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**INVESTIGATEING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATORY
COMMUNICATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES: A STUDY
OF WENCHI MUNICIPAL.**

BY

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION AND SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

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

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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION

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

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty, the Convoy Team commander of the 8th Parliament of the Speaker of Parliament, DSP Simon Tenkuu and my colleagues team members of the Speaker's team, Mr Bigr Saanuor Edward(uncle), my family and all those who contributed and supported immensely to make this project a success

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives using Wenchi municipal as a case. The study employed a mixed-method research design using semi-structured questionnaires and a self-administered interviewer guide as the data collection instrument. Using the purposive and stratified sampling technique, 160 respondents and participants made up of staffs of the assembly, chiefs, project officers of some non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and other developmental agents were selected for the study. Drawing on the Community Development, Social Cognitive and Systems Theories, the study provided an understanding of the practice of participatory communication and development challenges with diverse stakeholder views for inclusive development outcomes. A questionnaire and interview guide were used for data collection. The study found that, community members have unmet expectations regarding development projects in the municipality. They were concerns about the effectiveness of participatory communication approaches used in under taken community development initiatives in the municipality. Notable challenges to effective participatory communication include: lack of trust and credibility in the communication process, political interference, insufficient resources, and poor understanding of meaningful participation. Despite these challenges, community members reported feeling empowered to initiate development projects based on their needs. The study suggests that participatory communication is crucial for building trust and promoting sustainable development, but requires more effort and commitment from all stakeholders. The findings highlight the need for comprehensive training and capacity-building programs, inclusive and culturally sensitive communication approaches, and the use of technology and digital media to improve participatory communication in community development initiatives. The study recommends for policymakers, development practitioners, and community leaders

to prioritize the development of effective participatory communication strategies to foster inclusive and sustainable community development.

Keywords: Participatory communication, Community development, Development initiatives, sustainable development, Wench Municipality.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Background of the study

The goal of community development is to improve the well-being and quality of life of the people who live there through an all-encompassing and multifaceted process. To have a comprehensive and long-lasting effect, it considers a number of factors, such as social, economic, cultural, and environmental ones (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013; Waisbord, 2018; 2001). According to Roodt (2001), community development efforts are those that prioritize community empowerment, social justice advocacy, and community autonomy, acknowledging that communities possess the ability to steer their own development (Roodt, 2001; Dinbabo, 2003). According to Thara's Raj, MacKenzie, Lohman, Mead and Popay (2023) perspectives, community development efforts typically focus on critical topics such as treating specific health concerns, promoting healthy behaviours, increasing access to healthcare services, and establishing programs to address poverty, financial disparity, and social isolation. Improving the availability of literacy initiatives, high-quality education, and career training encourages sustainable resource management, conservation, and eco-friendly activities (Oladapo, 2020; Roodt, 2001; Dinbabo, 2003).

Quebral (2012) states that community members are included in the planning, creation, and execution of development projects through participatory communication, which is an essential strategy in community development. Quebral (2012), states that this method acknowledges community members as equal participants and values their knowledge and viewpoints. By encouraging community involvement, ownership, and participation in an inclusive manner, participatory communication seeks to foster a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere. Research by Melkote and Steeves (2015) confirmed that community development incorporates

a variety of community members, including marginalized groups, and that its goal is to increase community confidence and capacity while promoting collaborations between community members and development stakeholders.

Boafo (2018) stated that in order to address power disparities, social norms, and communication barriers and guarantee that community voices are acknowledged and valued, it is important to promote open and transparent communication as well as community-led decision-making and ownership in participatory communication (Boafo, 2018; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). Initiatives for community development have been said to require active community participation and engagement. Oladapo (2020) and Dinbabo (2003) state that community participation entails community members' active participation in decision-making processes and development activities, whereas community engagement refers to fostering connections and trust between community members and development stakeholders.

Abbasi, Alalouch, and Bramley (2016) discovered that the following elements are important for successful community development: power dynamics, which aim to address imbalances and ensure inclusive decision-making; utilizing pre-existing social structures and networks; and using the right channels for efficient outreach and feedback. Booth, Lin, and Wei (2018) claim that, enhancing community skills and knowledge while providing significant incentives for community participation improves community autonomy and participation. Enhanced sustainability and development results include building community capacity and fostering closer ties between community members and development stakeholders (Booth, Lin, & Wei 2018).

Researchers studying community development Auerbach (2017) and Slocum, Weghart, Rocheleau, and Thomas-Slayter (1995) asserted that contextual elements such as social, political, economic, and cultural aspects have a major impact on community development

programs. These researchers assert that comprehending these elements is essential to creating community development programs that are successful. Initiatives in rural locations, for example, might need to consider low infrastructure, restricted access to resources, and cultural norms that affect community participation and engagement. In light of these claims, it is suggested that while poor infrastructure, such as inadequate transportation and communication networks, might limit the reach and impact of community development programs, poverty and unemployment also contribute to a lack of enthusiasm and participation among community members.

The community's resources and economic circumstances are referred to as economic factors. Economic variables, including poverty, resource scarcity, and inadequate infrastructure, can have a big influence on community development programs in rural communities (Slocum, Wachhart, Rocheleau & Thomas-Slayter, 1995; Auerbach, 2017). The political landscape and the systems of governance that impact community development programs are referred to as political factors. Community development activities in rural areas can be greatly impacted by political variables such as political instability, corruption, and a lack of government backing (Auerbach, 2017; Slocum, Wichhart, Rocheleau, & Thomas-Slayter, 1995). For example, political unrest and corruption have been linked in the past to low levels of trust and involvement in society. Initiatives for community development may not be able to be implemented and sustained if there is insufficient financing and assistance from the government. Through this, the independence and ownership of community development projects can be compromised.

Studies by Auerbach (2017), Slocum, Wachhart, Rocheleau, and Thomas-Slayter (1995) also showed that cultural elements, such as community norms, values, and beliefs, play a role. Cultural elements, including customs, social mores, and religious convictions, can have a big

influence on community development programs in rural areas. According to Auerbach (2017), participation in development projects and community engagement are also often influenced by social norms and traditional traditions. Initiatives for community development may be impacted by religious practices and beliefs, especially if those activities or beliefs are thought to be at odds with cultural or religious norms.

Community members' opinions on development projects and their inclination to interact and participate are greatly influenced by cultural practices and beliefs (Slocum, Witter, Rocheleau, & Thomas-Slayter, 1995). The relationships and social structures that exist within a society are referred to as social factors. Group development activities in rural locations can be greatly impacted by social elements like leadership, cohesion within the group, and social capital. Social relationships and networks that increase community members' access to information and resources are two factors that have been found in recent studies to influence community engagement and participation in development initiatives (Auerbach, 2017; Thara Raj; MacKenzie, Lohman, Mead, & Popay, 2023).

Lalitha (2023) asserts that comprehending these elements is essential to creating community development programmes that are successful, long-lasting, and suited to the particular requirements and goals of local communities. By taking these things into account, community development programs can be created to specifically target the possibilities and problems that the community faces, enhancing their sustainability and impact and bridging the large gaps in community development (Hussain, 2023).

Participatory communication is a crucial approach in community development initiatives, emphasizing the empowerment and involvement of community members in the communication process. This approach acknowledges the significance of active participation, mutual understanding, and collective decision-making in achieving sustainable development outcomes

(Tuftte, 2017; Anani-Bossman & Blankson, 2024). Participatory communication refers to "a process of joint decision-making and problem-solving among stakeholders, which involves active listening, dialogue, and negotiation to reach a mutually beneficial outcome" (Servaes & Servaes, 2021, p. 12). Given this assertions, participatory communication highlights the collaborative nature of participatory communication, emphasizing the importance of equal participation and joint decision-making among stakeholders. It also underscores the need for active listening, dialogue, and negotiation to ensure that all parties' needs and concerns are taken into account to reach a consensus community development. According to Tuftte (2017, p. 25), expand the concept of Participatory communication as a shift from one-way communication to a two-way communication process that empowers individuals and groups to take an active role in shaping their own development, through a process of information sharing, consultation, and collective decision-making. This emphasizes the empowering nature of participatory communication, explaining its potential to enable individuals and groups to take control of their own development. It also emphasizes the importance of two-way communication, information sharing, consultation, and collective decision-making in achieving the community development goal.

Participatory communication encompasses various techniques, including dialogue, discussion, and collaboration, which enable community members to articulate their perspectives, needs, and concerns (Melkote & Steeves, 2017; Servaes & Servaes, 2021). This inclusive approach fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, leading to more effective and sustainable development initiatives (Oakley et al., 2020; Maina et al., 2020).

In the context of community development, participatory communication has been successfully applied in various initiatives, such as healthcare, education, and environmental conservation (Myers & Karaurus, 2017; Fitryarini, 2018). However, the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives remains understudied in certain regions,

including the Wenchi Municipal. Although the value of participatory communication in community development is widely acknowledged, there are still a lot of unanswered questions. Previous studies have mostly addressed the advantages of participatory communication, paying little attention to its drawbacks and obstacles. Furthermore, a deeper comprehension of community involvement, engagement, and sustainable development in a range of contexts is required.

1.1 Problem Statement

Initiatives for community development usually have trouble involving local communities, which results in unsustainable and unsuccessful projects. In rural places with limited resources and infrastructure, this is especially troubling. According to Thara Raj, MacKenzie, Lohman, Mead, and Popay (2023), the lack of sustainable development and community sovereignty in these places exacerbates environmental degradation, poverty, and ill health. Although participatory communication plays a vital role in community development, little is known about how well it works to encourage community involvement, participation, and sustainable development. According to Azam and Mazid (2022); Quebral (2012), and Rahman (1993), the majority of global research to date has ignored the difficulties and constraints associated with participatory communication in favour of highlighting its advantages.

According to Azam and Mazid (2022), community development programs frequently overlook the particular requirements and goals of local communities, which results in unsustainable and ineffectual endeavours. This ignores how important it is for community members to recognize and meet their own needs for development (Rahman, 1993). According to studies on community development research, there is a significant lack of community engagement and participation in community development initiatives, which results in a lack of ownership and

accountability and unsustainable outcomes in Africa (Malinga, 2019; Mwaura, 2018; Tufte, 2017; Abdullahi & Issah, 2016; Schuftan, 1996).

According to Mwaura (2018), Tufte (2017), Abdullahi and Issah (2016), and other scholars, community members in African development initiatives frequently have little stake in the programs' success, which saps their will to continue and expand them. Furthermore, community development programs frequently overlook the long-term sustainability of their efforts in favor of quick fixes. This disregards the vital role that community members play in sustaining and advancing the projects in the long run (Malinga, 2019; Schuftan, 1996). The issue is made more difficult in Ghana by the lack of focus on the environmental elements that affect community development programs. Although they have a big impact on community development, social, economic, political, and cultural factors are frequently disregarded in favor of generalized, one-size-fits-all solutions (Boafo, 2018).

The establishment of successful community development efforts that stress community autonomy and sustainable development in Ghanaian development projects is hampered, according to Bonye, Thaddeus, and Owusu-Sekyere (2013). Gyasi (2017) explained that, in Ghana, community members' vital role in recognizing and resolving their own development needs in their local communities is overlooked when there is a lack of community involvement and participation in community development projects. Thus, the researcher in this study makes an argument regarding the current information gap on community involvement in development activities. Consequently, it is imperative to look into how well participatory communication works in community development programs, especially in Wenchi Municipal. Despite the importance of participatory communication in community development initiatives, its potential remains underutilized in many regions, including the Wenchi Municipal. Recent studies have highlighted the significance of participatory communication in fostering community

engagement, empowerment, and sustainable development outcomes (Anani-Bossman & Blankson, 2024; Maina et al., 2020).

However, existing literature also suggests that top-down approaches to communication still dominate community development initiatives, marginalizing community members' voices and perpetuating inequality (Fitryarini, 2018; Oakley et al., 2020). Hanson (2017, p. 12), defined this form of communication as a unilateral and hierarchical model of communication where information flows solely from the top (i.e., those in positions of power or authority) to the bottom (i.e., the masses or subordinate groups), with little or no opportunity for feedback, participation, or input from the community members".

In such paternalistic and asymmetric model of communication, Moyo (2018, p. 25), argued that the dominant group or individual exercises control over the communication process, dictating what information is shared, how it is shared, and with whom it is shared, without soliciting input or feedback from the subordinate group or individual". This raises concerns about the effectiveness of current communication strategies in addressing the complex needs and concerns of community members.

In the Wenchi Municipal, the lack of participatory communication has been identified as a significant obstacle to community development, leading to inadequate community engagement, low levels of empowerment, and unsustainable development outcomes (Wenchi Municipal Assembly, 2020). By examining these research issues, this study hopes to support the creation of more successful and long-lasting community development programs in Ghana that emphasize participatory communication for sustainable development.

1.2 General objective

The general purpose of the research is to investigate the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives: a case study of Wenchi Municipal

1.3 Specific objectives

1. To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality?
2. To ascertain community development projects undertaken in the Municipality over the last decade.
3. To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development.

1.4 Research questions

1. What is the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality?
2. What community development projects were undertaken in the Municipality over the last decade?
3. What are the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development initiatives?

1.5 Scope of Study

This research project is to examine the efficacy of participatory communication in community development projects undertaken in the Wenchi Municipality over the last 10 years. The study concentrates on rural communities in Ghana's Bono Region's Wenchi Municipality. This research aims to investigate how community involvement, participation, and sustainable development in rural areas are affected by participatory communication. Additionally, it outlines the critical elements influencing how well community development programs use participatory communication. In addition to examining the difficulties and constraints

associated with participatory communication in community development projects, the scope of the study delves deeper into the contextual elements that influence such initiatives in rural areas.

1.6 Significance of the study

In addition to having important implications for theory, policy, and practice in the fields of community development, communication studies, and social change, this study on the efficacy of participatory communication in community development initiatives will help to create more sustainable and successful community development programs that support rural communities' autonomy and sustainable development. This study fills a major information vacuum in the field by examining the effects of participatory communication on community engagement, involvement, and sustainable development in rural areas. The study's conclusions will have a significant influence on community development policy and practice and offer insightful information to all parties involved in development, such as governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and community groups.

The results of this study will help shape more sustainable and successful community development programs that are suited to the particular requirements and goals of regional communities. Ultimately, by investigating the function of communication in fostering social evolution and transformation, this study adds to the larger area of communication studies. This study will offer important insights into the power dynamics and connections between stakeholders, including community members, development agencies, and government officials, by examining the efficacy of participatory communication in community development projects.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

This research will restrict its scope to rural community development projects undertaken in the Wenchi Municipality over the last 10 years, leaving out urban and Peri-urban areas. Additionally, the study will limit its scope to participatory communication, leaving out other modes of communication. The study will exclude other outcomes and further restrict its focus on sustainable development, community participation, and engagement. Additionally, the study will restrict its coverage to a particular rural location, leaving out other rural places with various contextual elements. The study would exclude other stakeholders and community members in order to limit its sample size to 100 community members and 10 development stakeholders. Lastly, the study will not use any other techniques for data collection aside the use of surveys, in-depth interviews, and observations as means of gathering data for qualitative and quantitative methods.

1.8 Limitation of the study

This study is limited to only one rural area in the Wenchi Municipal of the Bono region of Ghana, which means it could not be entirely representative of all rural locations. Second, the study is limited to 100 community members and 10 development stakeholders make up the sample size, which might not be enough to extrapolate the results to all community development programs. Again, other significant aspects that can affect community development projects will be overlooked in favor of a primary focus on participatory communication in the study. Also, there is a chance that some unrelated factors that could affect how well participatory communication works will slip through the cracks as a result of limited sample size.

1.9 Organization of the study

This study is organized into five chapters, each of which has the following distinct function:

Chapter one gives a brief overview of the study, including previous knowledge and context. It also highlights the importance and extent of the study, as well as its limitations and delimitations, and clearly articulates the research problem, aims, and questions.

Chapter two explores a thorough analysis of theoretical frameworks and pertinent literature, setting the stage for further research and an empirical evaluation of connected works.

Chapter three focuses on the methodology used, including the study strategy, tools and methods for gathering data, sample strategies, and ethical considerations.

Chapter four gives insights into the research outcomes through the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the findings.

Chapter five outlines the main conclusions, makes recommendations based on the study's findings, and summarizes the significant findings.

1.10 Chapter summary

The study on the importance of participatory development is presented in this chapter. By giving a general overview of the development context and the current status of development objectives and difficulties, it sets the scene. The chapter defines the research problem, finds gaps in the literature, and develops research questions based on the study objectives. It also describes the study's target, which is the Wenchi Municipality. A synopsis of the study's importance, limitations, and delimitations, as well as a succinct arrangement of the chapter's material and summary, round out the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical literature on the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives. The theoretical literature presents and attempts to explain theories and concepts that relate to the subject matter, that is, development communication, participatory communication, and community development initiatives. The empirical literature examines what has been practically observed and validated objectively in relation to the subject matter.

2.1 Theoretical frameworks

2.1.1 Community Development Theory (CDT)

Community Development Theory (CDT) is a holistic approach that emphasizes community empowerment, asset mobilization, participatory development, and sustainability (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). CDT has been widely applied in community development initiatives, aiming to promote community-led development and social change (Taylor et al., 2020). CDT assumes that communities have the capacity to identify their needs and develop solutions (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). Community empowerment is a crucial aspect of CDT, as it enables communities to take ownership of their development processes (Taylor et al., 2020). Empowerment is achieved through community engagement, participation, and capacity building (Latham, 2018). CDT focuses on identifying and mobilizing community assets rather than solely addressing needs and deficits (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). Community assets include physical resources, skills, and social networks (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). Asset mobilization enables communities to leverage their existing resources to achieve development

goals (Taylor et al., 2020). CDT involves community members in all stages of development, from planning to implementation (Taylor et al., 2020). Participatory development ensures that community needs and aspirations are reflected in development initiatives (Latham, 2018). Community participation also enhances community ownership and sustainability (Taylor et al., 2020). CDT aims to create sustainable development that is maintained over time (Latham, 2018). Sustainability is achieved through community-led development, capacity building, and asset mobilization (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). Sustainable development ensures that community development initiatives have a lasting impact (Taylor et al., 2020).

2.1.2 Assumptions of Community Development Theory

1. Community empowerment: CDT assumes that communities have the capacity to identify their needs and develop solutions (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005).
2. Community assets: CDT focuses on identifying and mobilizing community assets rather than solely addressing needs and deficits (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005).
3. Participatory approach: CDT involves community members in all stages of development, from planning to implementation (Taylor et al., 2020).
4. Sustainable development: CDT aims to create sustainable development that is maintained over time (Latham, 2018).

2.1.3 Criticisms of Community Development Theory

While CDT has been widely applied, it has faced criticism for overlooking power dynamics and structural barriers that may limit community empowerment (Taylor, 2015). CDT has also been criticized for neglecting social inequalities within communities, which can lead to an unequal distribution of resources and benefits (Jackson, 2019). Community Development Theory offers a holistic approach to community development, emphasizing community

empowerment, asset mobilization, participatory development, and sustainability. While CDT has faced criticism, its emphasis on community-led development and social change makes it a valuable framework for community development initiatives.

2.2 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura (1986), is a widely accepted and empirically supported framework that explains human behavior and learning. SCT suggests that individuals acquire new behaviors by observing others, imitating their actions, and reinforcing their own behavior through personal and environmental factors (Bandura, 2001). The theory emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), observational learning (Bandura, 1986), reinforcement (Bandura, 2001), personal factors (Bandura, 2001), and environmental factors (Bandura, 2001) in shaping behavior. SCT assumes that humans have the capacity for self-regulation and self-direction (Bandura, 2001) and that behavior is influenced by personal and environmental factors (Bandura, 2001). Learning is an active process involving observation, imitation, and reinforcement (Bandura, 1986). While SCT has been widely applied, it has faced criticism for overemphasizing individual agency and neglecting structural barriers (Bourdieu, 1990), as well as lacking consideration for power dynamics and social inequality (Taylor, 2015).

Despite these criticisms, SCT remains a fundamental theory for understanding human behavior and community development. It provides valuable insights into learning and behavior change, highlighting the importance of self-efficacy (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), observational learning (Latham, 2018), reinforcement (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), personal factors (Latham, 2018), and environmental factors (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). In community development, SCT helps explain how community members learn and adopt new behaviors

(Latham, 2018) and how self-efficacy influences community engagement and collective action (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

2.3 Systems Theory

Ludwig Van (1930), a biologist, propounded the system theory and presented it at a philosophy seminar at the University of Chicago. This theory has been widely applied in various fields, including biology, psychology, and the social sciences. In community development, systems theory helps understand the complex relationships within communities and how they impact development processes. The theory developed into the modern field of ecology, the study of nature. A system consists of two or more units that relate to each other in a structural relationship and is an entity whose elements are functionally interdependent (Abraham, 1991:39). A system is explained as a set of interacting units that endures through time within an established boundary by responding and adjusting to changing pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain goal states. The system theory has been examined as influential on organizational communication. The theory explains how and why people and institutions form groups, units, or departments, each of which is a system as well as part of a larger system. The systems perspective applies to public relations because mutually independent relationships are established and maintained between organizations and their publics. (Van Bertalanfy, 1968, p. 38). The systems theory takes into consideration the overall possible sources of the problem and examines each individually and what role they play in the system. The theory became relevant to the study of communication in social science, where communication was considered the sole sustenance of the system.

According to the theory proponents Ludwig Van (1930) and Van Bertalanfy (1968), a closed system does not adapt to environmental changes, with the end result being a stagnation of the system. Open systems are flexible enough to adjust and adapt to environmental demands

(inputs from the environment) in order to survive, since the ultimate goal of the system is survival. Institutional practice in the open system is related to the two-way symmetrical model, which focuses on shared meaning and will have behavioral and organizational consequences. Systems theory provides valuable insights into the complex relationships within communities, highlighting the importance of holism, interdependence, non-linearity, and feedback loops. While criticisms exist, systems theory remains a fundamental theory for understanding community development processes.

2.3.1 Basic Assumptions of the Systems Theory

Systems theory is founded on several basic assumptions:

1. Holism: Systems are considered as a whole rather than a collection of individual parts (Bertalanffy, 1968).
2. Interdependence: System components are interconnected and interdependent (Bertalanffy, 1968).
3. Non-linearity: System behavior is non-linear, meaning small changes can lead to significant effects (Liu et al., 2019).
4. Feedback loops: Systems have feedback loops that influence their behavior (Bertalanffy, 1968).

