rooted in cultural norms. One teacher noted,

"Before the campaign, most people in the community didn't understand that child marriage is not just a cultural issue but also a violation of children's rights."

Another teacher highlighted the community's lack of exposure to alternative perspectives, stating, *"Many parents believed they were securing a better future for their daughters, not realizing the long-term harm they were inflicting on their health, education, and overall well-being."* Local leaders also admitted to initially perceiving child marriage as a way to uphold community traditions. One leader said, *"We thought it preserved our culture and safeguarded our daughters' futures."* These responses highlight the limited understanding of the adverse effects of child marriage before the campaign.

These responses align with Walker (2015), who posited that families may perceive early marriage as a means to alleviate financial burdens or prevent teenage pregnancies, often without realizing that it perpetuates cycles of poverty and restricts girls' potential. Additionally, cultural traditions that associate early marriage with maturity and societal acceptance frequently overshadow concerns regarding the developmental needs and rights of children.

In conclusion, the study anticipated that economic issues would play a part in these outcomes, but the level of cultural embeddedness was more than anticipated. Considerations of health, education, and rights appeared to be subordinated to the idea that early marriage protects family honour and ensures the future of girls. These results show how negative customs can have wider repercussions that are hidden by normalised behaviours.

Shaping Knowledge and Perceptions of Child Marriage

One parent noted that the campaign revealed the harmful consequences of child marriage on girls' health, education, and future opportunities. *"I never knew child marriage could lead to such complications during childbirth and destroy a girl's chance to succeed in life,"* a parent confessed.

Another youth response indicated that the campaign encouraged them to view education as a priority over early marriage. One youth said, *"I now see that staying in school gives me a better chance for a brighter future."*

Teachers noted that the campaign presented data and real-life stories that vividly illustrated how child marriage hinders development. As one teacher shared, *"Hearing about girls who had dropped out of school and faced abuse hit home for many of us."* Local leaders admitted that their perspectives shifted significantly after learning about the long-term negative impact on the community. One leader stated, *"The campaign helped us realize that child marriage is not just a personal issue; it holds back the whole community."*

The stories provided by parents, adolescents, teachers, and local leaders correspond to the literature on the effects of child marriage and the importance of campaigns to raise awareness of the problem. Recognition by a parent of the health complications and life disruptions caused by child marriage strongly supports existing literature. The UNFPA (2012) reports that child marriage has serious health consequences, including maternal mortality, fistula, and other complications during childbirth. Mathur et al. (2003) also show that child marriage contributes to early pregnancies that often occur in unsafe conditions, exacerbating health risks. Regarding education, Steinhaus et al. (2016) identify that child marriage truncates girls' educational opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and dependency. This aligns with the parent's newfound awareness of how early marriage can destroy a girl's chances of achieving success.

The campaign's success in encouraging youth to prioritize education reflects the findings of Delprato et al. (2015) and Nguyen and Wodon (2014), who emphasize the inverse relationship between child marriage and girls' schooling. These studies show that child marriage significantly reduces educational attainment and lifelong learning opportunities, thereby limiting the potential

for economic empowerment and independence. Campaigns that present education as a pathway to a better future can therefore be a crucial intervention.

Teachers' responses to the campaign's data and personal stories echo the approach highlighted by Karam (2015) and Erulkar (2013). Presenting real-world statistics and consequences humanizes the abstract concept of child marriage, making the issue relevant and urgent. Such strategies are particularly effective in raising awareness among educators, who play a key role in shaping community perspectives and encouraging girls to stay in school.

The statement by a local leader acknowledging the broader impact of child marriage on community development supports the findings of Nguyen and Wodon (2014), who highlight the social and economic costs of child marriage at the community level. Child brides often have fewer employment opportunities due to poor education and skills, which hinders community development (Gage, 2013). Campaigns that draw attention to these broader implications are essential to encourage collective action against this practice.

The shift in community perspective highlighted by the leader is also in line with the recommendation for interventions adapted to local culture. Studies such as Santhya et al. (2010) emphasize the importance of engaging community stakeholders, including leaders and parents, to address deeply entrenched social and cultural norms. Effective campaigns combine education, dialogue, and advocacy to create a shared understanding of the dangers of child marriage and promote community-based solutions.

These examples illustrate the transformative potential of communication campaigns in changing perceptions, promoting dialogue, and mobilizing community efforts to combat child marriage. By combining real-life experiences with evidence-based data, such interventions can address the multiple causes and consequences of child marriage, as emphasized in the literature.

Ultimately, these findings are consistent with expectations that awareness efforts can effectively challenge established norms when they use accessible stories and evidence. However, the community's responsiveness and depth of transformation exceeded expectations, particularly among local leaders. Initially hesitant to change, leaders acknowledged that the campaign widened their perspectives.

Resonating Campaign Messages

Another notable response was how specific campaign messages resonated deeply with individuals. Parents were particularly moved by messages like *"Every girl deserves an education before marriage,"* which challenged the traditional mindset. One parent shared, *"It made me rethink my responsibilities as a father to my daughters."*

Youth found slogans such as *"Your future matters"* and visual stories of girls overcoming challenges inspiring. One youth said, *"It gave me hope that I could achieve more if I stayed in school."* Teachers appreciated messages focused on the importance of education as a fundamental right, while local leaders were struck by the campaign's emphasis on community involvement in ending child marriage. *"It reminded us that this isn't just a problem for parents; it's everyone's responsibility,"* one leader remarked.

The effectiveness of specific campaign messages in transforming attitudes towards child marriage is well supported by the literature. Campaigns that use targeted and relevant messages have been shown to have a profound impact on audiences and stimulate behavioural change.

Parents' positive response to the message *"Every girl deserves an education before marriage"* is in line with Nguyen and Wodon (2014), who point out that education-focused campaigns effectively challenge deeply rooted cultural norms by re-establishing education as a fundamental right and a means of empowerment. This approach has been shown to encourage parents to

prioritise their daughters' education over early marriage. Similarly, the response of young people to slogans such as "*Your future matters*" demonstrates the power of positive and inspiring messages.

Erulkar (2013) points out that campaigns that use relatable stories and inspiring narratives significantly increase youth's ability to visualise alternative futures and promote resilience and ambition by making abstract concepts tangible through real-world success stories.

In conclusion, the campaign's messages are essential to challenge societal norms, inspire young people, and mobilise collective action against child marriage. By focusing on education, empowerment, and shared responsibility, these messages address the multidimensional nature of the problem and foster a sense of hope and action in affected communities. These responses far exceeded expectations, demonstrating the campaign's ability to personalise messages that resonate strongly with varied populations. The intentional use of inclusive language and relevant visuals heightened the effect, instilling a shared sense of urgency and optimism.

Societal Implications of the Findings

The campaign reached beyond mere individual awareness, sparking significant changes in cultural norms and societal priorities. Parents who once considered early marriage a viable financial strategy have now acknowledged its detrimental effects on their daughters' health and future opportunities. Inspired by the campaign, young people began to explore alternative routes focused on education. Teachers recognized as influential figures within the community, took on more proactive roles in advocating for girls' rights and enhancing educational access.

Perhaps most importantly, local leaders who were initially perceived as protectors of tradition started to utilize their influence to confront harmful practices and promote systemic reform. The

recognition by one leader that "*child marriage holds back the whole community*" illustrates this pivotal change.

These findings indicate a significant societal transformation with extensive implications. Firstly, as awareness increases, the community could observe a gradual reduction in child marriage rates. This shift is expected to lead to better health outcomes, lower maternal mortality rates, and improved educational achievements for girls. Over time, these elements can effectively disrupt the cycle of poverty and dependency that has historically sustained child marriage in the district.

Secondly, the success of the campaign highlights the effectiveness of collective action in tackling deeply ingrained societal challenges. By framing child marriage as a community issue rather than an individual concern, the campaign created a sense of shared responsibility. This strategy not only engaged a wide range of stakeholders but also laid the foundation for lasting change.

Reflections on Expectations and Unanticipated Insights

While the research findings largely correspond with initial expectations regarding the campaign's ability to raise awareness, the extent of the community's engagement yielded unexpected insights. The readiness of local leaders to openly confront long-held traditions was particularly remarkable, as was the enthusiasm displayed by youth in imagining alternative futures.

One unforeseen outcome was the cascading effect of the campaign's messages. Parents reported disseminating their newfound knowledge to neighbours and family members, thereby extending the campaign's influence. Likewise, teachers began integrating lessons on child marriage into their curriculum, fostering opportunities for ongoing impact.

However, the findings also highlight areas that require further action. For example, although awareness has increased, the community is still in the early stages of systemic transformation. Structural barriers, such as poverty and limited access to education, still require attention to ensure

continued progress. Youth, empowered and empowered by the campaign initiatives, have begun to imagine and visualize alternative life paths that focus primarily on pursuing education and personal development. Teachers, who hold respected positions as trusted figures within their communities, have taken a more proactive role in advocating for girls' rights and advocating for the availability and accessibility of educational opportunities essential for empowerment.