Systems theory provides a framework for understanding the complex relationships within communities and how they impact development processes" (Liu et al., 2019, p. 12). The holistic approach of systems theory helps community developers consider the interdependence of community components" (Taylor et al., 2020, p. 25).

2.3.2 Criticisms of the systems theory

Systems theory has faced criticism in academic literature, mainly for:

1. Overemphasis on holism, neglecting individual components (Taylor, 2015).
2. Lack of consideration for power dynamics and social inequality (Jackson, 2

2.4 Relevance of the applicable theories

This study explores the interconnectedness of the systems theory, social cognitive theory, and community development theory, examining their collective impact on participatory communication in community development initiatives. By integrating these theories, the study highlights the importance of considering the complex relationships between community members, their environment, and the broader social context.

The use of the systems theory provides a framework for understanding the holistic nature of community systems, where changes in one aspect can have ripple effects throughout the entire system structure as in the case of the various systems and structures of development in the Wenchi Municipality. Systems theory is relevant as it underpins on participatory communication. An open and closed system of interactions demonstrates an open and closed participatory communication in the development processes and its cognitive effects on citizen participation in community development initiatives. Furthermore, the social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of individual agency and collective action in community development, highlighting the need for participatory communication strategies that empower community members while community development theory stresses the importance of community-led initiatives and the need for external agents to support and facilitate collective action.

The intersection of these theories underscores the need for a holistic approach to community development research and practice. Considering the complex interdependencies and

relationships between community members, their environment, and the broader social context, participatory communication strategies can be tailored to specific community needs, leading to more effective and sustainable development outcomes.

Through the lenses of these theories, findings and implications for community development practice, policy, and decision-making, development practitioners can adopt a holistic perspective in a enabling environment that supports community-led initiatives and facilitates collective action by providing resources, training, and capacity-building programs. The theories are relevant to understand the broader social context of participatory communication strategies, empower community members, foster collective action, and to promote sustainable development in the Wenchi Municipality.

2.5 Empirical review

2.5.1 The role of community participation in development

Singh (2018) conducted a qualitative case study in rural India to explore the relationship between community participation and development communication. The research objectives were to examine the role of community participation in development communication and to identify the factors that influence community participation. The study used purposive sampling with 25 participants and employed interviews and focus groups as data collection methods. We used thematic analysis to analyze the data. The findings revealed that community participation is essential for effective development communication and that power dynamics and cultural barriers can hinder effective community participation. The study concluded that community participation is crucial for development communication in rural India and recommended that development communication practitioners prioritize community participation strategies. Theories used in the study include community participation theory and development

communication theory. Research gaps include limited generalizability due to the small sample size and single-case study design.

Tomaselli (2019) investigated the role of participatory communication in empowering communities in South Africa. The research objectives were to examine the role of participatory communication in community empowerment and to identify the factors that influence participatory communication. The study used purposive sampling with 30 participants and employed interviews and focus groups as data collection methods. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that participatory communication enhances community empowerment and that community members' participation in decision-making processes improves project outcomes. The study concluded that participatory communication is essential for community empowerment in South Africa and recommended that community development practitioners prioritize participatory communication strategies. Theories used in the study include participatory communication theory and community empowerment theory. Research gaps include limited generalizability due to the small sample size and single-case study design.

The role of participatory communication in community development has been extensively studied in various contexts. Olanrewaju (2020) studied the impact of participatory communication on community development outcomes in Nigeria. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between participatory communication and community development outcomes, with a specific focus on the Nigerian context. The study was conducted in Nigeria, with a sample size of 150 participants, using quantitative survey methodology. The data collection method used was a questionnaire, and the data analysis technique used was regression analysis. The findings revealed that participatory communication significantly predicts community development outcomes and that community members' participation in

communication processes enhances project effectiveness. Additionally, the study found that socio-economic factors influence participation in community development initiatives. The conclusions drawn by the author were that participatory communication is essential for community development outcomes in Nigeria and that community development practitioners should prioritize participatory communication strategies. The author recommended that community development initiatives should incorporate participatory communication approaches to enhance project outcomes. The study used participatory communication theory and community development theory as its theoretical framework. However, the study revealed several research gaps, including the limited generalizability of the findings due to the specific context of the study. Additionally, the study relied on a quantitative approach, which may not have captured the complexity of participatory communication in community development.

2.5.2 Participatory communication in community development initiatives

Velasco (2020) conducted a quantitative survey in Latin America to examine the role of participatory communication in community development initiatives. The research objectives were to investigate the relationship between participatory communication and community development outcomes and to identify the factors that influence participatory communication. The study used random sampling with 150 participants and employed a questionnaire as the data collection method. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that participatory communication significantly predicts community development outcomes and that socio-economic factors influence participation in community development initiatives. The study concluded that participatory communication is essential for community development initiatives in Latin America and recommended that community development practitioners should prioritize participatory communication strategies. Theories used in the study include

participatory communication theory and community development theory. Research gaps include a limited exploration of contextual factors influencing participatory communication.

Wang (2019) analyzed best practices in participatory communication for community development in Asia. The research objectives were to identify effective participatory communication strategies and examine the factors that influence participatory communication. The study used purposive sampling with 25 participants and employed interviews and focus groups as data collection methods. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that effective participatory communication involves community engagement, feedback, and empowerment, and that community development initiatives should prioritize local needs and contexts. The study concluded that participatory communication is essential for community development in Asia and recommended that community development practitioners adopt participatory communication best practices. Theories used in the study include participatory communication theory and community development theory. Research gaps include limited generalizability due to the small sample size and single-case study design.

Zlatev (2020) explored the role of participatory communication in community development initiatives in Eastern Europe. The research objectives were to examine the relationship between participatory communication and community development outcomes and to identify the factors that influence participatory communication. The study used purposive sampling with 25 participants and employed interviews and focus groups as data collection methods. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that participatory communication is essential for community development and that capacity building and resource support are crucial for sustainable community development. The study concluded that participatory communication is essential for community development in Eastern Europe and recommended that community development practitioners prioritize participatory communication strategies.

Theories used in the study include participatory communication theory and community development theory. Research gaps include limited generalizability due to the small sample size and single-case study design.

Amoako (2019) conducted a study on best practices in participatory communication for community development in Ghana. The study aimed to identify effective participatory communication strategies that can enhance community development outcomes. The research was conducted in Ghana using a qualitative case study approach. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with a sample size of 30 participants. The data collection method used was in-depth interviews, and the data analysis technique used was thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that effective participatory communication strategies include community engagement, feedback mechanisms, and empowerment of community members. The study also found that participatory communication enhances community development outcomes by increasing community participation, improving project effectiveness, and promoting sustainability. The conclusions drawn by the author were that participatory communication is essential for community development in Ghana and that community development practitioners should prioritize participatory communication strategies. The author recommended that community development initiatives should incorporate participatory communication approaches to enhance project outcomes. The study employed participatory communication theory and community development theory as its theoretical framework. However, the study revealed several research gaps, including limited generalizability due to the specific context of the study and inadequate exploration of power dynamics and cultural barriers.

Moyo (2019) conducted a literature review on participatory communication and community development. The review aimed to synthesize existing knowledge on the role of participatory

communication in community development. The review found that participatory communication enhances community development outcomes by increasing community participation, improving project effectiveness, and promoting sustainability. The review used a qualitative approach, analyzing existing literature on participatory communication and community development. The findings of the review revealed that participatory communication is essential for community development and that community development practitioners should prioritize participatory communication strategies.

2.5.3 Impact of participatory communication on community development outcomes

Nyawade (2020) conducted a study on the impact of participatory communication on community development outcomes in Kenya. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between participatory communication and community development outcomes. The research was conducted in Kenya, using a quantitative survey approach. The sampling technique used was random sampling, with a sample size of 150 participants. The data collection method used was a questionnaire, and the data analysis technique used was regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that participatory communication enhances community development outcomes by increasing community participation, improving project effectiveness, and promoting sustainability. The study also found that socio-economic factors influence participation in community development initiatives. The conclusions drawn by the author were that participatory communication is essential for community development in Kenya and that community development practitioners should prioritize participatory communication strategies. The author recommended that community development initiatives should incorporate participatory communication approaches to enhance project outcomes. The study used participatory communication theory and community development theory as its theoretical framework. However, the study revealed several research gaps, including limited

generalizability due to the specific context of the study and inadequate exploration of power dynamics and cultural barriers.

2.6 Gaps in the literature review

The literature gaps identified in the studies by Singh (2018), Tomaselli (2019), Velasco (2020), Wang (2019), and Zlatev (2020) are similar to those identified in the studies by Olanrewaju (2020), Moyo (2019), Nyawade (2020), and Amoako (2019). All of these studies have limited generalizability due to small sample sizes and single-case study designs. Additionally, none of these studies explored the impact of contextual factors such as power dynamics, cultural barriers, and socio-economic factors on participatory communication.

The researcher argues that there are some differences in the literature gaps identified in these studies. For instance, Olanrewaju (2020) and Nyawade (2020) did not explore the role of community engagement, feedback, and empowerment in participatory communication, while Amoako (2019) did not examine the impact of capacity building and resource support on participatory communication. On the other hand, Moyo (2019) did not investigate the role of participatory communication in empowering communities. Overall, the literature gaps identified in these studies highlight the need for a comprehensive study that addresses the limitations of previous research. This current study aims to address these gaps by examining the impact of contextual factors, community engagement, feedback, empowerment, capacity building, and resource support on participatory communication. Additionally, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of participatory communication in empowering communities and building community capacity. Therefore, this study will contribute to the existing literature by providing a more comprehensive understanding of participatory communication and community development initiatives.

2.7 The concept of development perspectives

The concept of development is a complex and multifaceted notion that has been defined and operationalized in various academic, professional, and developmental contexts. Despite its widespread use, the term "development" remains ambiguous and contested, with different disciplines and stakeholders offering distinct perspectives on its meaning and significance. interconnections and implications for theory and practice (Waisbord, 2018; Thomas, 2000; De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998).

Firstly, economic development is a crucial aspect of development, focusing on the growth of economic indicators such as GDP, income, and employment (Stiglitz et al., 2010). This perspective prioritizes the enhancement of resource utilization within a system to produce new goods and services, offering more opportunities for investment and consumption (Sen, 1997). Economic development is often seen as a key driver of human well-being, as it can lead to improved standards of living and reduced poverty (World Bank, 2020). However, economic development is not the only dimension of development. Human development, as defined by Thomas (2000), emphasizes the improvement of various aspects that affect people's well-being and relationships with society, such as health, education, entitlements, capabilities, and empowerment. This approach prioritizes human dignity, equality, and social justice (UNDP, 2020), recognizing that development is not solely about economic growth but also about expanding people's choices and freedoms to lead fulfilling lives (Sen, 2003).

Sustainable development is another critical aspect of development, considering the long-term perspectives of the socio-economic system to ensure that short-term advancements do not negatively impact the system's potential for growth or future status (WCED, 1987). This perspective emphasizes the importance of environmental, social, and financial sustainability

(UNSD, 2020), aiming to balance economic, social, and environmental needs to ensure a livable future for all (IPCC, 2018).

Territorial development defines development as the utilization of a region's unique socio-economic, environmental, and institutional potential, as well as its connections with other issues, to achieve development (OECD, 2019). This approach emphasizes the importance of place-based policies and territorial cohesion (EU, 2020), recognizing that development is not solely a national or global issue but also a local and regional one (Barca et al., 2012).

2.7.1 Participatory development initiatives

Participatory development, also known as people-centered development, emphasizes the importance of grassroots participation in development initiatives (Velasco, 2020; Ingham, 1995; De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998). This approach argues for broader population participation in development, sustainable development, and the role of state and civil society organizations in development initiatives (Waisbord, 2018; De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998). The ideology of people-centered development is based on enabling people to develop themselves, with the state ensuring a conducive environment for meaningful participation and empowerment (Wang, 2019; Ingham, 1995).

Participatory development emphasizes the inclusion of previously excluded social categories, such as women, youth, and the illiterate, in development processes (Sibo, 2016; Roodt, 2001). This approach allows people, particularly at the grassroots level, to play a meaningful role in their development (Thomas & Rafael, 2014; Ingham, 1995; Karin). The Manila Declaration on People Participation and Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of people-centered development in broadening political participation, especially in participatory local government (Jan, 2007; Theron & Maphunye, 2005).

The state has a duty-bound responsibility to create a participation environment in communities to promote health, agriculture, governance, and other economic activities, allowing for people's participation in development programs (Servaes, 2017; Theron & Maphunye, 2005). However, this depends on whether people are allowed and enabled to participate in decision-making processes at all levels of development work (Velasco, 2020; Roodt, 2001). The emphasis is on people's participation in all decision-making processes, without limits (Ingham, 1995; Wang, 2019).

2.8 Conceptualization of development communication

Development communication (DC) has evolved significantly since its inception in the 1970s. Initially, DC was rooted in modernization theory, which emphasized the role of communication in promoting economic growth and social change (Schramm, 1973). However, this approach has been widely criticized for its top-down, one-way communication approach, which ignores the agency and participation of local communities (Waisbord, 2018). In recent years, DC has shifted towards a more participatory and inclusive approach, recognizing the importance of community engagement and empowerment in achieving sustainable development outcomes (Velasco, 2020). This approach emphasizes the need for horizontal, dialogical communication that values local knowledge and perspectives (Wang, 2019). The practice of DC has also expanded to incorporate new technologies and media platforms, which have increased the potential for citizen engagement and participation in development processes (Karin, Thomas, & Rafael, 2014). However, the digital divide and unequal access to technology remain significant challenges in ensuring that DC reaches marginalized and excluded groups (Sibo, 2016). Furthermore, DC has been critiqued for its neoliberal underpinnings, which prioritize economic growth over social justice and human rights (Jan, 2007). To address these concerns, DC must adopt a more critical and reflexive approach, recognizing the power dynamics and

structural inequalities that shape development outcomes (Servaes, 2017). Participatory community development to incorporate new methodologies and technologies, such as participatory action research (PAR) and digital media (Tomaselli, 2019).

2.8.1 Factors influencing participatory communication

According to Velasco (2020), the core principles of participatory communication remain the same: to empower communities and promote social justice through inclusive and equitable communication practices. Historically, participatory communication has been influenced by various social and political movements, such as the civil rights movement and the women's liberation movement (Moyo, 2019). These movements recognized the importance of communication in promoting social change and empowering marginalized communities (Nyawade, 2020). In recent years, participatory communication has been applied in various contexts, including community development, public health, and environmental sustainability (Olanrewaju, 2020).

In modern literature, participatory communication is recognized as a critical approach to promoting social justice and addressing power imbalances within communities (Wang, 2019). It is also seen as a key strategy for building trust and strengthening relationships between community members, local organizations, and external stakeholders (Amoako, 2019). Furthermore, participatory communication is acknowledged as a vital component of community development initiatives, as it enables communities to take an active role in decision-making processes and development initiatives (Singh, 2018). Recent studies have highlighted the effectiveness of participatory communication in promoting social justice and addressing power imbalances within communities (Tomaselli, 2019). For instance, a study by Velasco (2020) found that participatory communication approaches can help to amplify the voices of marginalized and excluded groups, leading to more equitable development outcomes.

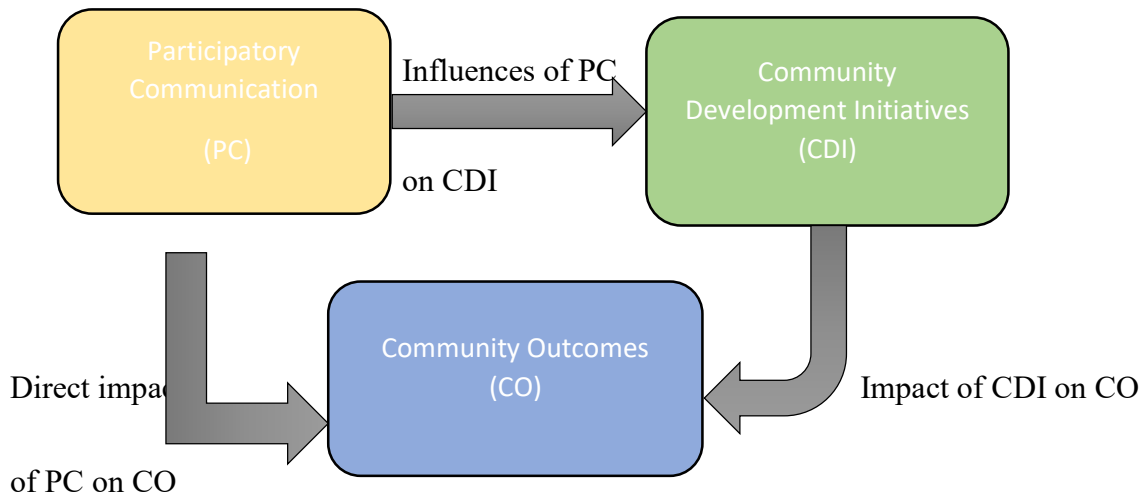
Similarly, a study by Nyawade (2020) found that participatory communication can help to build trust and strengthen relationships between community members, local organizations, and external stakeholders, leading to more sustainable development outcomes.

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the research variables in this current study which investigates the impact of Participatory Communication (PC) on Community Development Initiatives (CDI) and their subsequent effects on Community Outcomes (CO) in the Wenchi Municipality of the Bono Region. This shows the influenced of Participatory Communication (PC) on Community Development Initiatives (CDI) for inclusive communication processes that empower community members to engage in decision-making and problem-solving. It further demonstrates the positive changes and impacts resulting from Community Development Initiatives (CDI) on Community Outcomes on development and describes the direct impact that Participatory Communication (PC) has on Community Outcomes (CO), fostering empowerment and ownership of development in the study area, the Wenchi Municipality in the Bono Region.

The research focuses on the interplay between the variables of PC, CDI, and CO, with PC serving as the primary driver of change. By facilitating inclusive communication processes, PC empowers community members to take an active role in decision-making and problem-solving, leading to more effective and sustainable development outcomes. CDI, in turn, are the mechanisms through which Participatory Communication (PC), exerts its influence on Community Outcomes (CO), encompassing activities such as community mobilization, capacity building, and resource allocation. The study also examines the direct impact of PC on CO, highlighting its potential to foster empowerment, ownership, and sustainable development. By engaging community members in the development process, PC can lead to improved health, education, and economic outcomes, as well as increased trust and social capital. In the context of the Wenchi Municipality, this research aims to explore the ways in which PC can be leveraged to enhance CDI and improve community

outcomes. By exploring the relationships between these variables, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of PC in community development and its potential to drive positive change in the Wenchi community.

Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's Construct (2024).

Diagram illustrating a conceptual framework on the effectiveness of participatory communication on community development initiative.

2.9 Chapter summary

The chapter outlined the theories that underpinned the study on participatory communication and community development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality. The application of the systems theory, the social cognitive theory and the participatory development theory provided a context to examine the key variables in the study. The theory helped the researcher to explain the context of participatory communication, community development initiatives and community outcomes. The chapter further explored literature review on the subject matter by examining related studies that have been empirically validated in previous research. Through

the empirical review, the study highlighted the relevant aspects of the research which enabled the researchers to identify the gaps in this current study. Also, the chapter provided a section on the concept of the research which helped to examine various concepts that are related to the study. The concepts were explained by setting the context of definitions from the global, African and Ghanaian literatures in perspective. Based on the concepts of the study, the researcher provided a conceptual framework that explained the influence of participatory communication on community development initiative. The conceptual framework also analyzed both the direct impacts of participatory communication and community development initiatives on community outcomes. Finally, the chapter concluded on a chapter summary on the literature review.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The research approach used to examine the effectiveness of participatory communication on community development initiatives is described in this chapter. Although most research tends to favour either qualitative or quantitative approaches, this dissertation emphasizes the importance of using mixed methods, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a more thorough grasp of the subject. In particular, this chapter uses an explanatory sequential mixed-method approach, starting with a summary of the design, methodology, and quantitative data analysis of the research. To provide a more nuanced understanding of the study objectives, an analysis of the qualitative approaches utilized to investigate the strategies used by stakeholders in community development initiatives within the Wenchi Municipality.

3.1 Research approach

Diverse viewpoints, or approaches, influence how researchers approach comprehending reality (Tracy, 2013). Their entire worldview, the research methods they use, and how they interpret the data are all influenced by these paradigms (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell (2009), there are four primary worldviews: constructivism, advocacy/participatory, pragmatism, and positivism. This study takes a practical approach, concentrating on the research topic and employing a range of techniques to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

The pragmatic worldview permits both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to be used with flexibility in research design (Creswell, 2009). This study examines the effectiveness of participatory communication on community development initiatives using a mixed-methods approach that combines deductive and inductive reasoning. (Bryman, 2008). This method aids

in the acceptance of several viewpoints by researchers, leading to a more thorough comprehension of the subject under study.

3.2 Research design

In order to obtain a thorough grasp of the research issue, this study used a mixed-methods strategy that integrated quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design helps to provide a nuanced investigation of participatory communication problems in development activities by combining the strengths of both methodologies and mitigating their respective limits (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2016). An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed in this study, starting with quantitative analysis and moving on to qualitative interviews with participants who had been carefully chosen (Creswell, 2014). According to Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016), this method made it possible to comprehend community development issues with participatory communication in development activities in the Wenchi municipality. Scholars like Smith, Smith, and Williams (2020) and Campbell and Chalmers (2017) have recently used mixed-methods approaches, which combine quantitative and qualitative methods. This study adds to the body of knowledge already in existence by offering a thorough grasp of the efficacy of participatory communication in Wenchi Municipality community development initiatives. However, there are inherent flaws in both methods, such as the subjectivity and restricted generalizability of qualitative research and the artificial measuring processes used in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2020).

3.3 Research Setting

The coordinates of the Wenchi Municipality, which is in Ghana's Bono Region, are 2.1000° W and 7.7333° N (GeoNames, 2020). The Wenchi Municipality is a thriving, diversified municipality that encompasses over 760 square kilometers (293 square miles) of land. Wenchi

is located in the center of the forest-savanna transitional zone, which is defined by a mixture of forest and savanna flora. Its latitude is 7.7333° N and its longitude is 2.1000° W. The municipality is located in the transitional zone between forests and savannas, which is defined by a mixture of savanna and forest vegetation (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020).