Perhaps most importantly, local leaders, who were initially seen as the custodians of traditional customs, began to use their positions to actively confront and challenge harmful practices, such as historically oppressed rights, in the hope that this would benefit society. The endorsement of a sincere leader who says that "*society as a whole is postponing child marriage*" is an important perspective that deeply reflects the prospects and commitments of this respect for social progress. These findings suggest a profound societal transformation that carries extensive and far-reaching implications for the community as a whole.

First and foremost, as the awareness within the community continues to expand and evolve, it is highly plausible that the community may gradually witness a notable decline in the rates of child marriage, which would be a significant step forward. This positive change is likely to yield a variety of improved health outcomes, a marked reduction in maternal mortality rates, and an overall enhancement in educational attainment levels for girls, which collectively can contribute to breaking the cyclical patterns of poverty and dependency that have historically underpinned the prevalence of child marriage in the district.

Secondly, the campaign's success serves as a powerful testament to the immense potential that collective action holds in addressing deeply ingrained societal issues that have persisted over time. By effectively framing child marriage as a pressing community-wide problem rather than merely an individual concern, the campaign succeeded in fostering a strong sense of shared responsibility

among community members. This collaborative approach not only mobilized a diverse array of stakeholders but also established a solid foundation for sustainable, long-term change that benefits all members of the community.

Research Question 2: What Impact Have Communication Campaigns Had on Changing Behaviours Related to Child Marriage?

Shifts in Attitudes and Behaviours

The campaign to end child marriage elicited a range of positive and negative responses from parents, youth, teachers, and community leaders, reflecting the complex dynamics of confronting deeply rooted cultural and social practices.

Parents demonstrated a growing awareness of the importance of prioritizing education over child marriage. One parent noted, *“We now think twice before making decisions about our daughters’ futures”* This is consistent with Nguyen and Wodon (2014), who found that educational campaigns help parents better understand the long-term benefits of educating girls. such as higher lifetime income and better economic opportunities often improve.

Similarly, young people commented on their changing priorities, with one stating, *“It’s not just about preventing child marriage; we’re now talking about how to make our dreams come true.”*

This confirms the findings of Erulkar (2013), who indicate that youth-focused interventions are effective in encouraging young people to view education as a means to achieve their goals.

Teachers observed tangible changes and noted an increase in the dropout rate among girls.

Despite these positive developments, there were also notable challenges. Some parents resisted the campaign’s messages, citing economic constraints as a reason for continuing the practice of early marriage. As Steinhaus et al. (2016) observed, financial burdens often compel families to view

marriage as a practical solution, particularly in resource-poor settings. Similarly, some youth admitted difficulty countering peer pressure and societal expectations.

One youth explained, *"It's not easy to focus on school when everyone expects you to marry early."*

These findings are consistent with Karam's (2015) work, which underscores the enduring influence of cultural norms on young people's decisions.

Teachers expressed frustration over systemic challenges that hindered sustained progress. *"We lack the materials and support to keep girls in school,"* one teacher lamented. Nguyen and Wodon (2014) emphasize that while awareness campaigns raise expectations, inadequate resources and infrastructure often prevent long-term impact.

Local leaders also encountered resistance from community members unwilling to abandon traditional practices. One leader explained, *"Many still believe that child marriage is a cultural norm that should not be interfered with."* This view is consistent with UNFPA (2012), which highlights the difficulty of maintaining deeply held cultural beliefs to overcome them.

The mixed reactions to the campaign highlight the complexity of child marriage, which is shaped by economic, social, and structural factors (Karam, 2015). While positive responses demonstrate significant progress in changing attitudes, negative responses highlight persistent challenges, including economic hardship, cultural norms, and systemic barriers. To achieve sustainable progress, interventions must combine awareness-raising campaigns with practical support mechanisms such as scholarships, teacher training, and community engagement (Steinhaus et al., 2016; Nguyen and Wodon, 2014).

Personal Choices and Actions

Parents have shown an increasing awareness of the importance of the prioritisation of education towards early marriage. A parent has noticed: *"We are thinking twice before making decisions*

about our daughters." This corresponds to Nguyen and Wodon (2014) who revealed that the awareness of the long-term advantages of girls is improving frequently. Education, such as improving income and economic opportunities for life.

Likewise, young people have expressed changes in their priorities, one of them said: "It is not only a question of avoiding children's marriage. We are now talking about the way we can realize our dreams.

Teachers observed concrete changes and found an increase in school retention rates in girls. A teacher said: *"I saw more parents who tried to keep their daughters in school since the start of the campaign."* Steinhaus et al. (2016) confirm this observation, noting that campaigns that emphasize the value of education often lead to improved enrollment and retention rates, especially among girls at risk of early marriage.

Local leaders also recognized a growing openness within their communities to debate child marriage. *"People are now talking more openly about the dangers of child marriage and how we can prevent it,"* noted one leader. UNFPA (2012) highlights the importance of open dialogues in promoting collective action and challenging harmful cultural norms.

The campaign to end child marriage received mixed responses, with some stakeholders expressing resistance or reluctance to fully embrace its messages. Many parents continued to view child marriage as a necessary economic strategy due to prevailing financial difficulties. One parent expressed, *"Even though I want my daughter to stay in school, we can hardly afford the fees and marrying her off will ease the burden on our family."* This perspective is consistent with the findings of Steinhaus et al. (2016) showing that financial insecurity often leads families to resort to child marriage as a survival strategy, especially in resource-poor settings.

Among the youth, there was an appreciation for the campaign's messages but hesitation to take action due to societal pressure. "We understand the importance of education, but it is hard to go against community expectations," admitted one youth. This echoes Karam (2015), who notes that social conformity and fear of stigma can limit youth's ability to challenge entrenched cultural practices.

Teachers face institutional and logistical constraints that limit their ability to fully achieve campaign goals, even within the framework of Ghana's girl-centred curriculum. One teacher noted, *"While the curriculum supports gender equality, its rigid structure and focus on standardized content leaves little room to integrate other messages, such as those from the movement. We also lack the teaching materials needed to effectively address child marriage in the classroom"*. According to Nguyen and Wodon (2014), the lack of adequate resources and institutional support often hinders teachers' efforts to effectively address social problems such as child marriage.

While local leaders recognised the importance of the campaign, they reported limited community support for their interventions. One leader noted, *"Some families don't want to listen and say child marriage is a cultural norm that we have to respect."* This resistance is consistent with UNFPA's (2012) findings, which highlight that deeply rooted traditions often have a significant impact. an obstacle to addressing child marriage, even if awareness campaigns are well received. The diverse responses to the campaign demonstrate how the combination of economic, social and structural challenges can be complex and prevent the campaign from having a real impact. These responses highlight the importance of more comprehensive strategies that combine advocacy with financial assistance, institutional changes and community programmes (Karam, 2015; Steinhaus et al., 2016).

Encouraging Lasting Behavioural Change

Responses to the campaign to end child marriage revealed both challenges and opportunities for sustainable change among parents, young people, teachers, and community leaders.

Parents expressed difficulties in making sustainable change due to economic constraints. One parent noted, *“Even if we want to end child marriage, poverty leaves us no choice.”*

This highlights the tension between short-term financial survival and long-term educational benefits for girls. Walker (2015) highlights how economic hardship often forces families to view child marriage as a practical solution to reduce household costs.

Young people highlighted the challenges associated with engaging in deeply rooted cultural traditions. One commented, *“Some families are hard to convince because they see it as part of our identity.”*

Despite these challenges, some young people demonstrated a strong commitment to advocacy. One shared *“We started forming groups to educate our peers on why child marriage should be ended.”*

This proactive engagement reflects young people’s growing determination to take control of their futures and influence their peers.

Teachers highlighted systemic challenges such as a lack of resources and institutional support that prevented them from fully integrating the campaign’s messages into their curricula. One teacher explained, *“Without teaching materials and flexibility in the curriculum, it is difficult to make these messages a central part of our work.”*

Despite these challenges, some teachers and community leaders expressed optimism about the campaign’s potential for lasting behaviour change. One leader noted, *“The campaign has planted the seeds of change, but we need more follow-up to continue to grow”*. This position is consistent with Plan International’s (2021) emphasis on sustained community engagement and practical

support, such as skills training and financial assistance, to reinforce changes in attitudes and behaviours.

Comparing results with Expectations

The research findings are largely consistent with both the researcher and general expectations regarding the ability of awareness campaigns to influence attitudes and behaviours. However, some unexpected findings emerged:

Youth advocacy: The active engagement of young people in advocating for change exceeded expectations and highlighted the effectiveness of peer-led initiatives.

Community dialogues: The openness of some community members to engage in discussions about child marriage was a welcome revelation and indicated a willingness to change cultures.

Economic constraints: The magnitude of economic barriers was greater than expected, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies that combine awareness-raising with practical support.

Societal Implications

The impact of the campaign went beyond individual behaviour, influencing social dynamics and revealing both opportunities and challenges for sustainable change. Open discussions about the child's marriage were more often held and broke the silence that once caused the issue and collective reflection, even in communities rooted in traditional practices. However, economic and structural barriers remained, in many families considered early marriage as a survival strategy, the need for interventions such as fairs, vocational training and community support underlines in addition to awareness efforts.