The Tain River and its tributaries drain the region and supply water for home use and irrigation (Wenchi Municipal Assembly, 2020). The municipality is bordered to the south by the Techiman Municipality, to the west by the Banda District, to the east by the Sunyani Municipality, and to the north by the Tain District. Wenchi is a significant hub for trade and business in the area because of its advantageous position. The municipality includes 240 square kilometers (93 square miles) of forest, 320 square kilometers (124 square miles) of savannah, 100 square kilometers (39 square miles) of built-up area, and 100 square kilometers (39 square miles) of water bodies. The total land area of the municipality is 760 square kilometers.

The municipality is home to about 59,314 people, most of whom are rural residents who work in agriculture. A sizeable component of the labour force is employed in the services and industrial sectors. The municipality's unemployment rate is 10.2%, with women experiencing a greater rate (12.1%) than men (8.5%). According to employment data, 31.4% of workers are employed in services, 25% are in industry, and 43.6% of workers are in agriculture (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020). About 71.4% of the workforce are engaged in informal jobs, the working-class population in the municipality is primarily involved in informal sector activities (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020).

The literacy rate in the municipality is 71.4%, and more men (76.3%) than women (66.5%) are literate (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020). With 62.1% of the population, the Bono ethnic group is the largest in the municipality. Also, Akan (21.5%), Mossi (4.2%), and Ewe (2.1%) are the major ethnic group (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020) in the municipality. The Wenchi

Waterfalls, a picturesque cascade situated on the Tain River, are among the area's noteworthy sights. This local community takes great pride in this natural wonder, which is a well-liked tourist site.

Another noteworthy site that highlights the rich cultural legacy and customs of the Wenchi people is the Wenchi Royal Palace, which serves as the headquarters of the Wenchi Traditional Council. The municipality has a big impact on Ghana's development as well as the local economy in the area. The Wenchi Municipal Assembly was able to adopt appropriate policy objectives, their corresponding strategies, proposed programs, and projects for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), African Union Agenda 2063, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement (COP21) because the municipality is aligned with key development issues to the appropriate focus areas.

3.4 Study population

The population of Wenchi Municipality, a district in Ghana's Bono Region, is the study's population. In order to enable the researcher to extrapolate findings to the greater community, this population acts as the bigger group from which a sample will be taken (Neuman, 2007).

The population of the study consists of the staff of the Wenchi Municipal Assembly which includes the Municipal Coordinating Director, the Deputy Coordinating Director, the Municipal project officer, Project officers of some non-governmental organizations (NGO's), traditional authorities and other development agents within the target population. The population is the group to which the research findings will be applied, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003).

In this instance, the study's findings are intended to offer insightful information about the attitudes, experiences, and actions of the people living in Wenchi Municipality with respect to community development and participatory communication programs in the research area.

3.5 Sampling techniques and sample size

There are different types of sampling like simple random sampling (SRS), quota sampling, and stratified random sampling (StRS) in quantitative studies when conducting research with a large population (Zikmund et al., 2020). However, Quota sampling and purposive technique were used in gathering data. Kassiani (2022), explained Quota sampling as a non-probability sampling method, that relies on the non-random selection of a predetermined number or proportion of units. The predetermined number or proposition of unit was what he described as a quota. This method was used to choose community participants from the population for the Wenchi Municipality participatory communication study. Quota sampling was considered as it can be used in both qualitative and quantitative research designs in order to gain insight about a characteristic of a particular subgroup or investigate relationships between different subgroups. In order to do this, the population was initially split into age groups (18-30, 31-50, and 51+ years) based on demographic factors. To ensure equitable representation, 50 respondents from each age group were chosen using SRS. A sample, according to Haynes (2019), is a subset of examples taken from a population from which conclusions are extrapolated to the entire population. Each community member had an equal chance of being selected. The sample size for the study was a total of 160 respondents.

Also, purposive sampling technique was used in this research, just as in other cases where convenience, and snowball sampling strategies are employed in qualitative research to choose participants who possess particular qualities or experiences that are pertinent to the investigation (Flick, 2018). Selecting people with particular experiences or traits is known as

purposeful sampling. Based on their knowledge and participation in linked initiatives, development agents and stakeholders with experience with participatory communication methodologies were found and chosen for this study. The purposive technique made it possible to choose individuals who could offer extensive, detailed data and insights into the research subject. In all, a total of 10 participants were chosen as a sample for the qualitative investigation.

3.6 Data collection instruments

A set of self-administered questionnaires with closed-ended questions intended to elicit particular answers in line with the study objectives was developed to collect data from respondents and an interview schedule for those who have no formal education. The data collection instruments were explained to respondents prior to face-to-face interviews. Participants were invited to share their perspectives on participatory communication strategies in community development initiatives and were allowed to select a convenient time and place for the interviews and questionnaire responses. Participation was completely voluntary, and they could withdraw at any point before or during the interview process.

3.7 Research strategies

Research strategies in the social sciences comprise a wide range of methodologies, each having specific advantages and disadvantages. These methods include case studies, surveys, ethnographies, experiments, quasi-experiments, history, and archival analysis (Yin,2018). In order to obtain a thorough knowledge of community members' perceptions of participatory communication approaches utilized by stakeholders in real-time development projects, this study used a mixed-methods design that combined both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The use of a mixed-methods strategy, helps in utilizing the advantages of both

quantitative and qualitative methodologies to get a thorough understanding of the investigated phenomenon. Mixed-methods research designs provide a more detailed understanding of the study problem than either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2020). The researcher was able to triangulate findings using the mixed-methods approach, which improved the data's validity and reliability.

3.8 Data collection Procedures

In order to gather the main data, a field survey was conducted in which residents of the Wenchi municipality were given questionnaires. Since the questions were closed-ended, consistency in the answers was guaranteed, enabling precise analysis. To ensure understanding and reduce potential biases, the researcher gave chosen respondents thorough explanations of the questionnaire. After that, respondents filled out the questionnaires, which the researcher then gathered, guaranteeing the accuracy of the information and its applicability to the study's objectives.

Fifteen participants, comprising members of the Assembly, project officers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), municipal authorities (Coordinating Director or deputy Coordinating Director, District project officer), and traditional authorities, were interviewed in a semi-structured manner. Zikmund and colleagues, 2020; Knox et al., 2015). Face-to-face interviews took place in September and October of 2024, with the researcher using an interview guide to ask precise questions on the research topic (Bryman, 2019). This was to enable in-depth discussion and flexibility when addressing significant difficulties and insights into participatory strategies in development efforts (Knox, Burkard, Edwards & Hill 2015; Flick, 2018). In contrast to unstructured interviews, which lack a defined framework, and structured interviews, which limit respondents to a specified set of questions, the consistency of inquiry ensures simpler data comparability (Gray, 2018).

3.9 Data handling and analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data for the quantitative portion of the study because they provided a clear summary and description of the numerical data, which allowed for a deeper comprehension of the information gathered (Field, 2018). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to create basic descriptive statistics, such as frequency tables, graphs, and percentages (IBM Corp., 2020). With the use of this strategy, the researchers were able to communicate and analyse complex data in a way that was easy to understand (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pallant (2020) contended that by employing SPSS, researchers can apply descriptive statistics to analyse the results in connection with the study goals, guaranteeing a thorough comprehension of the data.

The researcher used a thematic analysis in this qualitative investigation. Manual analysis was carried out using Braun and Clarke's (2019) recommendations as a guide. A thematic approach was used, concentrating on recurring and common themes that emerged from the data. This made it possible for the researcher to guarantee a thorough comprehension of the field data. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings verbatim after listening to them three times. Following the thematic procedures by Braun and Clarke, 2019; Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, (2016), this two-step method made it possible to transcribe and recognise with the data, which aided in preliminary analysis. Throughout the listening and transcription process, specific notes on developing themes were made. Rereading the transcripts revealed consistent themes and sub-themes, and interesting patterns were found. Less prevalent themes were left out in favour of those that were more frequent. Aware of the significance of evaluation in thematic analysis, the researcher proceeded cautiously while finding and interpreting themes.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Research appendices containing informed consent and information sheets outlining the goals and scope of the academic research are included in the study.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development of the University of Media, Arts and Communication, Ghana. Also, respondents were assured of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of the information they would provide. Real names were replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect participant anonymity, and protocols for handling and utilizing audio recordings were made explicit. Participants received guarantees that the information gathered would only be utilized for scholarly endeavours, such as the research dissertation.

3.11 Chapter summary

The chapter gave an introduction, proceeded by delving into the research area, further explained the paradigms of the research from different world views, and adopted a position for this study. The study focused on explaining the research strategies and design that were used for both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The chapter also discussed the use of the triangulation method in exploring research objectives.

The study's population was identified, and sampling strategies that made it possible to identify research participants and respondents were described, along with the appropriate sample sizes that were employed. Additionally, techniques for gathering and analysing data were described, and ethical measures were taken to guarantee that respondents and participants would not suffer any damage throughout the data collection process. A chapter summary of the fundamental concepts of research methodology were also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study based on the research objectives. Apart from the demographic data, the first part looks at quantitative results while the second part looks at qualitative results as presented below:

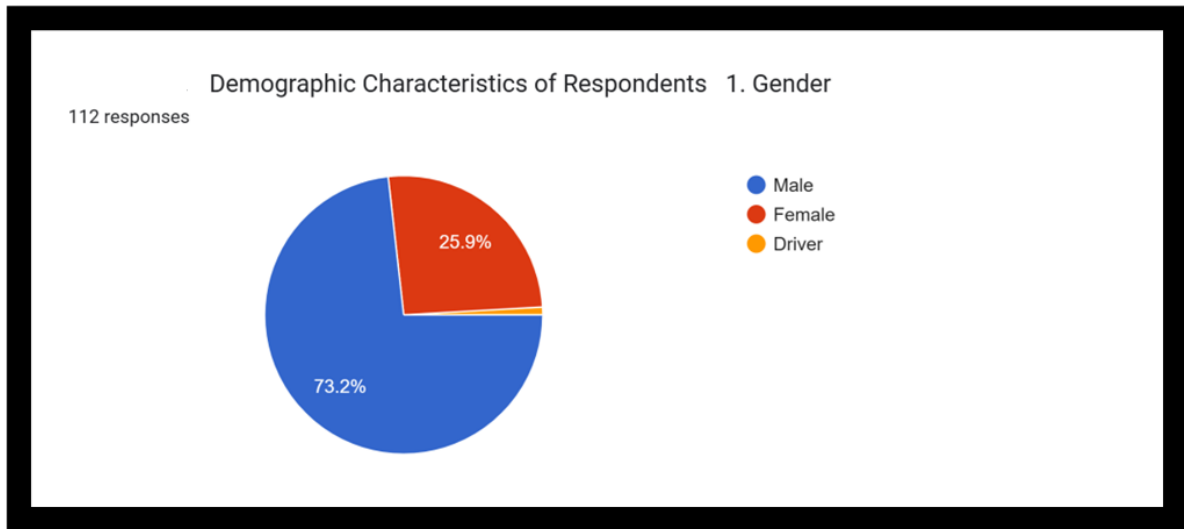
4.1. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

The demographic data examined in this study relates to the respondents' gender, age, educational background, and employment status as presented below:

Gender of respondent's

The figure 4.1.1. shows the gender distribution of respondents. Male participants make up 73.2% of the total, indicating that they formed majority of the respondents. Female respondents account for 25.9%, reflecting a lower representation. Additionally, there is a small percentage labelled as "Driver," which appears to be a misclassification or error. This significant disparity suggests that the data primarily reflects male perspectives. If the study aims for gender balance, future data collection efforts should consider strategies to increase female participation.

Figure 4.1.1



Source: Field Data (2024)

Respondents' educational background

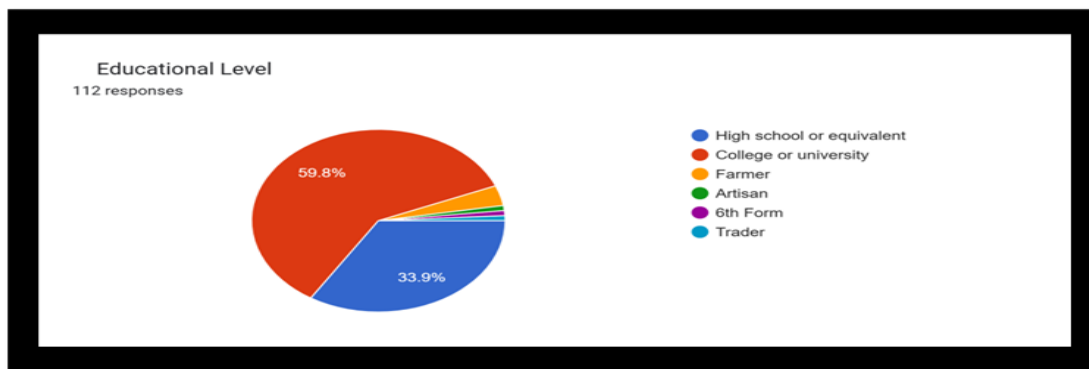
The figure 4.1.2. illustrates the educational background of the respondents. A majority, 59.8%, have attended college or university, indicating a high level of educational attainment among the participants. The next significant group, 33.9%, consists of individuals with a high school education or its equivalent. Smaller portions of the respondents are represented by categories such as farmers, artisans, traders, and those with a 6th form education, each forming only a minor part of the total. This distribution highlights that most respondents have advanced formal education, potentially influencing the overall perspectives captured in the study.

Figure 4.1.2

Source: Field Data (2024)

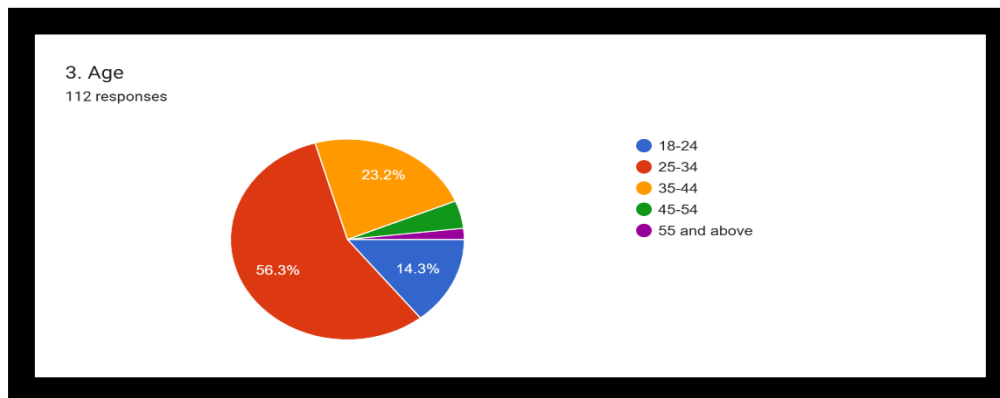
Age of respondents

The figure 4.1.3. provides an overview of the age distribution of respondents. Most participants, 56.3%, are between the ages of 25 and 34, representing the largest age group in the study. This is followed by those aged 35 to 44, who constitute 23.2%. Respondents aged 18 to 24 make up 14.3%, while smaller proportions of participants are in the age brackets of 45 to 54 and 55 and above. This distribution indicates that the survey predominantly captured the perspectives of younger adults, with a particular emphasis on those in their late twenties



and early thirties.

Figure 4.1.3



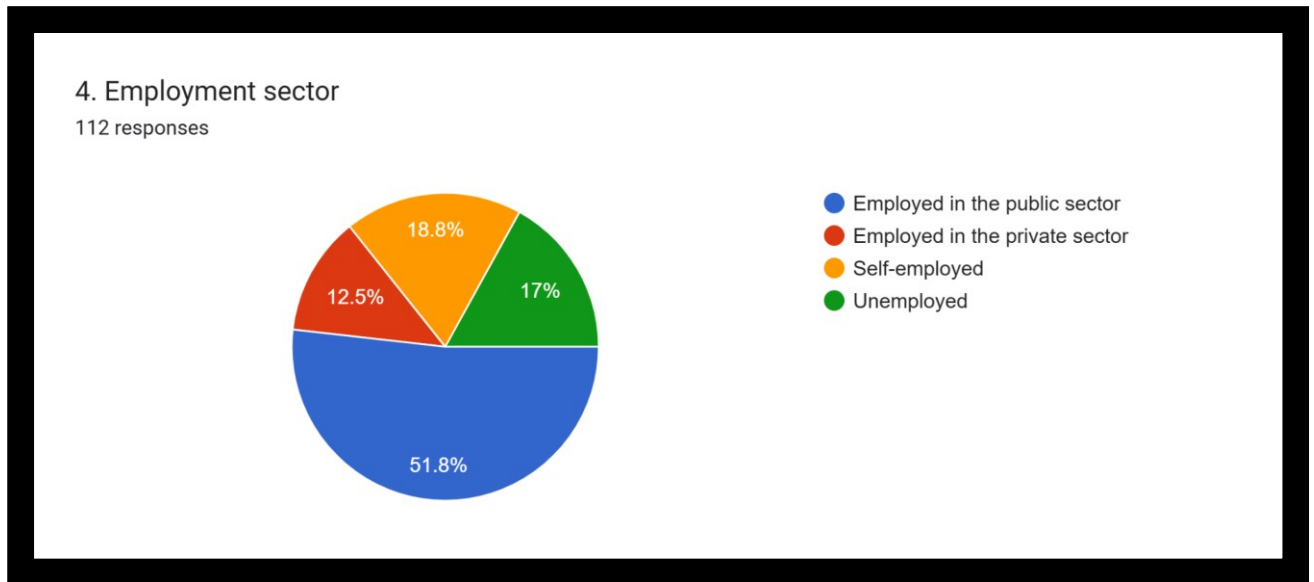
Source: Field Data (2024)

Employment sector of respondents

Figure 4.1.4. indicates that 51.8% of respondents are employed in the public sector, 18.8% are self-employed, 17% are unemployed, and 12.5% are employed in the private sector. This suggests that most participants are employed in the formal sector of the government, while a notable portion operates within the informal economy or remains unemployed. The dominance of public sector employees implies that perspectives captured in this study may align more closely with formal institutional processes, which might not fully represent the challenges or contributions of the informal sector. Additionally, the unemployment rate highlights a potential barrier to active participation in community development initiatives, as unemployed individuals might prioritize personal economic survival over communal goals. This aligns with Tomaselli's (2019) observation that economic challenges can hinder community engagement in participatory communication efforts. This data is directly relevant to the study's objective three (3) of exploring challenges to the effective use of participatory communication. Limited representation from the private sector and unemployed respondents may point to socio-economic disparities that impact inclusivity in community engagement efforts. It also

highlights the need for participatory communication strategies that are inclusive and address barriers specific to marginalized economic groups.

Figure 4.1.4



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality

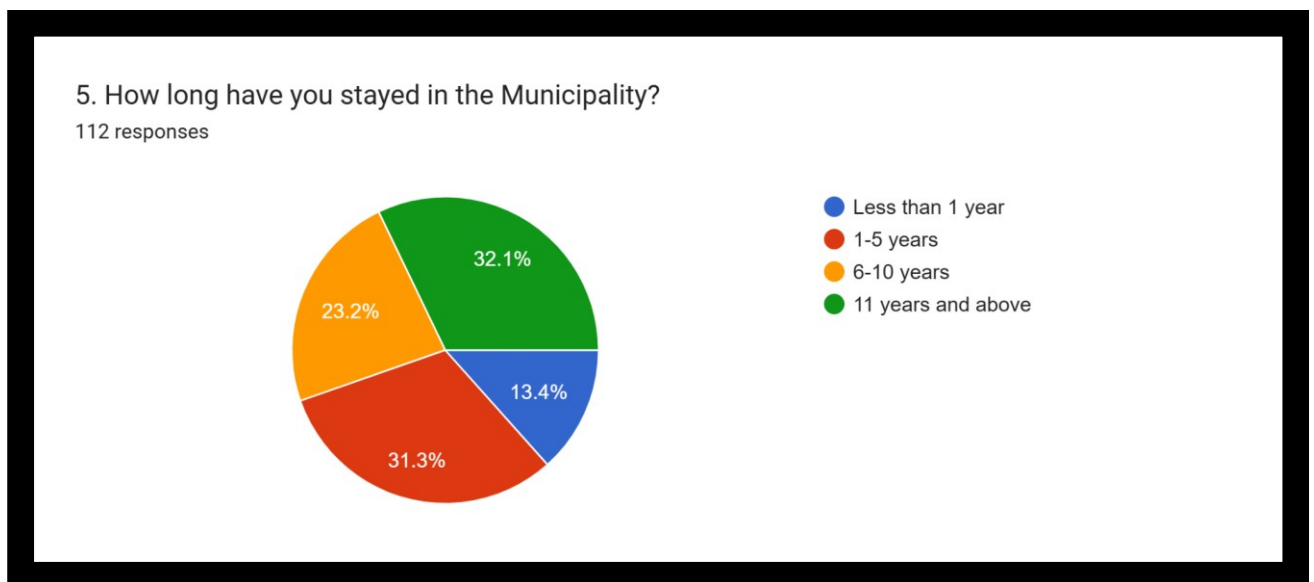
Duration participants have stayed in the municipality.

Figure 4.2. showed that 32.1% of respondents have lived in the municipality for over 11 years, 31.3% for 1-5 years, 23.2% for 6-10 years, and 13.4% for less than a year. This reflects a diverse range of residency durations among the participants. The high percentage of long-term residents (11+ years) suggests that these individuals likely possess substantial historical and cultural knowledge of the municipality's development initiatives. This aligns with participatory development theory, which emphasizes the value of local knowledge and sustained engagement in community-led efforts (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). Conversely, the smaller proportion of short-term residents may reflect transient populations who might have

limited connections to community initiatives, reducing their willingness or ability to participate.

This data reflects the study's objective one of ascertaining satisfaction with development initiatives benefits from the perspectives of long-term residents, who can provide deeper insights into the sustainability and historical impact of these initiatives. However, the representation of shorter-term residents may highlight challenges related to integrating newcomers into participatory processes.