Cultural resistance also remained considerable, because deep-rooted norms continued to perpetuate child marriage, despite some leaders and parents who embraced change, which

emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive approaches. Teachers and schools played a crucial role in stimulating change but were confronted with institutional limitations, such as insufficient financing and resources, which must be tackled to maximize the impact of future campaigns.

Research Question 3: What Significant Communication Strategies Have Been Utilized, and How Effective Have They Been?

Most Successful Communication Channels

Another response from a parent was that community meetings were the most effective channel for communicating campaign messages. One parent said, *“Hearing the messages in person and being able to ask questions made all the difference.”* This is in line with findings from UNICEF (2020), which emphasizes that face-to-face interactions during community meetings promote dialogue, trust and collective ownership, and allow participants to clarify misunderstandings and engage deeply with the message.

Youth found social media platforms particularly effective. One youth stated, *“The posts on Facebook and WhatsApp remind us every day.”* Literature supports this view, with Kagesten and Chandra-Mouli (2020) finding that social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are critical for amplifying campaign messages through constant presence and peer-to-peer advocacy. Local leaders praised radio programs for their ability to effectively reach remote areas. One leader noted, *“Radio allowed us to spread the message even to people who could not attend community meetings.”* UN Women (2019) recognized radio as a critical tool for reaching underserved populations, particularly in rural areas where literacy barriers and geographic challenges can limit access to other forms of communication.

Relatability and Accessibility of Messages

The campaign's ability to customize its messages for various groups was a key highlight. Parents found it meaningful when local languages and relatable examples were used. One parent mentioned, *"Hearing them speak in our language made it feel more personal."* This strategy supports the research by Ndungi and Karanja (2020), which shows that using local languages in campaigns helps build trust and creates a welcoming atmosphere, making it easier for people to connect with the message. Additionally, relatable examples help parents see themselves in the issues presented, making the messages more powerful and actionable (Groot et al., 2021).

Young people were especially inspired by stories of their peers who overcame challenges to reach their goals. One youth expressed, *"It made me feel like I could do the same."* This aligns with the work of Martin and Rose (2020), who emphasize that success stories can motivate young audiences. Hearing about others who have faced similar struggles encourages hope and a sense of control, which are essential for lasting behavior change.

Teachers appreciated the campaign's focus on education, particularly its commitment to keeping girls in school. One teacher noted, *"The focus on keeping girls in school was something we could easily integrate into our lessons."* This aligns with the findings of Unterhalter et al. (2020), who argue that education-centred initiatives not only empower girls with knowledge and skills but also challenge harmful cultural practices that contribute to child marriage.

Local leaders pointed out that directly addressing cultural norms made the messages more effective. One leader remarked, *"They weren't afraid to confront the traditions that support child marriage."* According to Adjei and Oduro (2021), respectfully challenging deep-rooted cultural norms through informed dialogue is a powerful way to encourage community-wide changes in behaviour.

Enhancements to Communication Strategies

Another parental response was that involving religious and traditional leaders could enhance the reach of the campaign. One parent noted, *“If pastors and leaders talk about this, people will listen.”* This is consistent with studies by Yaro and Asamoah (2020), who emphasize the influential role of religious and traditional leaders in shaping community attitudes and behaviours. These leaders are often seen as custodians of moral and cultural values, making their support for campaigns against child marriage particularly effective in building trust and promoting behavior change.

Youth suggested creating more interactive school programs to directly engage students. One youth said, *“We need debates, workshops, and drama performances that show us why this issue matters.”* This suggestion is supported by Kinyua et al. (2021), who argue that participatory and interactive learning methods are highly effective in engaging young audiences, fostering critical thinking, and encouraging them to question harmful social norms. Such activities also provide safe spaces for dialogue and peer-led advocacy.

Teachers recommended providing scholarships to support families financially. One teacher stated, *“If families know that education is not a financial burden, they will choose it over early marriage.”* This recommendation aligns with the findings of Wodon et al. (2021), who highlight those financial incentives, such as scholarships and conditional cash transfers, are powerful tools for reducing child marriage by mitigating the economic pressures that drive families to marry off their daughters early. Local leaders emphasized the need for ongoing community engagement to sustain the impact of the campaign. One leader concluded, *“The campaign must be continuous; only then will we see real change.”* This perspective is consistent with the work of Adjei and Oduro (2021), who argue that sustained engagement, rather than one-off interventions, is critical to achieving

long-term behaviour change in communities. Regular follow-ups and consistent messaging help reinforce new norms and prevent relapse into harmful practices.

Comparing Results with Expectations

The results largely correspond to the expectations of the importance of tailored communication strategies and the power of personal engagement. However, the effectiveness of social media in strengthening news and the inspiring effects of peer successes have exceeded the first hypotheses. At the same time, the persistence of economic and cultural obstacles has shown the limits of awareness campaigns in isolation and highlighted the need for integrated approaches.

Social implications of results

The effects of the campaign went beyond individual behaviour, influenced social norms and prompted the community to be the practice of the community. Open discussions have become more common and have called the silence that the problem was surrounded for a long time. Parents began to question traditional practices; young people took education as a way of strengthening and teachers joined the campaign problems in their lessons.

However, the results have also shown systemic barriers such as poverty and cultural resistance that have hampered continuous progress. While some families took the campaign messages, others considered early marriage to continue as a necessary economic strategy. Likewise, cultural norms have remained an important obstacle, especially in rural areas where traditions have a strong influence.

Despite these challenges, the campaign has demonstrated the collective action potential. By adapting messages to various audiences and approaching cultural sensitivities, it has created a basis for future efforts. The study highlighted the need for multiple support interventions that combine

awareness-raising campaigns with practical solutions such as financial aid, community commitment and institutional support.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed diverse responses from different stakeholders regarding the communication strategies and impact of the campaign against child marriage, showcasing both successes and challenges in influencing attitudes, behaviours, and practices at the community level.

Impact of Communication Strategies

Parents highlighted that the campaign's use of local languages and relatable examples made the messages more impactful. They felt that hearing the messages in their native languages fostered a sense of personal connection. This aligns with Agha and Van Rossem (2004), who emphasise the importance of culturally relevant communication in driving social change. Similarly, local leaders stressed the effectiveness of involving religious and traditional authorities in campaign messaging, as these figures hold significant influence in communities. Kumi-Kyereme et al. (2007) argue that trusted figures in society often lend credibility to social change initiatives, making them essential stakeholders in addressing child marriage.

Youth found storytelling particularly inspiring, especially narratives of peers who had overcome challenges to achieve their goals. Such stories not only inspired hope but also reinforced the importance of staying in school. Research by Silverman et al. (2018) supports the power of narrative communication, noting its ability to make abstract concepts more tangible and relatable. Additionally, youth recommended more interactive, school-based programs to sustain engagement. This aligns with Gibbs et al. (2020), who highlight the value of peer-based interventions in promoting behavioural change among adolescents.

Teachers valued the campaign's focus on education but recommended that financial barriers be addressed through scholarships. Many families, despite appreciating the importance of education, are unable to afford it due to poverty. Figueroa et al. (2002) note that addressing structural barriers such as economic insecurity is vital for sustaining long-term behavioural change. Local leaders also echoed the need for continuous community engagement to ensure that the momentum gained from the campaign does not wane over time. This perspective resonates with UNICEF's (2020) recommendation for sustained, community-driven approaches to combat child marriage.

Role of Media Channels

Media channels played a significant role in the campaign's reach and effectiveness. Parents found community gatherings impactful, as they provided opportunities for direct interaction and clarification of concerns. Muturi and Mwangi (2017) argue that participatory communication fosters a deeper sense of ownership among community members. Local leaders emphasized the role of radio in reaching remote areas where physical meetings may not always be feasible. Buckley et al. (2008) highlight radio as a widely accessible medium in rural areas, making it an invaluable tool for mass communication. On the other hand, youth appreciated the daily reminders provided by social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, which kept the campaign's messages top-of-mind. This finding aligns with Nyirenda et al. (2021), who observe that digital platforms are particularly effective in engaging younger demographics.

Challenges in Sustaining Behavioural Change

However, challenges in sustaining behavioural change emerged across responses. Parents noted that economic pressures often left them with limited choices, despite their desire to prioritize their children's education. Malhotra et al. (2011) highlight the relationship between poverty and harmful practices like child marriage, emphasizing the need for multi-faceted approaches that address

economic vulnerabilities. Cultural traditions also continue to pose significant barriers, as observed by youth. Bicchieri et al. (2014) argue that deeply entrenched social norms require persistent and multi-dimensional efforts to change. While many teachers and local leaders expressed optimism about the campaign's potential for sustained change, they recognized the need for ongoing engagement and adequate resources. Teachers recommended integrating the campaign's goals into the school curriculum to reinforce its messages, while local leaders emphasized the importance of follow-up initiatives to maintain momentum. These insights align with the findings of Figueroa et al. (2002), who stress that effective social change campaigns must be continuous and well-resourced to achieve lasting impact.