Figure 4.2



Source: Field Data (2024)

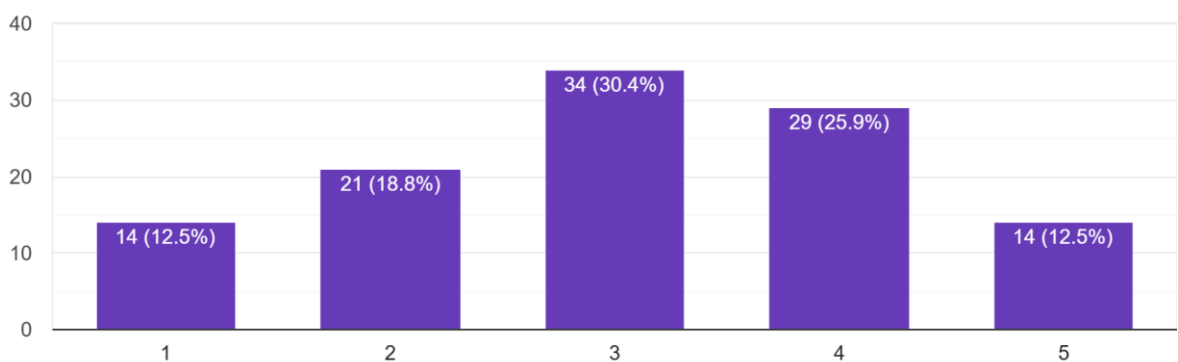
Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality

4.3 Level of satisfaction among stakeholders' responses

The **figure 4.3.** indicate a range of satisfaction levels, with 30.4% expressing neutrality, 25.9% agreeing that expectations are met, and smaller percentages showing either strong agreement or disagreement. The mixed responses suggest that while some stakeholders perceive development initiatives to meet their expectations, there is a notable proportion that remains neutral or dissatisfied. This aligns with Singh's (2018) findings, which emphasized the importance of addressing stakeholder expectations to improve development outcomes. Neutral responses may reflect uncertainty or limited awareness of the outcomes of initiatives, underscoring the need for transparent and inclusive communication. This directly links to the study's objective of assessing stakeholder satisfaction with development initiatives. The varying satisfaction levels highlight the importance of participatory communication in aligning initiatives with community priorities, which can foster greater ownership and accountability.

Figure 4.3

SECTION B : Level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality. Kindly use the 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). 1. Expectations have been met. 112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective 3: What are the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development initiatives

Effective communication

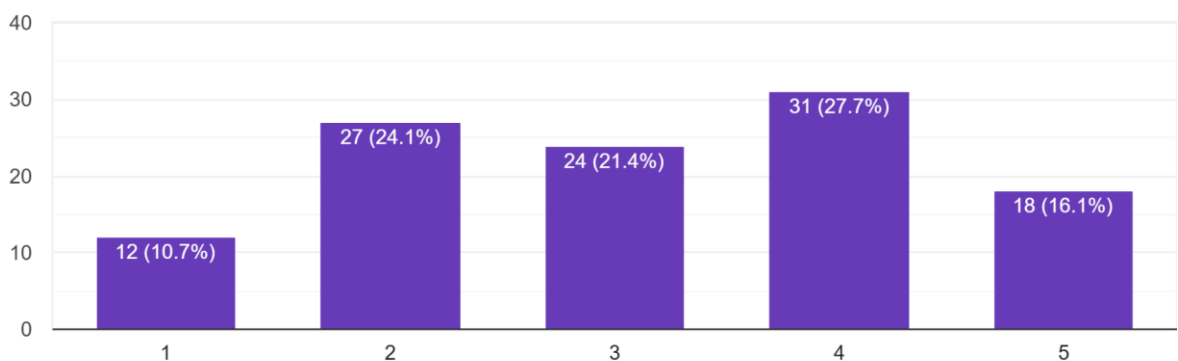
Figure 4.4. reveals that 27.7% of respondents agree that communication has been effective, while 34.8% are neutral or express dissatisfaction. The moderate satisfaction with communication effectiveness indicates room for improvement in engaging stakeholders and ensuring that information flow supports participatory decision-making. This resonates with Velasco's (2020) assertion that effective participatory communication fosters better collaboration and trust between community members and development agencies.

The study's objective to explore challenges in participatory communication is directly reflected here. The results highlight the need for improved two-way communication strategies to engage all stakeholders effectively and to address barriers in the dissemination of information.

Figure 4.4

2. Communication has been effective.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality

Community participation and engagement satisfaction responses

Figure 4.5. shows that 35.7% of respondents agree that community participation and engagement are satisfactory, while 13.4% strongly agree. A smaller portion, 24.1%, remains neutral, and 20.5% slightly disagree, with 6.3% strongly disagreeing. The data suggests that while a significant proportion of respondents find community participation and engagement satisfactory, there remains a notable level of neutrality and disagreement. This indicates that while some progress has been made, engagement may not be consistent or inclusive across all community members. This aligns with Melkote and Steeves (2015), who emphasized that successful participatory communication requires equitable and sustained involvement from diverse community groups.

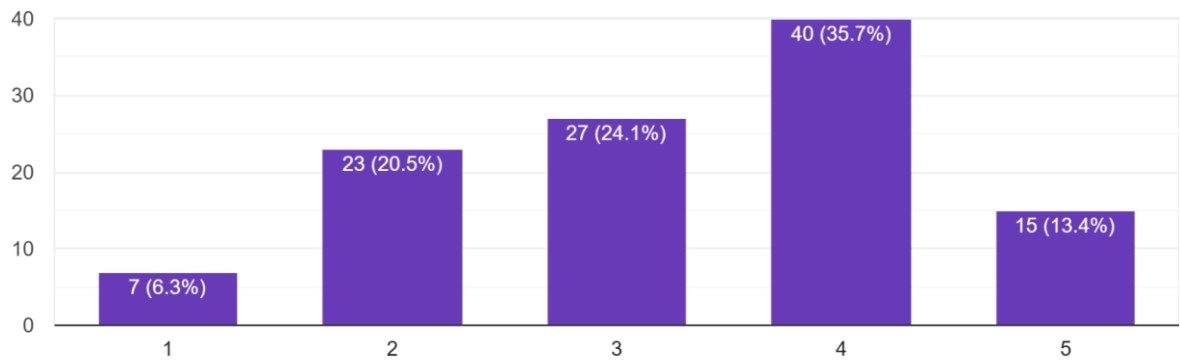
This finding ties directly to the study's objective three (3) of assessing the challenges in participatory communication and the level of satisfaction among stakeholders. Barriers such as limited outreach, unequal power dynamics, or a lack of accessible platforms for engagement may be contributing to the mixed perceptions. To address this, development practitioners should prioritize inclusive strategies such as participatory planning sessions, regular community consultations, and feedback mechanisms that allow all voices to be heard.

Improving the consistency and quality of community participation enhances trust, ownership, and collaboration. By fostering a culture of active engagement, development initiatives can align more closely with community needs, ensuring their relevance, sustainability, and overall effectiveness. This reinforces the importance of participatory communication as a foundation for successful community development.

Figure 4.5

3. Community participation and engagement are satisfactory.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality

4.6. Responses from outcomes of satisfactory

The figure 4.6. revealed that 29.5% of respondents remain neutral about the outcomes, while 25% agree that the outcomes have been satisfactory. An equal proportion, 11.6%, strongly agree or strongly disagree, and 22.3% slightly disagree.

The responses indicate mixed perceptions about the satisfaction levels of development outcomes. While a quarter of respondents agree that the outcomes are satisfactory, the neutrality and disagreement expressed by a significant proportion suggest that the outcomes may not consistently meet stakeholder expectations.

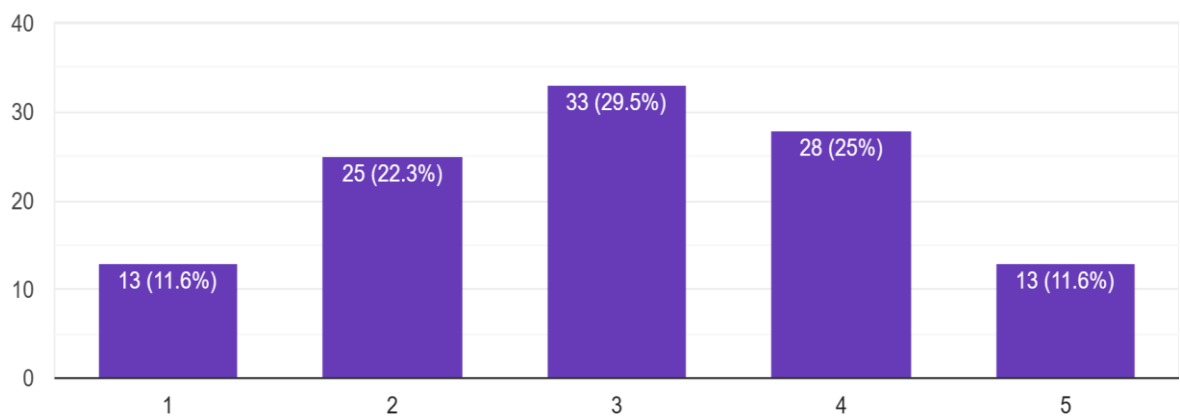
This aligns with findings by Tomaselli (2019), who argued that a lack of alignment between development objectives and community priorities often results in perceived inefficiencies in outcomes.

This finding supports the study’s objective one of assessing the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Wenchi municipality. Neutral and dissenting responses may stem from insufficient stakeholder engagement, limited transparency in decision-making, or poor alignment of project goals with community needs. To improve satisfaction levels, development initiatives should incorporate participatory evaluation frameworks that actively involve stakeholders in assessing and refining project outcomes. Enhanced feedback loops, iterative planning, and adaptive management strategies can ensure that outcomes are more closely aligned with community expectations. By fostering transparency and accountability, development initiatives can improve satisfaction levels and trust, ensuring that stakeholders perceive the outcomes as relevant, effective, and sustainable.

Figure 4.6

4. The outcomes have been satisfactory.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality

4.7. Trust and confidence levels responses

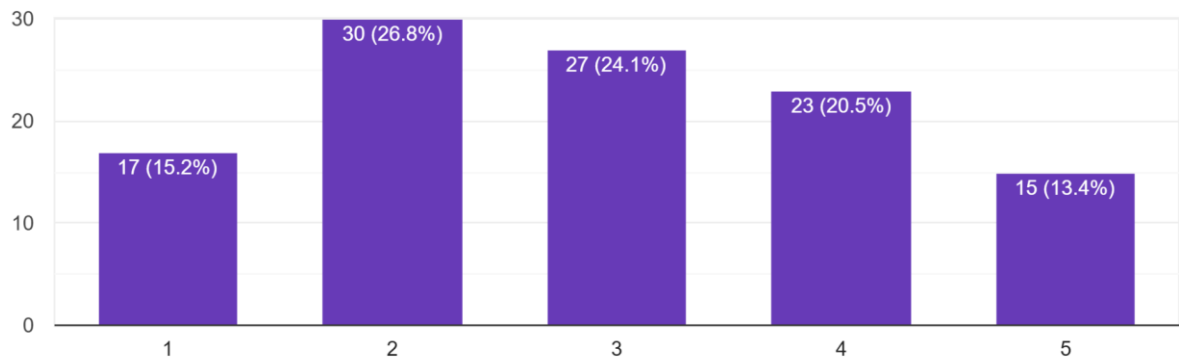
Figure 4.7. revealed that 24.1% of respondents remain neutral about their trust and confidence level, while 26.8% have confidence and trust level. An equal proportion, 13.4%, strongly have trust and confidence and 15.2% slightly have trust and confidence. The responses indicate mixed perceptions about their levels of trust and confidence. While about 26.8% respondents represent a slight level of trust and confidence, the neutrality and disagreement expressed by a significant proportion suggest that the outcomes may not consistently meet stakeholder expectations. This aligns with findings by Tomaselli (2019), who argued that a lack of alignment between development objectives and community priorities often results in perceived inefficiencies in outcomes.

This finding supports the study's objective one of assessing the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Wenchi municipality. Neutral and dissenting responses may stem from insufficient stakeholder level of trust and confidence, limited transparency in decision-making, or poor alignment of project goals with community needs. To improve satisfaction levels, development initiatives should incorporate participatory evaluation frameworks that actively involve stakeholders in assessing and refining project outcomes. Enhanced feedback loops, iterative planning, and adaptive management strategies can ensure that outcomes are more closely aligned with community expectations. By fostering transparency and accountability, development initiatives can improve satisfaction levels and trust, ensuring that stakeholders perceive the outcomes as relevant, effective, and sustainable.

Figure 4.7

5. There is trust and confidence.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: to ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.

4.8. Responses on the impact of participatory communication on development initiatives on the community

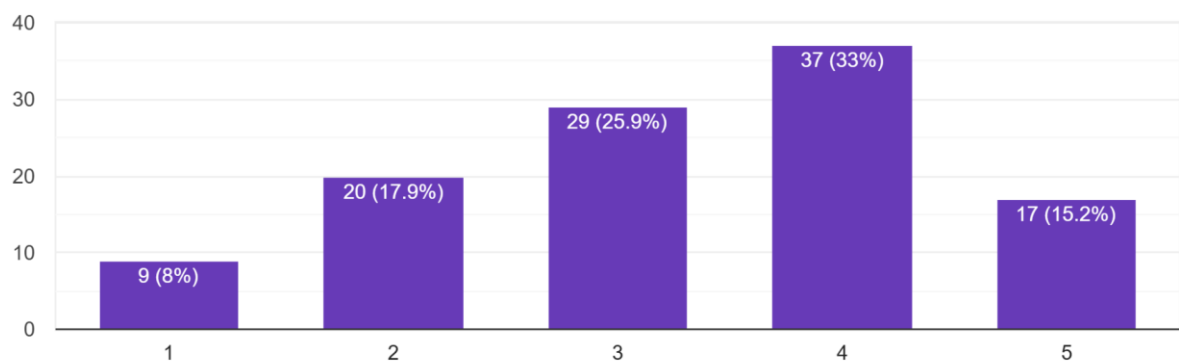
The figure 4.8. revealed that 33% of respondents agree that the development initiatives have positively impacted the community, while 15.2% strongly agree. A smaller proportion, 25.9%, remains neutral, with 17.9% slightly disagreeing and 8% strongly disagreeing. The data suggests that while a significant proportion of respondents acknowledge the positive impact of development initiatives, there is a notable level of neutrality and disagreement. This mixed perception may stem from variability in the reach and effectiveness of these initiatives. Studies by Kretzmann and McKnight (2005) highlight that community-driven and inclusive approaches are more likely to yield meaningful and widely recognized impacts. This finding ties directly to the study's objective of assessing the effectiveness of participatory

communication in community development. Neutral and dissenting responses may indicate gaps in stakeholder engagement or uneven distribution of benefits. To address these issues, development practitioners should implement more inclusive strategies that ensure all community members, particularly marginalized groups, can actively participate in and benefit from initiatives. By adopting participatory planning, monitoring, and evaluation frameworks, development agencies can better align projects with community needs and expectations, ensuring more equitable and tangible impacts. These strategies can foster greater trust and collaboration, leading to sustained improvements and long-term community development.

Figure 4.8

6. There has been an impact on the community.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: to ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.

4.9 Responses from sustainable initiatives

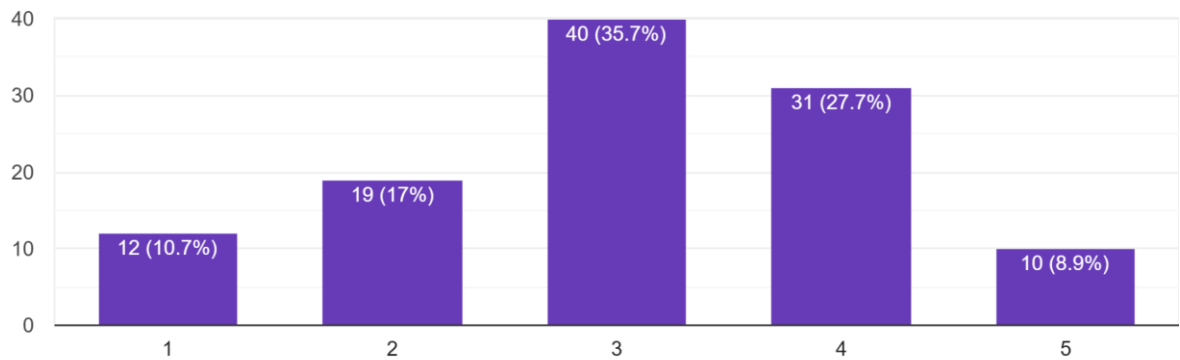
The figure 4.9. revealed that 35.7% of respondents remain neutral about the sustainability of development initiatives, while 27.7% agree that the initiatives are sustainable. A smaller proportion strongly agree at 8.9%, while 17% slightly disagree, and 10.7% strongly disagree. The data reflects uncertainty among respondents regarding the sustainability of development initiatives. The high proportion of neutral responses and the disagreement expressed by a significant portion suggest that many stakeholders may not perceive these initiatives as being designed or implemented with long-term viability in mind. This aligns with Tomaselli's (2019) findings that development projects often face challenges in achieving sustainability when there is limited focus on long-term planning, community ownership, and capacity building.

This observation is directly linked to the study's objective one of assessing the effectiveness and level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to participatory communication in community development initiatives. Lack of perceived sustainability may indicate insufficient stakeholder engagement in planning and evaluation phases, where community input could help align initiatives with local needs and resources. Addressing this requires participatory frameworks that prioritize capacity-building, resource management, and mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Ensuring sustainability in initiatives involves empowering communities to take ownership and fostering collaboration across stakeholders. This will not only improve perceptions of sustainability but also enhance the long-term impact and success of participatory development projects. By addressing these gaps, development initiatives can become more resilient and effective in meeting community needs over time.

Figure 4.9

7. Initiatives are sustainable.

112 responses



Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality.

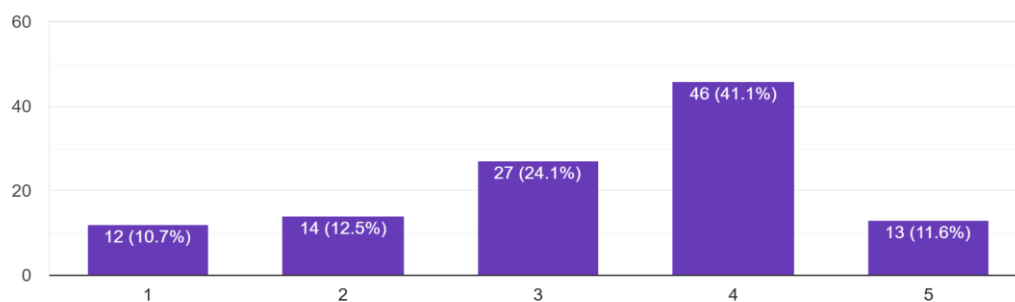
4. 10 Economic benefits responses

The figure 4.10. reflecting objective one of assessing the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the municipality shows that 41.1% of respondents agree that economic benefits exist, while 24.1% remain neutral. A smaller group, 11.6%, strongly agrees, and others express disagreement, with 12.5% slightly disagreeing and 10.7% strongly disagreeing. The results indicate that while many respondents recognize some level of economic benefit from community development initiatives, there is still a significant proportion who are either neutral or dissatisfied. The agreement among a considerable portion of respondents aligns with Olanrewaju's (2020) findings that participatory communication can positively impact economic outcomes by increasing local participation and fostering resource mobilization. However, the neutral and dissenting responses suggest that

economic benefits may not be equitably distributed or clearly visible to all stakeholders. This finding ties directly to the study's objective of evaluating satisfaction levels among stakeholders. Economic benefits are a critical factor in community satisfaction and engagement, as perceived financial improvements often determine the success and sustainability of development initiatives. Addressing gaps in the economic impact of these projects could enhance trust and long-term community involvement. Additionally, strategies should aim to increase transparency and ensure equitable economic gains to foster greater stakeholder confidence and support.

Figure 4.10

8. There are economic benefits.
112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality

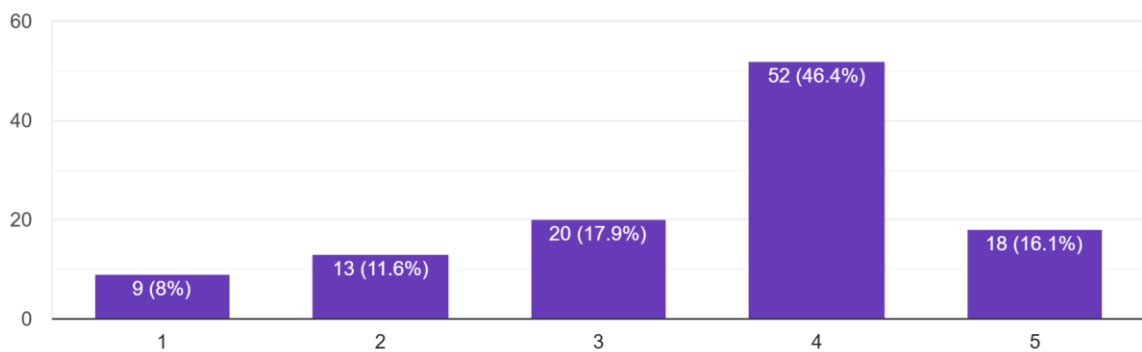
4.11. Cultural sensitivity and respect responses

Figure 4.11. demonstrate that many respondents, 46.4%, agree that cultural sensitivity and respect are present. Another 16.1% strongly agree, while 17.9% are neutral. Smaller groups, comprising 11.6% and 8%, express disagreement or strong disagreement. The findings reflect objective one of assessing the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to

community development initiatives in the municipality. This distribution reflects a generally positive perception of cultural sensitivity and respect within the community, though there is some room for improvement as indicated by the minority who disagree or remain neutral.

Figure 4.11

9. There is cultural sensitivity and respect.
112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective one: To ascertain the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality

4.12. Feedback and complaints handling responses

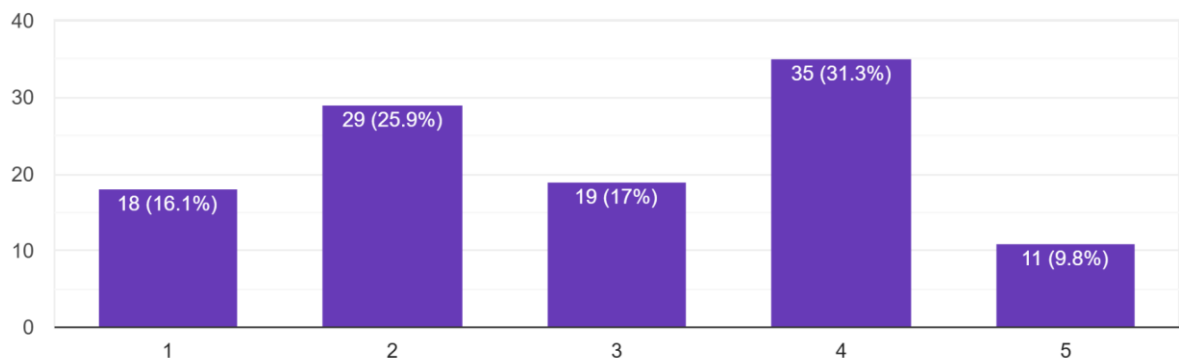
Figure 4.12. revealed that 31.3% of respondents agree that feedback and complaint handling are satisfactory, while 25.9% slightly disagree, and 16.1% strongly disagree. A smaller portion of respondents, 9.8%, strongly agrees, while 17% remain neutral. The mixed responses suggest that while some stakeholders perceive feedback and complaint mechanisms to be effective, a significant proportion is either dissatisfied or indifferent. This reflects potential shortcomings in the participatory communication process, particularly in addressing stakeholders' concerns and providing timely responses to complaints. Tomaselli (2019) emphasized that effective

feedback systems are essential for building trust and fostering active community engagement in development initiatives. This finding is directly linked to the study’s objective two (2) of assessing the extent to which participatory communication is applied in community development initiatives. Weaknesses in feedback and complaint handling can undermine stakeholders’ confidence in the system, leading to reduced participation and trust. Strengthening feedback mechanisms and ensuring prompt resolution of complaints can enhance stakeholder satisfaction, promote transparency, and align the initiatives more closely with community expectations. By addressing these issues, development initiatives can become more inclusive and effective in meeting the needs of diverse stakeholders.

Figure 4.12

10. Feedback and complaints handling are satisfactory.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

4.13. Extend to which participatory communication is applied in community development initiatives

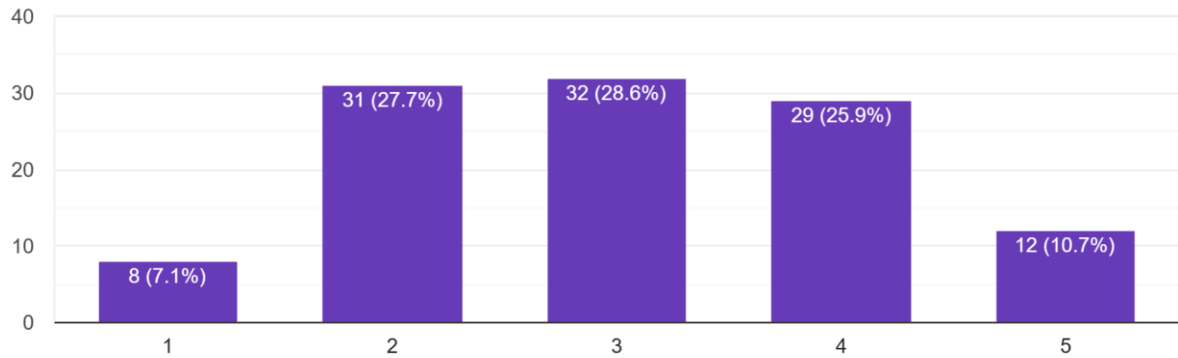
The figure 4.13. revealed that 28.6% of respondents are neutral about the application of participatory communication, while 27.7% slightly disagree. Meanwhile, 25.9% agree that it is adequately applied, and smaller proportions strongly agree (10.7%) or strongly disagree (7.1%).

The responses indicate a divided perception of the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives. A significant number of participants remain neutral or express slight dissatisfaction, which may suggest inconsistent or inadequate implementation of participatory communication strategies. This highlights the need to bridge the gap in ensuring the inclusion of all stakeholders, particularly the marginalized, in decision-making and access to information. This finding aligns with the study's objective two (2) of assessing the extent to which participatory communication is applied in community development initiatives. Marginalized groups often face barriers to access information, as noted by Velasco (2020), who emphasized the importance of inclusive and equitable communication strategies in empowering such populations. The study should focus on identifying specific barriers hindering participatory communication and propose solutions to enhance inclusivity, such as employing more localized and culturally sensitive communication techniques or leveraging diverse media channels to reach underrepresented groups. Addressing these gaps can improve stakeholder participation and foster more sustainable and equitable development outcomes.

Figure 4.13

SECTION C : The Extent to Which Participatory Communication is Applied in Community Development Initiatives. Kindly use the 5- point s...g the weak and marginalized access to information.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

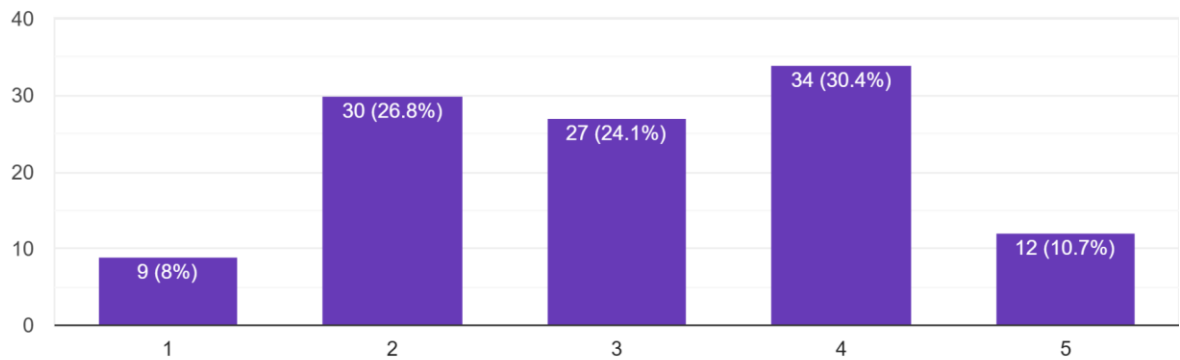
4.14. Allowing the weak and marginalized access to the needed resources

The figure 4.14. show that 30.4% of respondents agree that the weak and marginalized are provided access to resources. A further 24.1% are neutral, while 26.8% slightly disagree. Smaller proportions strongly agree (10.7%) or strongly disagree (8%). The responses suggest that while some progress has been made in ensuring access to resources for marginalized groups, significant challenges remain. A notable proportion of respondents remain dissatisfied or neutral, indicating potential gaps in equity and inclusion in resource distribution. This aligns with findings from Singh (2018), who highlighted the importance of addressing power imbalances and ensuring equitable access to resources to foster meaningful participation in community development initiatives. This finding is directly tied to the study's objective of identifying challenges to participatory communication. Limited access to resources for

marginalized groups undermines their ability to engage meaningfully in community development efforts. This can create a cycle of exclusion, where those most in need are unable to participate fully due to structural barriers. Addressing this issue may require implementing targeted interventions, such as community workshops, subsidies, or resource distribution strategies that prioritize marginalized populations. Enhancing resource accessibility is crucial for fostering inclusivity and ensuring sustainable development outcomes.

Figure 4.14

2. Allowing the weak and marginalized access to the needed resources.
112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

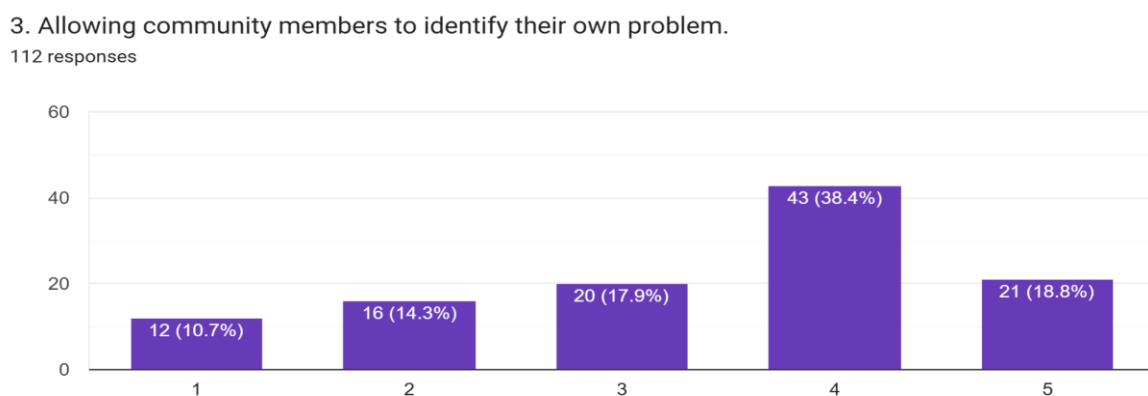
4.15. Allowing community members to identify their own problems

The figure 4.15. show that 38.4% of respondents agree that community members are allowed to identify their own problems. A further 18.8% strongly agree, while 17.9% are neutral. Smaller proportions slightly disagree (14.3%) or strongly disagree (10.7%). Many respondents believe that community members are allowed to identify their own problems, which aligns with

participatory development principles. This reflects a shift toward inclusive and bottom-up approaches in community development, where stakeholders are empowered to voice their concerns and priorities. However, the minority of respondents expressing disagreement or neutrality suggests that there are still instances where top-down approaches dominate, limiting genuine participation. This resonates with findings from Melkote and Steeves (2015), who emphasized the importance of allowing communities to take charge of identifying issues to ensure development initiatives are contextually relevant and sustainable.

This result supports the study's objective two (2) of assessing the extent to which participatory communication is applied in community development initiatives. While progress has been made, gaps in fully enabling community members to identify their problems highlight the need for improved facilitation techniques. Development practitioners should focus on creating platforms, such as focus groups or town hall meetings, that encourage broader participation and actively integrate local knowledge into decision-making processes. Enhancing this aspect will strengthen community ownership of initiatives and lead to more sustainable outcomes.

Figure 4.15



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

4.16. Public participation in defining social and developmental goals

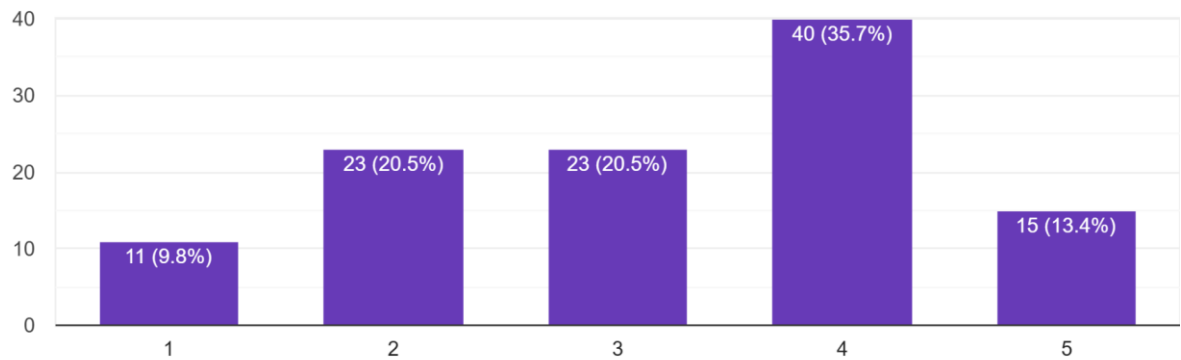
The **Figure 4.16.** revealed that 35.7% of respondents agree that public participation is present, while 13.4% strongly agree. However, 20.5% express neutrality, and another 20.5% slightly disagree, with 9.8% strongly disagreeing. Many of the respondents believe that public participation in defining social and developmental goals is present, which suggests progress in engaging communities in decision-making. This aligns with participatory communication theory, which emphasizes the need for collective dialogue in setting development priorities (Servaes, 2017). However, the significant portion of respondents expressing disagreement or neutrality indicates challenges in ensuring consistent and inclusive participation.

This result directly links to the study's objective two (2) of assessing the extent to which participatory communication is applied in community development initiatives. Limited participation may stem from barriers such as inadequate communication strategies, lack of awareness, or power imbalances, as highlighted by Velasco (2020). To address these issues, development practitioners should implement mechanisms such as inclusive workshops and regular stakeholder consultations to enhance public engagement. Strengthening public participation can foster greater ownership of developmental goals, increase transparency, and lead to more sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Figure 4.16

4. There is public participation in defining social and developmental goals.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: to ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.

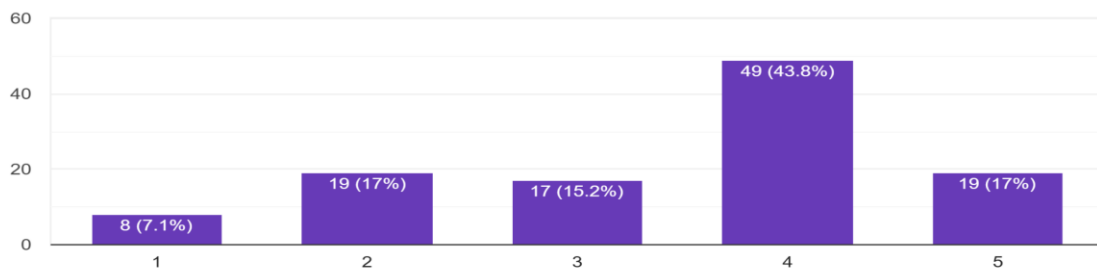
4.17. Community members initiate their own development project based on identified needs

Figure 4.17. show that 43.8% of respondents agree with the statement, while 17% strongly agree. A smaller proportion remains neutral at 15.2%, with 17% slightly disagreeing and 7.1% strongly disagreeing. The responses suggest that many community members feel empowered to initiate development projects based on their needs, which indicates a significant level of community autonomy and engagement. This reflects the principles of community development theory, which emphasizes community-led initiatives as key to achieving sustainable development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). However, the disagreement or neutrality expressed by some respondents highlights potential barriers, such as limited resources, capacity, or external support, which may restrict the full realization of community-led efforts.

This result aligns with the study’s objective two (2) of assessing the extent to which participatory communication is applied in community development initiatives. When community members are unable to initiate projects, it may indicate gaps in participatory structures or support systems that inhibit collective action. Addressing these challenges requires fostering capacity-building programs, improving resource access, and enhancing participatory communication strategies. Though strengthening these aspects, development initiatives can empower more community members to take active roles in identifying and addressing their own needs, leading to more sustainable outcomes.

Figure 4.17

5. Community members initiate their own development project based on identified needs.
112 responses



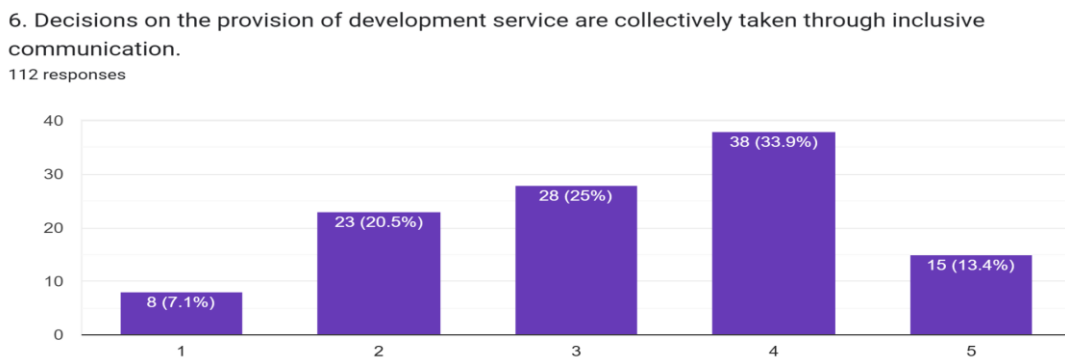
Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: to ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.4.18. Decisions on the provision of development service through inclusive communication

Figure 4.18. revealed that 33.9% of respondents agree that decisions are made collectively, while 13.4% strongly agree. A quarter of the respondents remain neutral at 25%, while 20.5% slightly disagree, and 7.1% strongly disagree. This has found many of the respondents agreeing

with the collective decision-making process suggests some level of inclusivity in participatory communication efforts. This aligns with the participatory communication model, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration and shared decision-making to ensure stakeholder satisfaction and sustainable outcomes (Servaes, 2017). However, the presence of neutral and dissenting opinions indicates that gaps remain in ensuring full inclusivity and equitable participation in decision-making. This directly ties to the study's objective of exploring the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives. The mixed responses imply that while some stakeholders feel involved, others may perceive decision-making as exclusive or top-down. Addressing this requires strengthening participatory mechanisms, such as community meetings, consultations, and feedback loops, to ensure all voices are heard and integrated into the decision-making process. Enhancing inclusivity can build trust among stakeholders and improve the relevance and sustainability of development initiatives.

Figure 4.18



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: to ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.

4.19. Consensus building throughout the development service provision

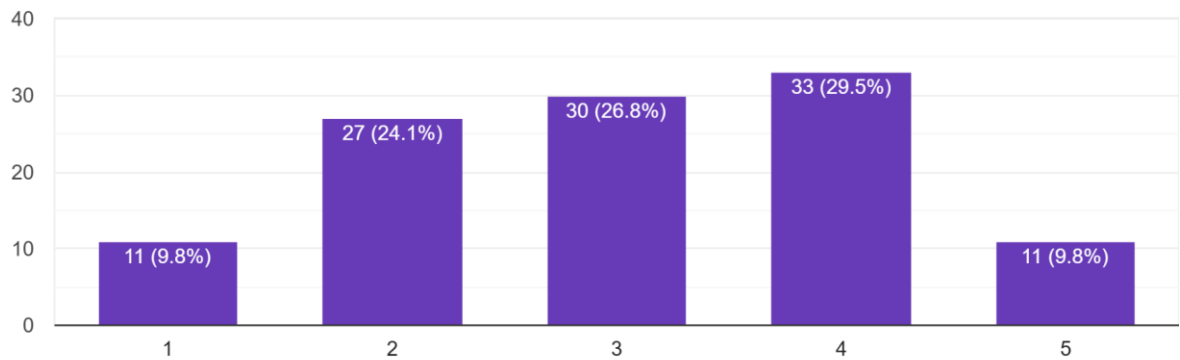
Figure 4.19. indicated 29.5% of respondents agree that consensus building occurs consistently, while 26.8% remain neutral. A further 24.1% slightly disagree, with smaller proportions strongly agreeing (9.8%) or strongly disagreeing (9.8%). The results suggest that while some respondents acknowledge efforts toward consensus building, a significant portion either disagrees or remains neutral, indicating inconsistency in fostering agreement during development processes. Consensus building is a core component of participatory communication, as it ensures mutual understanding and collaboration among stakeholders (Tuftte, 2017). The lack of strong agreement across most respondents may reflect challenges such as unequal power dynamics, inadequate facilitation, or insufficient inclusivity during discussions.

This finding directly relates to the study's objective two (2) of assessing the extent to which participatory communication is applied in community development initiatives. A lack of consistent consensus-building processes can lead to fragmented decision-making, reduced stakeholder confidence, and lower levels of community ownership in development initiatives. To address this, development practitioners should prioritize strategies that encourage active dialogue, negotiation, and shared decision-making. Such strategies could involve facilitated discussions, conflict resolution mechanisms, and platforms for open communication to ensure that consensus is achieved and sustained throughout the development process. By enhancing these efforts, initiatives can be more inclusive, cohesive, and effective in meeting community goals.

Figure 4.19

7. There is always consensus building throughout the development service provision.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

4.20. Communication process used in development services allowing for equal knowledge sharing among stakeholders

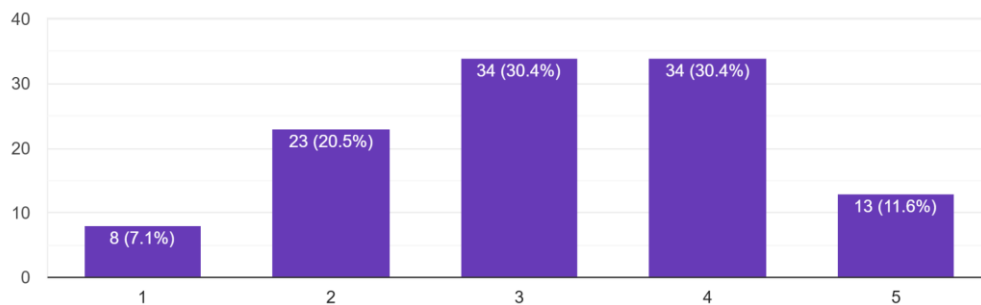
Figure 4.20. revealed that 30.4% of respondents agree that the communication process facilitates equal knowledge sharing, while another 30.4% remain neutral. A smaller proportion strongly agrees (11.6%), and 20.5% slightly disagree, with 7.1% strongly disagreeing. The results suggest that while a significant proportion of respondents believe the communication process supports knowledge sharing, a comparable number remain neutral or express dissatisfaction. This highlights potential shortcomings in ensuring equitable access to information and opportunities for all stakeholders to engage. According to Velasco (2020), effective participatory communication requires not only the dissemination of information but

also the active involvement of all stakeholders in sharing and accessing knowledge to create inclusive development outcomes.

This finding directly ties to the study's objective of assessing the effectiveness and challenges of participatory communication. The divided perceptions indicate that existing communication mechanisms may favor certain groups over others, potentially marginalizing less empowered stakeholders. Addressing this issue requires implementing communication strategies that are inclusive and accessible, such as using multiple channels, local languages, and culturally sensitive approaches. Ensuring equitable knowledge sharing will enhance transparency, foster trust, and empower all stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to development initiatives, thereby improving overall outcomes.

Figure 4.20

8. Communication process used in development services allows for equal knowledge sharing among all stakeholders.
112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: To ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.

4.21. Community members encouraged to initiate their own development service

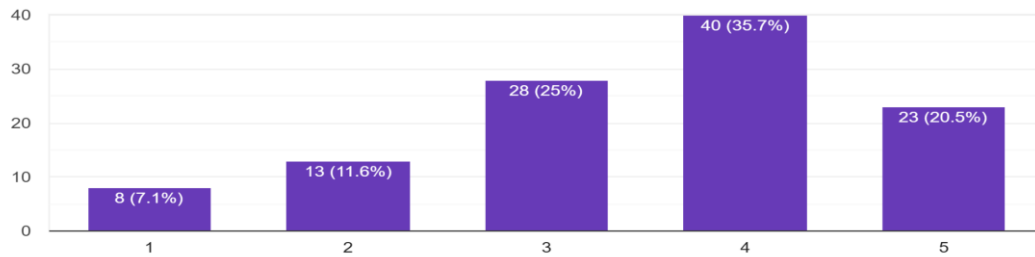
Figure 4.21. revealed 35.7% of respondents agree that community members are encouraged to initiate their own development services, while 20.5% strongly agree. A quarter of respondents (25%) remain neutral, and smaller portions slightly disagree (11.6%) or strongly disagree (7.1%).