Multi-Channel Approach

The contrasting views on the effectiveness of different media channels underscore the need for a multi-channel approach. While social media appeals to younger audiences, traditional media like radio and community gatherings ensure inclusivity, particularly for those without access to digital platforms. This balance is crucial for reaching diverse segments of the population, as supported by Muturi and Mwangi (2017).

Complexity of Social Change Campaigns

The study findings illustrate the complexity of social change campaigns and the interplay between cultural, economic, and structural factors in shaping attitudes and behaviours. While the campaign succeeded in creating awareness and promoting positive attitudes toward education and delayed marriage, structural barriers such as poverty and deeply ingrained cultural norms continue to pose challenges. Addressing these issues will require sustained efforts, involving a mix of tailored communication strategies, financial support mechanisms, and community-driven initiatives.

By leveraging these lessons, future campaigns can build on the successes of this initiative while addressing its limitations, paving the way for a more significant and lasting impact on communities in Ghana and beyond.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study findings, drawing connections between the research objectives and the findings presented in previous chapters. It summarises key insights into the effectiveness of communication campaigns, particularly World Vision's "End Child Marriage" campaign, in influencing public awareness and behaviour in Fanteakwa District.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study found that World Vision's communication campaign "End Child Marriage" significantly impacted public awareness and behaviour change in Fanteakwa District. Parents highlighted the effectiveness of community gatherings as they allowed for direct engagement and clarification of campaign messages. Young people found social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp particularly effective as they provided constant reminders of the campaign's goals. Teachers highlighted the importance of posters and banners in schools, while local leaders noted that radio programmes were successful in spreading the message to remote areas. The campaign was effective in raising awareness about the harmful effects of child marriage. Parents gained a better understanding of how child marriage negatively affects girls' education, health, and future opportunities. Young people have expressed a stronger commitment to prioritizing education and envisioning a brighter future. Teachers have seen an increase in discussions about preventing child marriage in schools, and local leaders have recognized the impact of the campaign on changing societal perspectives. However, we identified several challenges to sustaining behavioral change. Parents cite poverty as the main barrier to prioritizing education over early marriage, while young people acknowledge that entrenched cultural norms remain a significant barrier. Despite these

challenges, stakeholders have expressed an optimistic attitude, that is, with a continuous effort of movement.

Participants make recommendations for improving the impact of training. Parents advocated for the participation of religious and traditional leaders to increase the credibility of the event. Young people suggested more interactive programs in schools to directly engage students. Teachers suggested providing scholarships to reduce financial barriers for families, while local leaders emphasised the importance of ongoing community engagement to maintain motivation and promote long-term behavioural change.

The study also found that a tailored messaging strategy was critical to the campaign's success. Parents responded positively to messages in local languages, which made the event feel more relevant and personal. Teens are inspired by real-life stories of peers overcoming obstacles to achieve their goals. Teachers appreciated the emphasis on education as a fundamental right, and local leaders appreciated the campaign's bold approach in addressing cultural norms that perpetuate child marriage.

In conclusion, the campaign has been effective in initiating significant change, but sustained efforts, tailored strategies, and targeted interventions are needed to address persistent socio-economic and cultural challenges and ensure long-term impact.

5.3 Conclusion

World Vision's "End Child Marriage" campaign has shown great potential to raise awareness and stimulate behavioral change in the Fanteakwa District. The campaign employed a comprehensive strategy, utilizing various communication channels and customized messaging to effectively connect with diverse audiences and enhance awareness of the detrimental impacts of child

marriage. Key findings from the study highlight the effectiveness of community-based interventions, the power of social media, and the importance of traditional and religious leaders in amplifying campaign messages. The campaign has successfully challenged deep-rooted cultural norms and empowered individuals, especially young people, to make informed choices about their future.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that sustaining behaviour change requires ongoing efforts and addressing underlying socio-economic challenges. Poverty, cultural norms, and limited access to education remain significant barriers. To ensure the long-term impact of the campaign, it is essential to continue investing in community engagement, providing targeted support to vulnerable families and working with local leaders to create an enabling environment for girls' education and empowerment.

Building on the success of the movement and addressing the challenges identified, World Vision and other stakeholders can work to create a future where every girl has the opportunity to reach her full potential, free from the constraints of child marriage.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommendations:

1. **Strengthen Community Engagement:** Continue to invest in community activities such as public dialogues and awareness-raising events. Actively engage religious and traditional leaders to reinforce campaign messages and address cultural norms that perpetuate child marriage. Additionally, involve schools and local organizations to create a broader support network.

Engaging a wider range of community stakeholders, including schools and local organizations, can create a more comprehensive support system and ensure that anti-child marriage messages reach all segments of the community.