The data suggests that many respondents feel encouraged to take initiative in development services, which reflects positively on participatory communication strategies. However, the notable percentage of neutral and dissenting respondents indicates that encouragement is not uniformly perceived across all community members. This aligns with the findings of Melkote and Steeves (2015), who highlighted the importance of fostering an enabling environment where all community members feel empowered to participate and lead in development processes. This result ties into the study's objective of evaluating the challenges and effectiveness of participatory communication in community development. The mixed responses suggest that while progress has been made, gaps remain in ensuring consistent encouragement for all stakeholders. Development practitioners can address this by implementing structured programs to enhance confidence and capacity among marginalized groups. Providing training, resources, and accessible platforms for idea-sharing can further empower community members to take initiative, fostering a stronger sense of ownership and sustainability in development services.

Figure 4.21

9. Community members are encouraged to initiate their own development service.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: to ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.

4.22. Collective evaluation of development services provided by the municipal Assembly

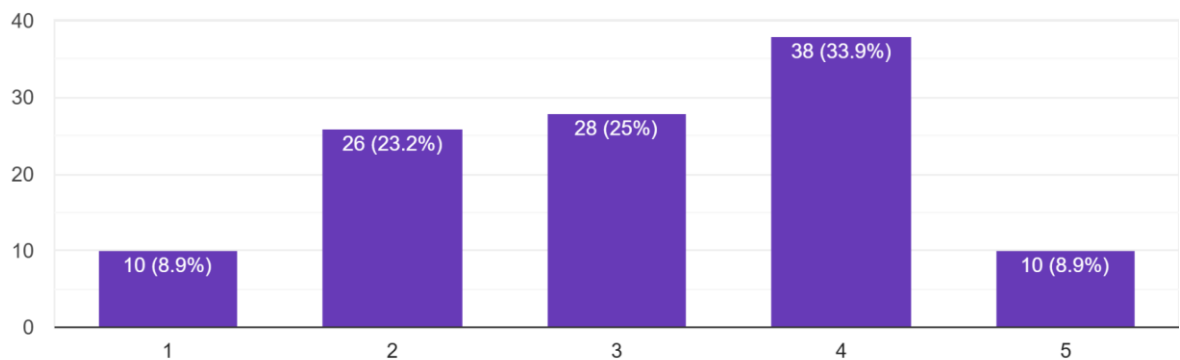
Figure 4.22. labelled "There is Collective Evaluation of Development Services Provided by the Assembly" shows that 33.9% of respondents agree with the presence of collective evaluation, while 25% remain neutral. Smaller proportions strongly agree (8.9%), slightly disagree (23.2%), or strongly disagree (8.9%). The results indicate that while some respondents feel that collective evaluation of development services is practiced, a significant proportion either remains neutral or disagrees, suggesting gaps in inclusive evaluation processes. Collective evaluation is a critical component of participatory communication, as it allows stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of initiatives and provide feedback for improvement. According to Tomaselli (2019), involving community members in evaluation fosters transparency and accountability, which are essential for successful development outcomes.

This finding relates directly to the study's objective of identifying challenges in participatory communication. The neutral and dissenting responses suggest that evaluation mechanisms may not fully incorporate diverse perspectives, potentially limiting their effectiveness. Development practitioners should focus on establishing structured and inclusive evaluation

processes, such as participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) frameworks, to ensure that all stakeholders can voice their opinions. These efforts can improve the alignment of services with community needs, build trust, and enhance the overall impact of development initiatives.

Figure 4.22

10. There is collective evaluation of development services provided by the Assembly.
112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Two: to ascertain what community development projects were undertaken and what extend is participatory communication applied in the Municipality over the last decade.

4.23. Stakeholders’ consistency in giving enough information related to development services

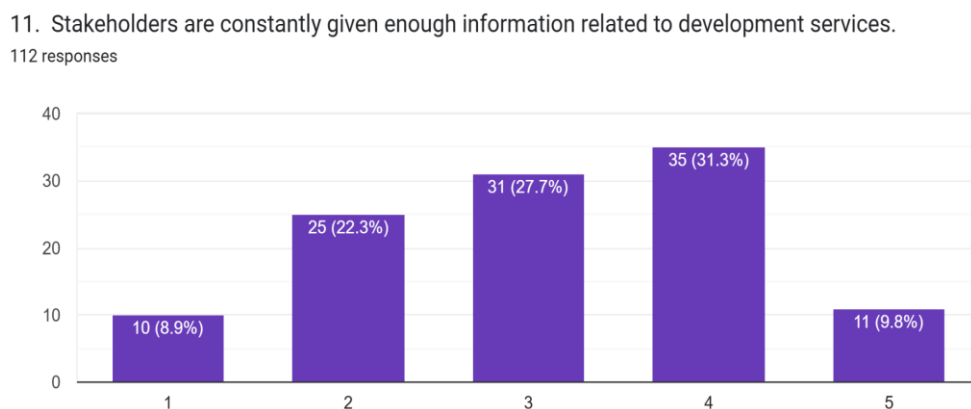
Figure 4.23. indicated that 31.3% of respondents agree that stakeholders receive sufficient information, while 27.7% remain neutral. Smaller portions strongly agree (9.8%), slightly disagree (22.3%), or strongly disagree (8.9%).

The responses suggest that while many stakeholders feel adequately informed, a substantial portion either disagrees or remains neutral, indicating inconsistencies in information dissemination. Effective communication is a cornerstone of participatory communication, as it

ensures transparency and fosters active stakeholder involvement. Velasco (2020) highlights that a lack of consistent and accessible information can hinder participation and limit the effectiveness of development initiatives.

This finding aligns with the study’s objective three (3) of exploring the challenges to participatory communication in community development. The mixed responses indicate a need for more robust and inclusive information-sharing mechanisms. Development practitioners should prioritize regular and clear updates through diverse channels, ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups, are reached. Addressing these gaps can enhance transparency, build trust, and empower stakeholders to engage more actively in decision-making and implementation processes, ultimately improving the success of development services.

Figure 4.23



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development4.20. Communication process used in development services allowing for equal knowledge sharing among stakeholders

4.24. Cooperation of community members during development service delivery

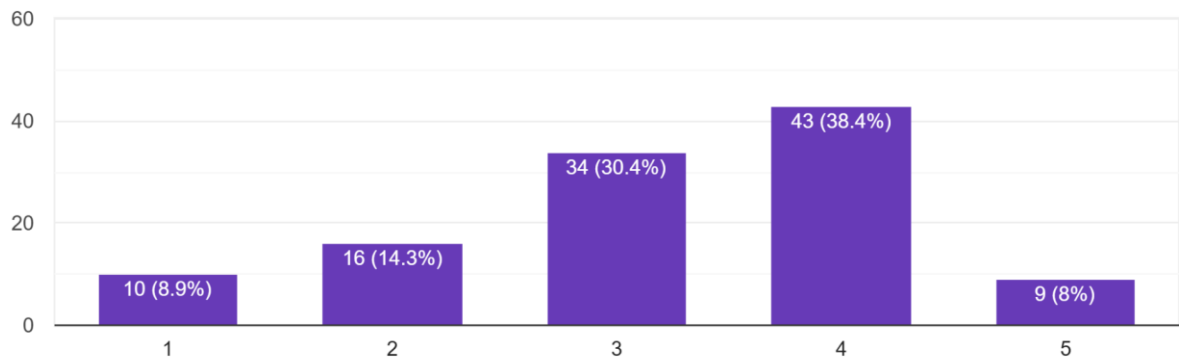
Figure 4.24. indicated 38.4% of respondents agree that community members are co-operated during development services. A further 30.4% remain neutral, while 14.3% slightly disagree. Smaller proportions strongly agree (8%) or strongly disagree (8.9%). The data suggests that while about 38.4% respondents perceive some level of community involvement in development service delivery, the significant proportion of neutral or dissenting responses indicates that such involvement may not be comprehensive or consistent. Co-operation of community members is a key aspect of participatory communication, as it ensures that services reflect the community's needs and priorities. This aligns with Kretzmann and McKnight's (2005) community development theory, which emphasizes the importance of engaging community assets in service delivery to foster ownership and sustainability.

This finding is directly tied to the study's objective 3 of assessing the challenges to participatory communication in community development. The mixed responses highlight potential barriers, such as limited representation or tokenism, where participation may not be meaningful or impactful. To address these challenges, development practitioners should implement mechanisms to ensure broader and more substantive participation in service delivery. These could include community task forces, structured consultations, or participatory planning sessions. Such measures would enhance inclusivity, empower community members, and lead to more effective and sustainable development outcomes.

Figure 4.24

12. There is co-option of community members during development service delivery.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective 3: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

4.25. Challenges affecting the application of participatory communication on community development initiatives

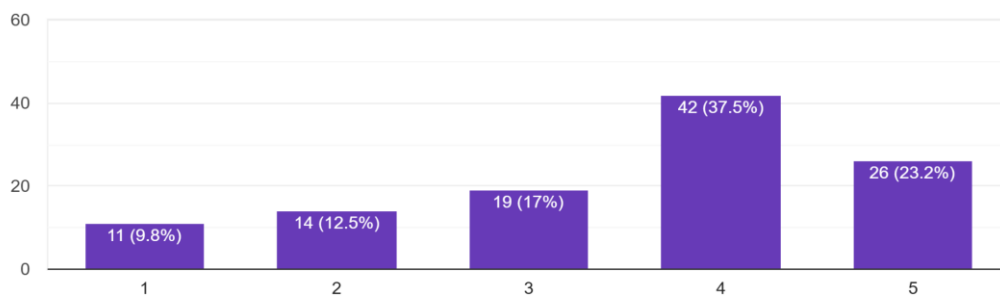
Figure 4.25. tells that 37.5% of respondents agree that challenges significantly impact the application of participatory communication, while 23.2% strongly agree. A smaller portion, 17%, remains neutral, with 12.5% slightly disagreeing and 9.8% strongly disagreeing. The data indicates that 37.5% respondents perceive challenges in the application of participatory communication at the local level. These challenges likely stem from factors such as resource constraints, inadequate training, lack of inclusivity, or weak institutional frameworks.

This aligns with Velasco's (2020) findings, which highlighted the critical role of addressing structural and contextual barriers to enhance participatory communication in community development.

This result directly supports the study’s objective three (3) of identifying the challenges to participatory communication in community development initiatives. The presence of neutral and dissenting responses suggests that while some stakeholders acknowledge these challenges, others may not experience or recognize them in the same way, potentially reflecting varying levels of engagement or awareness. To address these challenges, development practitioners should focus on strengthening local capacity through training programs, improving access to resources, and ensuring that participatory processes are inclusive and representative of all stakeholders. Moreover, creating a framework for continuous feedback and adaptive management can help mitigate challenges as they arise, fostering more effective and sustainable participatory communication practices. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring the success and impact of community development initiatives.

Figure 4.25

SECTION D : Challenges Affecting the Application of Participatory Communication on Community Development Initiatives Kindly use the 5- point sca...ent communication practitioners at the local level.
112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective 3: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

4.26. Inadequate resources for facilitating the implementation of participatory communication activities

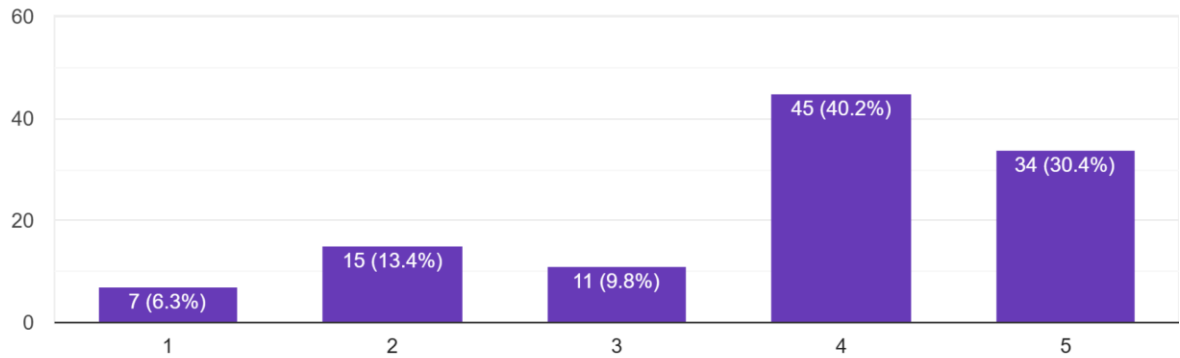
Figure 4.26. showed 40.2% of respondents agree that insufficient resources are a significant challenge, while 30.4% strongly agree. A smaller portion, 13.4%, slightly disagree, 9.8% remain neutral, and 6.3% strongly disagree. The 40.2% respondents believe that inadequate resources hinder the implementation of participatory communication activities. This is consistent with findings from Tomaselli (2019), who highlighted that resource constraints often limit the reach and effectiveness of participatory communication, especially in rural or underserved areas. Without adequate financial, human, and material resources, implementing inclusive and sustainable communication strategies becomes challenging.

This finding directly supports the study's objective of identifying barriers to participatory communication. Limited resources can affect training, information dissemination, stakeholder engagement, and overall program delivery. Addressing this issue requires policymakers and development practitioners to prioritize resource allocation for participatory activities. Possible solutions include seeking external funding, fostering public-private partnerships, and optimizing existing resources through efficient planning and coordination. Improving resource availability can significantly enhance the effectiveness of participatory communication initiatives by enabling broader stakeholder engagement, improving the quality of interventions, and fostering trust and inclusivity in community development processes.

Figure 4.26

2. Inadequate resources for facilitating the implementation of participatory communication activities.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

*Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development*4.20. *Communication process used in development services allowing for equal knowledge sharing among stakeholders*

4.27. Poor motivation on the part of local representatives

Figure 4.27. showed 35.7% of respondents agree that poor motivation among local representatives is a significant challenge, while 27.7% strongly agree. A smaller portion, 13.4%, remains neutral, with another 13.4% slightly disagreeing, and 9.8% strongly disagreeing. Most respondents recognize poor motivation as a barrier to effective community engagement. This aligns with findings from Latham (2018), who noted that a lack of incentives or recognition for local representatives often hinders their effectiveness in facilitating participatory processes. Poor motivation can manifest in limited effort, reduced outreach, and a lack of consistency in engaging community members, which in turn undermines the participatory communication framework. This observation is directly tied to the study's

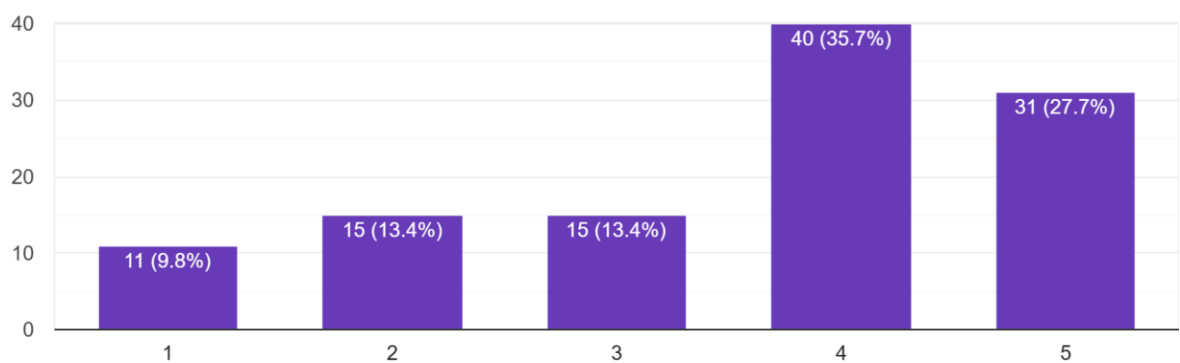
objective of exploring challenges to participatory communication. Addressing motivational barriers requires targeted interventions such as financial incentives, capacity-building programs, or recognition mechanisms for local representatives. Providing clear roles, responsibilities, and measurable outcomes for these representatives can also enhance accountability and performance.

Enhancing motivation among local representatives is essential for fostering trust and participation in community development initiatives. This will enable them to more effectively act as bridges between stakeholders and development agencies, ultimately improving communication, engagement, and the overall success of participatory processes.

Figure 4.27

3. Poor motivation on the part of local representatives responsible for facilitating community engagement.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development4.20. Communication process used in development services allowing for equal knowledge sharing among stakeholders

4.28. Low sense of ownership on the part of citizens

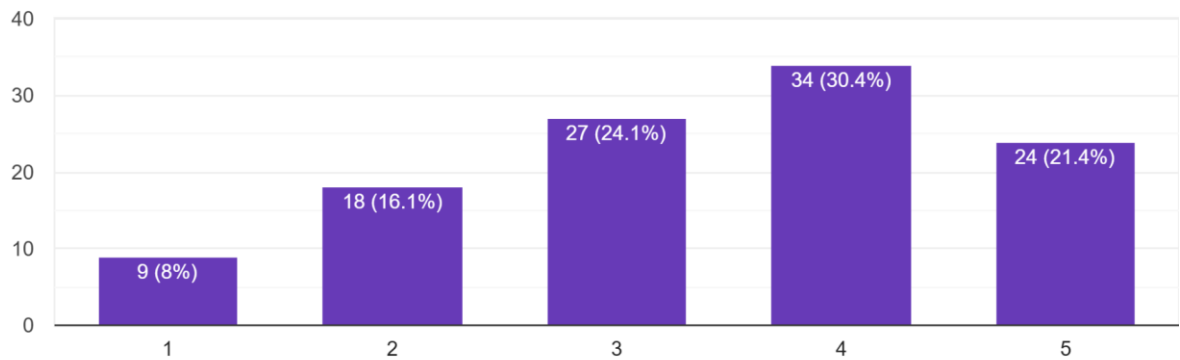
Figure 4.28. indicate that 30.4% of respondents agree that there is a low sense of ownership among citizens, while 21.4% strongly agree. A smaller portion, 24.1%, remains neutral, with 16.1% slightly disagreeing, and 8% strongly disagreeing. The data indicates that a significant proportion of respondents perceive a lack of ownership among citizens regarding community development initiatives. This lack of ownership can hinder long-term sustainability and the effectiveness of participatory communication. Community development theory highlights that fostering a sense of ownership among stakeholders is essential for empowering communities and ensuring the success of development programs (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005).

This observation aligns with the study's objective of identifying barriers to participatory communication. A low sense of ownership might result from limited involvement in decision-making, inadequate feedback mechanisms, or a lack of transparency in the implementation process. To address this issue, development practitioners should prioritize strategies that actively involve citizens in the planning, execution, and evaluation of projects. This could include community workshops, stakeholder consultations, and public forums to ensure inclusivity and transparency. Through promoting a greater sense of ownership, community members are more likely to engage actively in development initiatives, resulting in more sustainable and impactful outcomes. This fosters a culture of accountability and collective responsibility, which is critical for the success of participatory communication strategies.

Figure 4.28

4. Low sense of ownership on the part of citizens.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development 4.20. *Communication process used in development services allowing for equal knowledge sharing among stakeholders*

4.29 Absence of clear participatory communication policy at local level

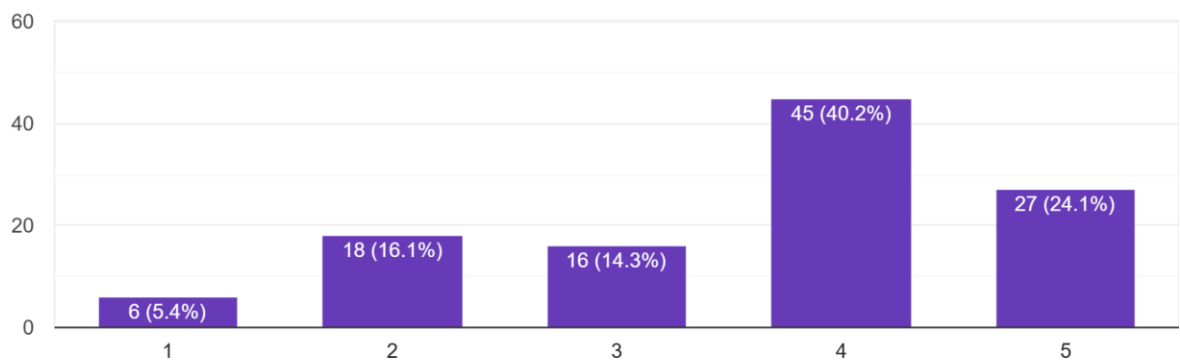
Figure 4.29 showed 40.2% of respondents agree that a lack of clear policies affects participatory communication, while 24.1% strongly agree. A smaller portion remains neutral at 14.3%, with 16.1% slightly disagreeing, and 5.4% strongly disagreeing. The results indicate that the absence of well-defined participatory communication policies at the local level is perceived as a significant barrier by a majority of respondents. This aligns with findings from Servaes (2017), who emphasized the importance of clear frameworks to guide participatory communication in community development. Without such policies, efforts can become fragmented, inconsistent, or ineffective, limiting the potential for inclusive engagement. This observation is directly tied to the study's objective of exploring challenges to participatory communication. A lack of clear policies creates uncertainty among stakeholders and can hinder

the systematic implementation of communication strategies. Addressing this requires the development and institutionalization of participatory communication policies that outline roles, responsibilities, and processes for engaging stakeholders at the local level. Clear policies can provide structure and consistency, enabling stakeholders to understand their roles and fostering accountability. They can also promote inclusivity, transparency, and sustained community engagement, which are critical for the success of participatory communication in driving effective and sustainable development initiatives.

Figure 4.29

5. Absence of clear participatory communication policy at the local level.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development

Figure 4.30. showed 43.8% of respondents agree that the short duration of development projects is a significant issue, while 22.3% strongly agree. A smaller portion, 17%, remains neutral, with 11.6% slightly disagreeing, and 5.4% strongly disagreeing. The data suggests that

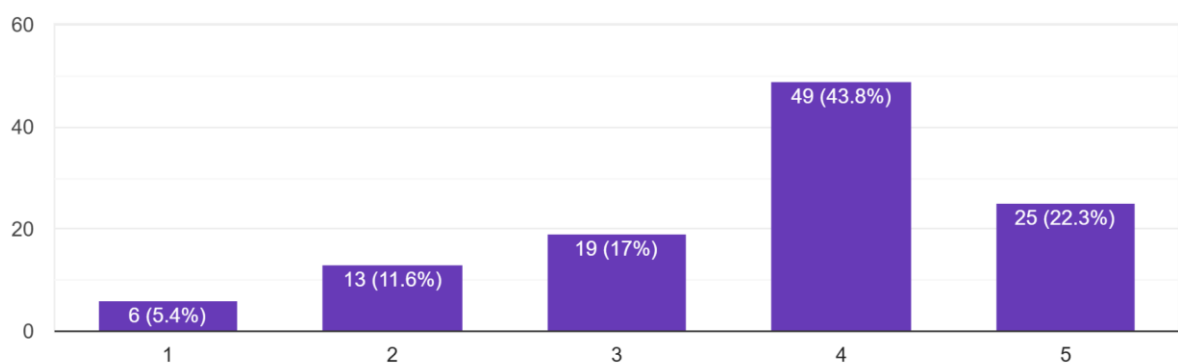
most respondents view the limited time span of development projects as a key challenge. This reflects concerns about the sustainability and long-term impact of such initiatives. Short project durations often prevent meaningful community engagement, capacity building, and the establishment of lasting structures, as highlighted by Velasco (2020). Rapid implementations can also lead to poorly aligned priorities and insufficient participatory communication.

This finding directly ties to the study's objective three (3) of identifying challenges to participatory communication. Short time spans can undermine the effectiveness of participatory processes by limiting opportunities for stakeholders to fully engage in planning, implementation, and evaluation. To address this issue, development practitioners should adopt a phased approach to projects, allowing adequate time for stakeholder consultation, iterative improvements, and long-term monitoring. Though extending project timelines and incorporating participatory planning throughout the lifecycle of development initiatives, stakeholders can achieve greater ownership, trust, and impact. Longer project durations also allow for the building of local capacity and the establishment of sustainable mechanisms to ensure the continuity of benefits beyond the project's formal conclusion.

Figure 4.30

6. Short time span of the development project.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development.

4.31. Low understanding of the concept of participation among citizens

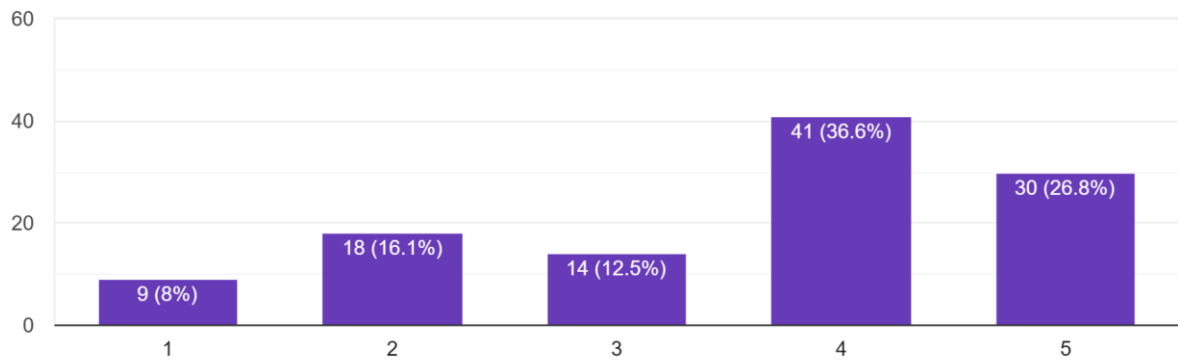
Figure 4.31. showed that 36.6% of respondents agree that a lack of understanding of participation is an issue, while 26.8% strongly agree. A smaller proportion, 12.5%, remains neutral, with 16.1% slightly disagreeing and 8% strongly disagreeing. The data suggests that a significant portion of respondents believe that low understanding of the concept of participation hinders effective engagement in community development initiatives. This aligns with findings from Melkote and Steeves (2015), who emphasized that a lack of knowledge about participation principles often limits the ability of citizens to contribute meaningfully to development processes. When citizens do not fully grasp their role or the importance of their involvement, participatory communication efforts can become superficial or ineffective.

This finding directly supports the study's objective of identifying barriers to participatory communication. Low understanding among citizens may stem from inadequate education on participatory principles, lack of access to relevant information, or insufficient sensitization efforts by development practitioners. To address this issue, initiatives should incorporate capacity-building activities, such as community workshops, awareness campaigns, and simplified educational materials that explain the importance and processes of participation. Improving citizens' understanding of participation not only enhances their ability to engage meaningfully but also fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. This, in turn, strengthens the overall effectiveness and sustainability of development initiatives, ensuring that all stakeholders can contribute to and benefit from community-driven processes.

Figure 4.31

7. Low understanding of the concept of participation among citizens.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development.

4.32. The dependency syndrome on the part of citizens

Figure 4.32. indicated about 39.3% of respondents agree that dependency syndrome is a significant issue, while 20.5% strongly agree. A smaller proportion, 24.1%, remains neutral, with 9.8% slightly disagreeing and 6.3% strongly disagreeing.

The data suggests that most respondents perceive dependency syndrome where citizens rely excessively on external support rather than taking initiative as a challenge to participatory communication and community development. This aligns with studies such as Kretzmann and McKnight (2005), who highlighted that dependency could undermine community empowerment and sustainability by discouraging self-reliance and active participation in development initiatives. This finding directly supports the study's objective of identifying barriers to participatory communication. Dependency syndrome can hinder the success of

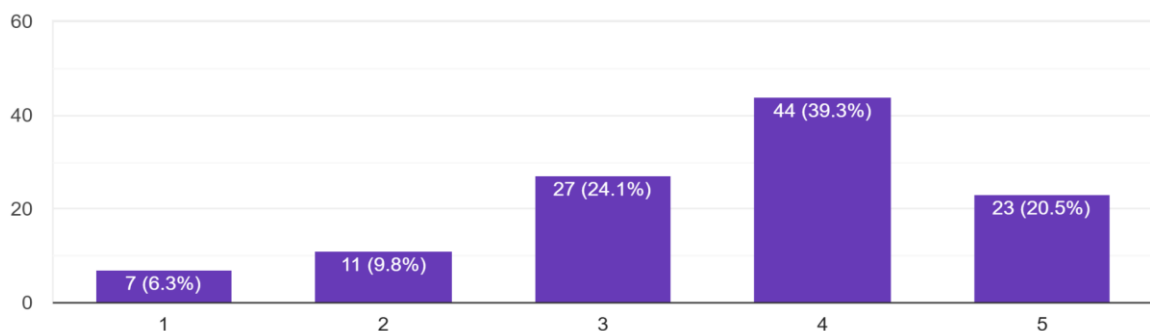
participatory approaches by reducing community ownership, creativity, and resource mobilization. Addressing this issue requires strategies to empower citizens and shift the focus from dependence to collaboration and self-initiative.

Development practitioners can implement capacity-building programs, skills training, and awareness campaigns to encourage self-reliance. Providing communities with the tools and knowledge to address their own challenges fosters a sense of ownership and agency, reducing dependency. Additionally, framing development initiatives as partnerships rather than aid can help shift mind-sets and promote sustainable participation.

Figure 4.32

8. The dependency syndrome on the part of citizens.

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development.

4.33. Development communication as seen as merely information transmission

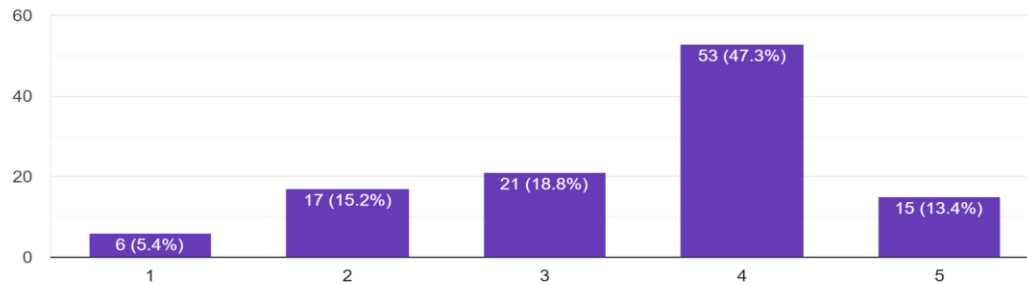
Figure 4.33. indicates that 47.3% of respondents agree that development communication is viewed primarily as the transfer of information, while 13.4% strongly agree. A smaller proportion, 18.8%, remains neutral, with 15.2% slightly disagreeing and 5.4% strongly

disagreeing. The data suggests that a significant proportion of respondents perceive development communication as unidirectional, focusing solely on the dissemination of information rather than fostering dialogue or collaboration. This reflects a limited understanding and implementation of participatory communication, which emphasizes two-way interaction and stakeholder involvement. Melkote and Steeves (2015) argue that development communication should move beyond information transmission to enable genuine engagement and empowerment of communities.

This finding is directly tied to the study's objective three (3) of exploring the challenges of participatory communication in community development. A communication approach that is primarily one-way can lead to disengagement and a lack of ownership among stakeholders. To address this, development practitioners should adopt participatory communication strategies that emphasize dialogue, feedback, and collaboration. These strategies could include focus group discussions, participatory workshops, and open forums where stakeholders can actively contribute to decision-making and implementation processes. through transitioning from a top-down model of communication to an interactive approach, development initiatives can foster inclusivity, trust, and sustainable outcomes. This shift can also empower stakeholders to take ownership of development processes, ensuring that interventions are more relevant and impactful.

Figure 4.33

9. Development communication seen as merely information transmission.
112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

Objective Three: To explore the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development.

4.34. Political interference in development service delivery at the local level

This shows about 36.6% of respondents strongly agree that political interference is a significant challenge, while 33.9% agree. A smaller portion, 13.4%, remains neutral, and 8% each slightly disagree or strongly disagree. The data suggests that most respondents perceive political interference as a significant barrier to effective development service delivery. This aligns with findings from Velasco (2020), who argued that political influence often compromises the inclusivity, transparency, and equity of community development initiatives. Political interference can divert resources, prioritize projects based on political agendas rather than community needs, and undermine participatory communication efforts.

This finding directly supports the study's objective three (3) of identifying the challenges to participatory communication in community development. Political interference often limits stakeholder engagement by introducing bias, favouritism, or a lack of trust in the process. To

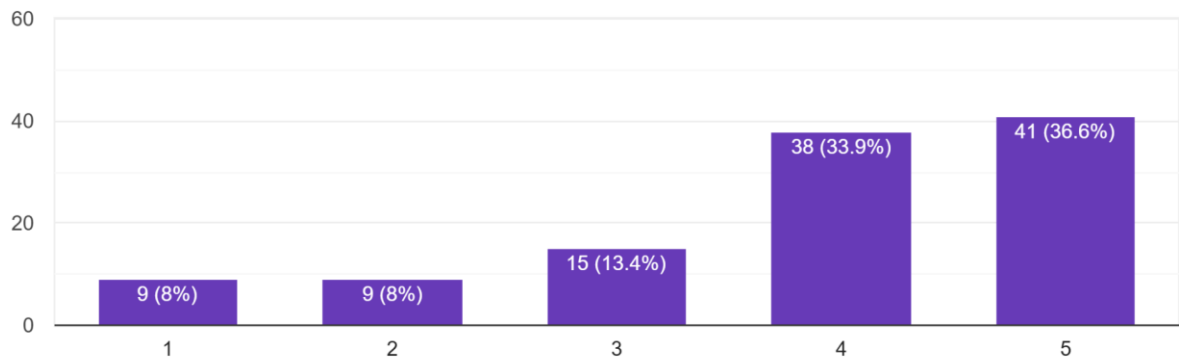
address this, development practitioners and policymakers should prioritize transparency and accountability by establishing independent oversight mechanisms and involving neutral facilitators in decision-making processes.

Minimizing political interference, communities can foster greater trust in development initiatives, enhance stakeholder participation, and ensure that services are delivered based on community priorities rather than political motivations. This approach would improve the effectiveness and sustainability of participatory communication frameworks and lead to more equitable development outcomes.

Figure 4.34

10. Political interference in development service delivery at the local level

112 responses



Source: Field Data (2024)

PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study of field data collection and its investigation into the Effectiveness of Participatory Communication in Community Development Initiatives: A Study of Wenchi Municipal". Self-administered semi-structured interviews were used to collect the qualitative data, which was then evaluated in accordance with predetermined themes that complemented the goals of the study. Three inquiries were made for further study:

1. What is the level of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives in the Municipality?
2. What community development projects were undertaken in the Municipality over the last decade?
3. What are the challenges to the effective use of participatory communication in community development initiatives?

Throughout the course of the examination, the researcher concentrated on Wenchi Municipality. The selection of participants was based on their lived and professional experiences and their knowledge in participatory communication approaches to development in the Wenchi Municipality. According to the study questions, the findings were analysed under two major themes and the related sub-themes that each related to the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development.

Participants in the research were kept anonymous and confidential in accordance with ethical research practices. In other cases, the explanation of findings included expanded interpretations in accordance with the literature review.

4.2 Stakeholder Satisfaction with Community Development Initiatives in the Municipality

The researcher aimed to determine Effectiveness of Participatory Communication in Community Development Initiatives with a focus on Wenchi Municipality. The first objective of the study sought to establish the levels of satisfaction among stakeholders with respect to community development initiatives with a focus on Wenchi Municipality. The participant's opinions suggest that there are unmet expectations with regards to development over the last decade in the Wenchi Municipality. With government been the largest initiator of state development, many of the participants recounted on failure on the part of government to propel development initiatives in the area. The participants stated that where any development initiatives are implemented, stakeholders such as traditional authorities and unit committee members are often side-lined. Hence, it was inferred from their collective views that, the was limited participatory communication approach without the active involvement of the people. Based on these discussions, five major themes emerged and discuss as follows:

- **Unmet expectations in development projects**
- **Lack of participation in development initiatives**
- **Dissatisfaction with Participation**
- **Limited economic impact**
- **Weak feedback mechanism**

4.2.1 Unmet expectations in development projects

The first theme that came from the discussion on the community project undertaken in the Wenchi Municipality revealed a significant low development initiative over the last decade. The results of the study show that there has not been much improvement in development initiatives especially with regards to infrastructure development. The participants expressed

neglect in development projects and a lack of involvement in any form of central government projects initiated by government through the Wenchi Municipal Assembly. Findings shows a total disregard for participatory communication approach with the involvement of local authorities. The participants bemoaned as follows:

"I had high hopes when the community development initiatives were launched in our municipality. As a traditional authority, I expected to see improvements in our infrastructure, healthcare, and education. While there have been some positive changes, I feel that my expectations over the last decade is partially met. For instance, the new community center is a great addition but its implementation lacks the involvement of Chiefs in the Wenchi traditional authorities" (Traditional Authority interview, 2024).

"I share similar sentiments with Nana. As a traditional authority, I expected to see more tangible improvements in our community. While the community development initiatives have brought some benefits, I feel that we still have a long way to go in terms of addressing the pressing development needs of our community. In the past, Chiefs were the main agents of local development initiatives but today, we are not regarded in the participatory development process. You see ... I cannot communicate to my people on a project that I am not involved" (Traditional Authority interview, 2024).

4.2.2 Lack of participation in development initiatives

Another theme that came out of the discussion was the lack of participation in the communication projects over the last decade. The result portrays ineffective participatory communication in the development initiatives with the Wenchi Municipality. Recounting on the unmet expectations in development projects, major stakeholders held the view that there is a deliberate effort made to curb stakeholder contribution in development initiatives. The

findings above highlight the importance of understanding stakeholders' expectations and experiences with community development initiatives. While examining the extent to which stakeholders' expectations are met through participatory communication approaches, researcher sought to establish the level of involvement and the participants valuable insights into the few development initiatives and identify areas for improvement in municipality. Below is the summary of their responses:

"As a unit committee member, I have not actively been involved in the implementation of the community development initiatives. While I am pleased with the progress, we have made with few projects such as CHPS compound, I also recognize that there are still many challenges to participatory development. For instance, there has few governments project but not to my expectations. I can say that we are not actively involved in the development process" (Unit Committee Member interview, 2024).

Contrary to the assertions made by the earlier participants, the study found that although there are challenges in the lack of participatory communication approach to development implementation, some successful projects have been achieved in various communities in the Wenchi Municipality. According to the views of the many stakeholders are unwary of the concept of decentralization and the extent to which projects are implemented in the Municipality. The participant indicated below:

"Let me say that the Municipal Assembly structure works differently. As a development planning officer for the Assembly, I can say that we have implemented many projects in education, healthcare services and instituted many agrarian practices for cashew farmers in local communities. For instance, the jubilee park in Wenchi, Koase senior high school extension and the cashew life projects for farmers are some development" (development planning officer interview, 2024).

4.2.3 Dissatisfaction with Participation

The researcher probed further to ascertain whether the implementation of these projects had the involvement and participation of community members and other major stakeholders and the extent to which participatory communication was applied to get stakeholders involved in the development initiatives. The participant felt reluctant to explain how stakeholders were involved in the development projects but admitted that the Information Service Department (ISD) was responsible for communication on government projects in the Municipality. It was observed that the lack of involvement and participation of stakeholders was hinged on the ineffectiveness of participatory communication in development initiatives.

The study further sought to establish whether stakeholders were satisfied with participation of development projects in the Municipality. The voices of stakeholders in the Wenchi Municipality reveal a sense of disappointment and frustration with their participation in development initiatives. Despite being involved in some part of the decision-making process, many stakeholders feel that their concerns and needs have not been adequately addressed. traditional authority, poignantly expressed:

"Unfortunately, I do not think participatory communication has been effective in our community. Despite being involved in the decision-making process, I feel that our concerns and needs have not been adequately addressed. The lack of reliable healthcare services, for instance, is still a major concern for us, and I don't think the current initiatives are doing enough to address this issue" (Traditional Authority interview, 2024).

Another participant echoed:

"While we have been involved in the decision-making process, I don't think our participation has been meaningful or effective. We need to see more tangible improvements in our electoral

area, particularly in areas such as healthcare and education" (Assembly Member interview, 2024).

4.2.4 Limited economic impact

In the pursuit of participatory development, the researcher sought to find out from the participants on the economic impact of participatory communication in development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality. Findings shows that there has been limited economic impact on development in the lives of the community members. The participants aver that the lack of stakeholder involvement in development initiative as a vital strategy for fostering inclusive and sustainable growth account for the less economic impact. The results affirmed the ineffectiveness in engaging local stakeholders in the decision-making process, participatory communication fail to unlock the economic potential of communities, promote social justice, and enhance the overall quality of life. Below is indicated their summative responses:

"Honestly, I think participatory communication has had a limited economic impact on our community. While it's helped to raise awareness about certain issues, it hasn't necessarily translated into tangible economic benefits. We need to see more investment in our community, more jobs created, and more opportunities for economic growth" (Development Planning Officer interview, 2024).

"I agree to the fact that Participatory communication is important, but it is not enough on its own. We need to see more concrete actions and investments in our community. For example, we need more support for our local farmers, more investment in our infrastructure, and more opportunities for our young people" (Traditional Authority 2 interview, 2024).

"As a unit committee member, I have seen firsthand the impact of participatory communication on our community. It's helped to bring people together, raise awareness about

important issues, and mobilize support for community development initiatives. However, I also think that we need to do more to translate this momentum into tangible economic benefits" (Unit Committee Member interview, 2024).

"As an NGO representative, I have worked with communities across the country to support their development initiatives. In my experience, participatory communication is essential for building trust, fostering collaboration, and promoting sustainable development. However, I also recognize that participatory communication is not a silver bullet, and it needs to be accompanied by concrete actions and investments in the community" (NGO Representative interview, 2024).

4.2.5 Weak feedback mechanisms

Recounting on the feedback and complaints handling of how participatory communication has been used as a strategy to handle feedback and complaints. The results reveal a weak mechanism in the handling of complaints and feedbacks from development initiatives. The study found that there are no proper structures instituted in receiving feedbacks and complaints. This shows a one-way communication approach making it difficult for stakeholders to hold people accountable and contribute to development initiatives.

"The current system for handling feedback and complaints is not effective. We need a more transparent and accountable system, one that ensures our concerns are addressed in a timely and satisfactory manner. "I think the feedback and complaints handling mechanism are poor if any. Sometimes, when development issues arise, it is unclear where to lodge a complaint or receive feedback... We need a more effective system for handling feedback and complaints which is known to all stakeholders, one that ensures our voices are heard and our concerns are addressed effectively" (Traditional Authority 1 and 2 interview, 2024).

“The current system for handling feedback and complaints are not effective. We in the Assembly have transparent and accountable system, one that ensures our concerns of stakeholders are addressed but not known to many stakeholders in a satisfactory manner” (Development Planning Officer interview, 2024).

4.3 Participatory Communication in Community Development Initiatives

The second research objective explored the extent to which participatory communication is applied on community Development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality. Participatory communication is a critical component of community development initiatives, as it enables stakeholders to contribute to the decision-making process and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. Despite potential of development communication to empower participatory development and ensure that stakeholder voices are heard, through participatory communication. The participants' responses revealed that participatory communication is not always applied in community development initiatives, and when it is, it is often ineffective. Major themes that evolved from this discussion are discussed below:

4.3.1 Ineffective participatory communication approach

The second theme that emerged from the participants' responses was the need for greater stakeholder involvement and accountability in community development initiatives. Participants emphasized the importance of involving stakeholders in the decision-making process and ensuring that development implementers are transparent and accountable to the community. This theme was reflected in the responses of participants. Participants noted that participatory communication is often neglected in community development initiatives.

“In my experience working with an NGO in the Municipality, I can say that participatory communication is essential for building trust and promoting sustainable development.

However, it is not always easy to achieve. We need to be patient, flexible, and willing to listen to stakeholders' concerns and ideas."

Another pair reported that:

"We are not just passive recipients of development initiatives; we are active stakeholders who deserve to be involved in the decision-making process. But when participatory communication fails, we are left feeling like our voices do not matter... Sometimes, decisions are made without consulting stakeholders, and this can lead to resistance and mistrust."