2. **Leverage Digital Platforms:** Expand the use of social media platforms to reach a wider audience, especially young people. Develop innovative digital campaigns, including short videos, interactive quizzes, and online forums, to engage youth and promote positive behaviours. Incorporate mobile apps and SMS campaigns to reach those with limited internet access.

Mobile apps and SMS campaigns can ensure that the message reaches individuals who may not have regular access to the internet, thereby broadening the campaign's reach.

3. **Provide Comprehensive Support Services:** Offer comprehensive support services, such as counselling, life skills training, and economic empowerment programs, to vulnerable girls and their families. These services can help address underlying issues that contribute to child marriage, such as poverty and lack of education. Include health services and legal aid to provide holistic support.

Adding health services and legal aid ensures that all aspects of the girls' well-being are addressed, providing a more robust support system to help them overcome challenges.

4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the impact of the campaign and identify areas for improvement. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of different communication channels and messaging strategies to optimize future interventions. Use participatory evaluation methods to involve community members in the process.

Participatory evaluation methods can provide valuable insights from the community, ensuring that the evaluation process is inclusive and reflective of the community's needs and perspectives.

5. **Support Policy Change:** Support policies that protect girls' rights, promote gender equality, and criminalize child marriage. Collaborate with government officials, policymakers, and civil society organizations to influence legislation and ensure its effective implementation. Advocate for the allocation of resources to enforce these policies. Ensuring that adequate resources are allocated for policy enforcement is crucial for the effective implementation of laws and regulations aimed at protecting girls' rights.

Conclusion

Addressing child marriage requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that combines community mobilization, technological innovation, support services, rigorous monitoring and evaluation, and political support. By effectively implementing these recommendations, we can create a more just and equitable society where all girls have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The added recommendations aim to enhance the inclusivity, reach, and effectiveness of the campaign, ensuring that all aspects of the issue are addressed.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

Given the current study's findings, the following areas could be considered for further research:

1. **Long-term Impact Assessment:** Research could study the sustained effects of the campaign over time, focusing on how behavioural changes concerning child marriage and community attitudes have evolved.
2. **Community Commitment and Participation:** A deeper study could explore the role of different community groups (e.g., elders, youth, local leaders) in the success of the

campaign and evaluate how community engagement has influenced child marriage reduction.

3. **Effectiveness of Media Channels:** Further research could assess the specific media channels (radio, television, social media) used in the campaign, examining which platforms were most effective in reaching and influencing the target audience.
4. **Gender Dynamics and Empowerment:** This research could explore how the campaign affected gender dynamics within households and communities, particularly in terms of empowering girls and changing family decisions about marriage.
5. **Role of Traditional and Religious Leaders:** Research could assess the involvement and influence of traditional and religious leaders in promoting or resisting the campaign, and how their position impacted its success in reducing child marriage.

These improvements and additions aim to provide a more comprehensive and actionable set of recommendations, ensuring that all relevant aspects of the issue are addressed and that the campaign's impact is maximized.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently in the final year of my Master's Degree program at the University of Media, Arts, and Communication (UNIMAC), specifically within the Institute of Journalism, School of Graduate Studies and Research. I am undertaking a study aimed at evaluating the impact of World Vision's "End Child Marriage" communication campaign on public awareness and behavior change in the Fantekwa District. The objective of this interview is to collect data exclusively for the aforementioned research. The information obtained will be utilized strictly for academic purposes, and I assure you that your responses will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality and anonymity. Your time and contributions are immensely appreciated, and I sincerely thank you for your willingness to participate.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Research Question 1: In what ways have communication campaigns influenced public awareness of child marriage in the Fantekwa District?

1. Could you share your understanding of child marriage before learning about the "End Child Marriage" initiative?
2. How has the campaign shaped your knowledge or perception of child marriage within your community?
3. Which particular messages from the campaign resonated with you, and how did they alter your perspective on child marriage?

Research Question 2: What impact have communication campaigns had on changing behaviours related to child marriage in the Fanteakwa District?

1. Have you noticed shifts in attitudes or behaviours towards child marriage in your community following the launch of the campaign?
2. What personal choices or actions, if any, have you made regarding child marriage as a result of the campaign?
3. Do you believe that the campaign has encouraged lasting behavioural changes in your community? Why or why not?

Research Question 3: What significant communication strategies have been utilized in public awareness and behavioural change initiatives, and how effective have they been in tackling child marriage?

1. Which communication channels (e.g., radio, posters, community gatherings) employed in the campaign proved most successful in raising awareness about child marriage?
2. How relatable and accessible were the campaign's messages to various demographics in the community, such as parents, youth, or local leaders?
3. In your view, what enhancements could be made to the campaign's communication strategies to further combat child marriage in the district?

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