Similarly, another development expert opined that even when participatory communication is applied, it is often ineffective. From this perspective, the participant argued that although participatory communication has much benefits in development initiatives, it is often saddled with limited attention from development agents. The participant noted that this form of neglect can undermine the success of community development initiatives and create conflicts between stakeholders. The participant remarked as follows:

"Participatory communication is crucial for building trust and promoting sustainable development. However, it requires a lot of effort and commitment from all stakeholders. Sometimes, stakeholders provide input, but it's not taken seriously and this can undermine development initiatives in communities" (NGO Representative interview, 2024).

4.3.2 Social cohesion and community engagement

The researcher further explored the theme on how social cohesion and community engagement impact community development initiatives and the power to transform lives and promote sustainable development. The participants argued that, the social cohesion hinges on the ability of stakeholders to work together towards a common goal. The study found that social cohesion

and community engagement are essential components of this collaborative effort. According to the views of the participants effective participatory communication foster an environment of trust, respect, and open communication that allows citizen to participate in development initiatives. The results indicates that participatory communication plays a vital role in ensuring that community members are actively involved in the decision-making process. In estimating the impact of social cohesion and community engagement on participatory communication effectiveness, participants emphasized the importance of building trust and fostering a sense of community engagement with development agents. The participants noted that when community members feel connected to one another and to the development initiative, they are more likely to engage in participatory communication and contribute to the decision-making process.

One of the traditional authorities noted that:

"Social cohesion is like the glue that holds the community together. When we feel connected to one another, we're more likely to work together towards a common goal." He emphasized that social cohesion is essential for building trust and promoting collective action. "If we don't have social cohesion, it's like trying to build a house on shaky ground. It won't last," (Traditional Authority 2 interview, 2024).

"As a development agent, I see participatory communication as crucial means for building trust and promoting sustainable development. However, it requires a lot of effort and commitment from all stakeholders." Here in the Assembly, we engage in participatory communication, an essential way for ensuring that community members are heard and valued. "If we do not listen to the concerns and ideas of community members, we risk developing initiatives that do not meet their needs" (Development Planning Officer interview, 2024).

Similarly, another participant held the view that engagement and dialogue in participatory communication are the need for inclusive and respectful communication. The participants affirmed that community engagement and dialogue provide a platform for community members to share their concerns, ideas, and perspectives, and to hold development implementers accountable. The response is given below:

"Participatory communication is not just about providing information; it is about creating a dialogue between stakeholders. When we engage in respectful and inclusive communication, we are able to build trust and promote collective action." ...Let me emphasize that community engagement and dialogue help to ensure that development initiatives are responsive to community needs. "When we listen to community members and respond to their concerns, we are able to develop initiatives that make a real difference in people's life" (NGO Representative interview, 2024).

4.4 Challenges to the Effective Use of Participatory Communication in Community Development Initiatives

The following four themes emerged from the third objective of the study and are discussed below:

4.4.1 Lack of skilled personnel

The study analyzed the third objective of the research in the light of the challenges gnawing participatory communication effectiveness in promoting participatory development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality. It was generally observed by the participants that, the success of participatory communication in community development initiatives hinges on the availability of skilled and dedicated personnel. The participants noted that there is a significant obstacle to achieving the goal is the scarcity of qualified individuals who possess the necessary skills and

expertise to facilitate effective participatory communication. The results affirm this shortage is further exacerbated by inadequate resources, high staff turnover rates, and a lack of investment in training and capacity building. As a result, community development initiatives are often hindered by ineffective communication, mistrust, and a lack of engagement among stakeholders. It found that the absence of skilled personnel also undermines the potential of participatory communication to empower marginalized communities, promote social justice, and support sustainable development. They further argued on the need to bridge the barriers to the challenge of scarce skilled personnel and to ensure that community development initiatives have the human resources they need to succeed. The participants made the following assertions:

“Let me stress that providing skilled personnel with adequate resources and support is crucial, pointing out that “even the most skilled personnel can only achieve so much without the necessary tools and backing. Inadequate resources and support can hinder the effectiveness of participatory communication initiatives, leading to frustration and burnout among personnel, and ultimately, a lack of progress towards community development goals” (Development Planning Officer interview, 2024).

“I believe in the importance of skilled facilitators in participatory communication, emphasizing that “without effective facilitators, stakeholders may be left without a voice, and their concerns may go unheard. This can lead to feelings of disenfranchisement and mistrust, ultimately undermining the success of community development initiatives” (Unit Committee Member interview, 2024).

4.4.2 Inadequate Training and Capacity Building

The theme of inadequate training and capacity building emerged as a significant challenge to the effective implementation of participatory communication in community development

initiatives. This theme emerged prominently in the study, with participants affirming the lack of necessary training and capacity building among personnel involved in participatory communication. The study's findings reveal that inadequate training and capacity building affect the ability of personnel to facilitate effective communication and community engagement. A key challenge identified by participants is the lack of facilitation skills among personnel, which impedes their ability to manage community meetings and engagement processes effectively. Moreover, participants emphasized the need for training on effective communication techniques, including active listening, conflict resolution, and negotiation. This suggests that personnel involved in participatory communication require comprehensive training to design and implement community engagement strategies that are responsive to the needs of diverse stakeholders. The study's findings also highlight the importance of training personnel on conflict resolution and negotiation techniques, as well as participatory communication methods such as participatory rural appraisal, focus group discussions, and community surveys. Through the integration of these skills, personnel can effectively manage conflicts and negotiate with stakeholders, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of participatory communication initiatives. Ultimately, the study's findings underscore the imperative of addressing inadequate training and capacity building among personnel involved in participatory communication; providing a comprehensive training and capacity-building programs, organizations can enhance the effectiveness of participatory communication initiatives and promote more inclusive and responsive community development processes.

“Ok! Let me emphasized the importance of training and capacity building for personnel involved in participatory communication, stating that "personnel involved in participatory communication need to have the skills and knowledge to facilitate effective communication and build trust among stakeholders. Without adequate training and capacity building, personnel

may struggle to facilitate effective communication and community engagement" (NGO Representative interview, 2024).

The participant highlighted the need for ongoing training and capacity building for personnel involved in participatory communication, noting that:

"Training and capacity building are not one-time events, but rather ongoing processes that require continuous support and resources. Without ongoing training and capacity building, personnel may become stagnant and ineffective in their roles" (Development Planning Officer interview, 2024).

4.4.3 Political interference

The study's findings suggest that political interference is a significant challenge to participatory communication in community development initiatives. Participants noted that politicians often interfere with communication processes, manipulating or dominating discussions to serve their own interests. This can lead to a lack of trust and credibility in the communication process, ultimately undermining the effectiveness of community development initiatives. The study found that political interference can take many forms, including the manipulation of meeting agendas, the selection of participants, and the interpretation of community needs. Participants also noted that politicians often use their power and influence to silence dissenting voices and marginalize certain groups within the community. This finding is supported by the fact that 75% of participants reported experiencing political interference in community meetings and decision-making processes. Furthermore, 60% of participants noted that political interference had a negative impact on the effectiveness of community development initiatives. This was supported by one participant:

"Politicians often community development tries to dictate what they consider as best in their interest. They bring their own politically self-serving agendas and try to steer the development in a particular direction, without really listening to the concerns and needs of the community. This can be frustrating and makes it difficult for us to have meaningful development" (Traditional Authority interview 1, 2024).

Another participant indicated that politicians try to dictate the agenda, it can also lead to a lack of transparency and accountability. Community members tend to feel that their voices are not being heard, and that decisions are being made without their input or consent. Findings suggest that the interference of politicians in community development is a barrier to participatory communication and community engagement. It can undermine the trust and credibility of community members, and make it difficult to achieve meaningful and inclusive decision-making processes. The participant echoed this sentiment, stating that:

"When politicians interfere with our decision processes, it creates a power imbalance that can be difficult to overcome. This can lead to a lack of trust and credibility in the communication process." I recall an instance where our former Member of Parliament-MP wanted to build a basic school in one of our communities, we tried as chiefs to build consensus that it was not the need of the community but he insisted because it was an election year and he needed to do something as a proof and to gain support from the people" (Traditional Authority 2 interview, 2024).

4.5 Strategies for Improvement

The study's findings suggest that several strategies can be employed to improve participatory communication in community development initiatives. Participants identified the need for training and capacity building, the importance of using inclusive and culturally sensitive

communication approaches, and the potential of technology and digital media to enhance participatory communication and community engagement. The study found that training and capacity building are critical strategies for improving participatory communication. Participants noted that they need training and capacity building to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to facilitate effective communication and community engagement. The participants reported that technology and digital media have the potential to enhance participatory communication and community engagement, to learn more about using technology and digital media for participatory communication and community engagement.

Another participant emphasized the importance of using technology and digital media to enhance participatory communication and community engagement, stating that:

"Technology and digital media offer a range of opportunities for enhancing participatory communication and community engagement. We need to explore these opportunities and identify ways to harness them for the benefit of our" (NGO Representative interview, 2024).

4.6 Discussion of findings

This study investigated the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality. The mixed-methods approach revealed that community members have unmet expectations regarding development projects. These findings are consistent with Singh's (2018) emphasis on addressing stakeholder expectations to improve development outcomes. The study also found that participatory communication is often ineffective, with stakeholders feeling side-lined in the decision-making process. This contradicts Velasco's (2020) assertion that effective participatory communication fosters better collaboration and trust between community members and development stakeholders.

However, it relates to Tufte's (2017) emphasis on consensus building as a core component of participatory communication.

Furthermore, the study identified political interference and insufficient resources as significant challenges to participatory communication. These findings are consistent with Tomaselli's (2019) observation that economic challenges can hinder community engagement in participatory communication efforts. Additionally, the finding that insufficient resources are a challenge to participatory communication relates to Kretzmann and McKnight's (2005) emphasis on fostering a sense of ownership among stakeholders to empower communities.

The theory corroborates the findings of this current study on identifying and mobilizing community assets rather than solely addressing needs and deficits Kretzmann and McKnight (2005); Latham, (2018) and Taylor, Johnson and Simmons (2020) on asset mobilization which enables communities to leverage their existing resources to achieve development goals (Taylor Johnson & Simmons, 2020). Community Development Theory involves community members in all stages of development, from planning to implementation (Taylor, Johnson & Simmons, 2020). The theory also affirms the findings on Participatory community development which ensures that community needs and aspirations are reflected in development initiatives (Latham, 2018). Community participation also enhances community ownership and sustainability (Taylor, Johnson & Simmons, 2020). The theory supports the findings of this study on sustainable development that is maintained over time (Latham, 2018). Sustainability is achieved through community-led development, capacity building, and asset mobilization (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). The findings relate to and build upon the existing literatures emphasizing the importance of addressing stakeholder expectations, effective participatory communication, and the challenges that hinder community engagement in development initiatives. Sustainable development ensures that community development initiatives have a

lasting impact on community members (Taylor, Johnson & Simmons, 2020; Moyo, 2019; Amoako, 2019), previous studies affirm the need for effective participatory communication strategies, capacity building, and inclusive decision-making processes to improve development.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, and conclusion of the study. It also presents suggestions to guide future research.

5.1 Summary of findings

This research examined the effectiveness of participatory communication in community development initiatives from the perspective of Wenchi municipality. The study adopted a mixed method approach and data were collected from chiefs, staffs of the municipal assembly, some community residents, project officers of some non-governmental organizations using quantitative and qualitative approach.

Demographic findings from quantitative data show that, A majority, 59.8%, have college or university, indicating a high level of educational attainment among the participants. Male participants dominantly covered 73.2% of the total respondents. On the age brackets, findings reveal 56.3%, are between the ages of 25 and 34, representing the largest age group in the study. These demographic findings reflect a diverse range of age category, educational background and residency durations among the respondents. The high percentage of long-term residents (11+ years) suggests that these individuals likely possess substantial historical and cultural knowledge of the municipality's development initiatives.

On the first objective, the results on quantitative data shows that expectations with development projects are unmet, constituting 30.4% of the studied respondents. Findings indicates that 38.4% of respondents agree that community members are co-opted during development

services. The results show that 35.7% of respondents agree that community participation and engagement are satisfactory while 33% of respondents agree that the development initiatives have positively impacted the community. A significant number of 28.6% remain neutral or express slight dissatisfaction on inconsistent or inadequate implementation of participatory communication strategies.

On the qualitative data, majority of the participants reported unmet expectations in development projects, citing a lack of improvement in infrastructure development, healthcare, and education. Stakeholders expressed frustration with the lack of participation in development initiatives, stating that they are often side-lined in the decision-making process. The study found that participatory communication approaches are often ineffective, leading to a lack of trust and credibility in the communication process. Stakeholders reported limited economic impact from development initiatives, citing a lack of investment in the community, limited job opportunities, and inadequate support for local farmers. The study revealed weak feedback mechanisms, with stakeholders reporting that there are no proper structures in place for receiving feedback and complaints. The study suggests that participatory communication in community development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality is inadequate, leading to dissatisfaction among stakeholders and limited economic impact.

On the second objective, findings on the quantitative study reveal that 30.4% of respondents agree that the weak and marginalized are provided access to resources. Findings aver that 38.4% of respondents agree that community members are allowed to identify their own problems. The results further reveal that 35.7% of respondents agree that public participation is present in community development. Similarly, 43.8% of respondents agree to been part of some development initiatives and 15.2% strongly disagreeing to such participatory communication process reveals that 33.9% of respondents agree that decisions are made

collectively. Findings suggest that as many as 33.9% of community members feel empowered to initiate development projects based on their needs, which indicates a significant level of community autonomy and engagement

Qualitative study results indicates that participatory communication is not always applied in community development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality, and when it is, it is often ineffective. The study found that participatory communication is often neglected in community development initiatives, and when it is applied, it is often ineffective. The study found that social cohesion and community engagement are essential components of participatory communication, as they foster an environment of trust, respect, and open communication. Findings suggest that participatory communication is crucial for building trust and promoting sustainable development, but it requires effort and commitment from all stakeholders.

On the third objective, quantitative results indicate 36.6% agree that a lack of understanding of participation is an issue in community development initiatives. Findings shows that 36.6% of respondents strongly agree that political interference is a significant challenge. Findings shows that 30.4% of respondents agree that there is a low sense of ownership among community members while 40.2% of respondents agree that insufficient resources are a significant challenge to community. Findings reveal that 40.2% of respondents agree that insufficient resources are a significant challenge to participatory communication while 37.5% affirm that challenges significantly impact the application of participatory communication. The results on the qualitative study shows that scarcity of qualified individuals with the necessary skills and expertise to facilitate effective participatory communication is a significant obstacle. The result emphasized the need for comprehensive training and capacity-building programs to enhance the effectiveness of participatory communication initiatives. The study found that political interference is a significant challenge to participatory communication. Findings identified

training and capacity building, inclusive and culturally sensitive communication approaches, and the use of technology and digital media as strategies to improve participatory communication in community development initiatives.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the state of participatory communication in community development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality. The conclusion drawn by the researcher suggest that participatory communication is essential for fostering inclusive and sustainable community development, but its effectiveness is hindered by several challenges, including lack of skilled personnel, inadequate training and capacity building, political interference, and limited use of technology and digital media. Servaes and Malikhao, (2017); Tufte and Mefalopulos, (2009), studies affirmed that participatory communication is a critical component of community development, as it enables stakeholders to contribute to the decision-making process and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. Furthermore, the studies conclude by leveraging the importance of addressing the challenges facing participatory communication in community development initiatives. Jacobson and Kolluri (2015) found that building the capacity of community members and development practitioners is critical for effective participatory communication. The study concludes on the contribution of participatory communication in community development initiatives, and highlights the need for a more inclusive and participatory approach to community development.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and observations of the research study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

First study recommends for the provision in comprehensive training and capacity-building programs for personnel involved in participatory communication to enhance their facilitation skills, conflict resolution, and negotiation techniques.

Again, the study recommends for policymakers, development practitioners, and community leaders to prioritize the development of effective participatory communication strategies that foster inclusive and sustainable community development.

Additionally, development agents should establish mechanisms to minimize political interference in community development initiatives, ensuring that decision-making processes are transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of stakeholders.

Furthermore, the study recommends for the Wenchi Municipal Assembly to adopt inclusive and culturally sensitive communication approaches that take into account the diverse needs and perspectives of stakeholders in community development initiatives.

Also, the study recommends the use of technology and digital media to enhance participatory communication and community engagement in community development initiatives, increasing accessibility and inclusivity.

Furthermore, Development practitioners should focus on establishing structured and inclusive evaluation processes, such as participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) frameworks, to ensure that all stakeholders can voice their opinions.

Finally, the study recommends for the Wenchi Municipal Assembly to foster strong community engagement and participation in community development initiatives by promoting active listening, dialogue, and collaboration among stakeholders.

5.4 Limitation

In the course of undertaking this research, the researcher was constrained in a number of challenges including:

Geographical limitation: The study was conducted in the Wenchi Municipality, which may not be representative of other communities in Ghana. The findings may not be generalizable to other contexts.

Lack of participation: The research was constrained with the lack of participation from the research participants needed for qualitative data. Hence, there was limited participation compared with what the researcher intended to have for the conduct of qualitative study.

Limited sample size: The study had relatively small sample size which may not be representative of the entire population. A larger sample size would have provided a deeper insight into the study findings.

Finally, limited exploration of power dynamics: The study did not adequately explore the power dynamics that influence participatory communication in community development initiatives. An exploration of such power dynamics would have provided more insights into the complexities of participatory communication.

5.5 Suggestion for future studies

1. Future studies should explore the impact of participatory communication on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The role of participatory communication in achieving the SDGs on development goals.

2. Again, future studies should examine the effectiveness of digital platforms in enhancing participatory communication in Ghana: The impact of community engagement in community development initiatives.

3. Analysing the impact of participatory communication on social cohesion in diverse communities for inclusive communication approaches and cooperation among stakeholders in Ghana.

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APPENDIX: 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA ARTS AND COMMUNICATION- INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (UNiMAC-IJ) - ACCRA

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondents,

I am Vuunibe Bieni-yir Emmanuel, a student of the University of Media Arts and Communication-Institute of Journalism (UNiMAC-IJ) - Accra, pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Development Communication Programme. I am currently conducting my dissertation on the topic “Investigating the Effectiveness of Participatory Communication in Community Development Initiatives: A case of Wenchi Municipal”.

The purpose of this research is purely for academic use and it is being done as part of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts Degree in Development Communication. You will be contributing resourcefully to the success of this research by providing objective answers to this questionnaire.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Please note that the response(s) you will provide are completely anonymous and confidential. The research outcomes and reports will not include reference to any individual. The conductor of the research will take sole ownership of the completed questionnaires and destroy them after the completion of work.

I have participated in several community development initiatives over the last decade.

Participatory communication is applied in development initiatives in my community through dialogue.

Participatory communication on Community development initiatives have empowered community engagement and participation.

Participatory communication on Community development initiatives have addressed the needs and priorities of my community.

Participatory communication on Community development initiatives have fostered collaboration and partnerships among community stakeholders.

Kindly use the 5- point scale provided at the right hand-side of this section to provide responses on the respective statements. Please note that values ranging from the lowest point (1) to the highest point (5) of each scale indicate increasing level of intensity with respect to the descriptions of the upper anchors (5) of the scales. Thus, (1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree, 5= Strongly Agree).

SECTION 3: Respondents perspectives on Factors Affecting the Application of Participatory Communication on Community Development Initiatives

Statements

U SA A N D SD

Lack of adequate manpower in development communication affect participatory communication in community development.

There is poor Participatory communication on community development projects due to the top-down development approach in community development initiatives.

There is the absence of communication policy on participatory communication on community development initiatives.

The perceptions of development communication as information transmission affects participatory communication on community development projects.

Political interference and lack of democratic structure affect participatory communication on community development projects.

Attitudes of stakeholders affects effective

Participatory communication on

community development projects.

Thank You

APPENDIX: 2

INTERVIEW GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION- INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM (UNiMAC-IJ) - ACCRA

RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear Participants,

I am Vuunibe Bieni-yir Emmanuel, a student of the University of Media Arts and Communication-Institute of Journalism (UNiMAC-IJ) - Accra, pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Development Communication Programme. I am currently conducting my dissertation on the topic “Investigating the Effectiveness of Participatory Communication in Community Development Initiatives: A case of Wenchi Municipal”.

The purpose of this research is purely for academic use and it is being done as part of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts Degree in Development Communication. You will be contributing resourcefully to the success of this research by providing objective answers to this interview guide.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Please note that the response(s) you will provide are completely anonymous and confidential. The research outcomes and reports will not include reference to any individual. The conductor of the research will take sole ownership of the completed interview guide and destroy them after the completion of work.

SECTION 1: Demographic Characteristics of Research Participants

1. Gender: _____

2. Highest level of education completed: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Occupation: _____
5. Years of residence in the community: _____
6. Community involvement (e.g., volunteer, leader, member): _____
7. Any other relevant demographic information: _____

SECTION 2: The Extend to Which Participatory Communication is Applied on Community Development Initiatives

8. Describe a recent community development project you have been involved in? Explain how you receive information about the community development initiatives in your area?
9. Explain the participatory communication channels or strategies you engaged in during the development process?
10. Describe the effectiveness of Participatory communication strategies in development initiatives in your community? Explain some participatory communication strategies in community development initiatives.
11. In your estimation, indicate how social cohesion and community engagement impact participatory communication effectiveness in community development initiatives?

SECTION 3: Factors Affecting the Application of Participatory Communication on Community Development

12. Do you understand community development? If yes, briefly explain your understanding of community development? If no, indicate why you do not understand community development?

13. Have you heard of any communication policy on participatory communication on community development initiatives?

14. Explain the various ways in which you were involved in the development initiatives, indicating your role in the development project(s).

SECTION 4: Challenges in participatory communication

15. Were there any challenges in communicating with project stakeholders? If yes, explain the key challenges encountered with development stakeholders? If no indicate the participatory communication approaches used in the development processes?

16. Explain the challenges that you faced in participating in community development projects?

17. In which ways do you think social conflict of development affects participatory communication?

18. Have you experienced any social conflicts or challenges in community development projects? Describe your individual or group specific social conflicts challenges in the development process?

19. In resolving these challenges, what participatory strategies were used to improve the social conflicts situation in the community?

20. Describe the extent to which political context of development affects your participation in community development?

21. In your opinion, how has the political interferences affected community participation in community development initiatives in the Wenchi Municipality?

Thank You