



The role of indigenous modes of communication in enhancing development support communication in Bongo Traditional Area of Upper East Region, Ghana

Thomas Azagsiba Agana¹

¹tagana@ubids.edu.gh (0242977694)

¹<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0694-554X>

¹Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD UBIDS), Ghana

Recommended Citation: Agana, T. A. (2025). The role of indigenous modes of communication in enhancing development support communication in Bongo Traditional Area of Upper East Region, Ghana. *African Quarterly Social Science Review*, 2(2), 369–378. <https://doi.org/10.51867/AQSSR.2.2.32>

ABSTRACT

Indigenous communication practices, deeply rooted in African cultural traditions, are very critical for fostering community engagement, disseminating information, and promoting sustainable development. This study examines the value and efficacy of indigenous communication practices in boosting Development Support Communication (DSC) in the Bongo traditional area of the Upper East Region of Ghana. Rooted in Participatory Communication Theory, the study emphasizes the significance of shared cultural experiences, collective decision-making, and discussion in shaping growth processes. Using a qualitative research design, the study looks at the perspectives and actual experiences of community members, traditional leaders, and development experts. Purposive sampling was used to select 40 participants, ensuring a diverse range of stakeholders, including elders, opinion leaders, and communication specialists. The data was gathered through participant observations, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. Key concepts were extracted through the use of a narrative approach and thematic analysis of the data gathered. The inclusion criterion involved development professionals, cultural leaders, and community elders while stakeholders who have no in-depth knowledge of the subject matter were excluded. The results demonstrate the significance of indigenous communication techniques in rural development, especially in promoting communal involvement, preserving traditional governance institutions, and transmitting cultural values. The result also reveals that the validity and reliability of these practices are threatened by modernization and digital transformation. The result shows that, though indigenous communication practices are still relevant, they are progressively extinct, raising worries and alarm that its uniqueness and relevance may be lost in favour of more popular contemporary media. The study recommends strategic incorporation of indigenous communication into modern development frameworks. This includes adopting hybrid models that blend traditional and digital communication techniques, systematically documenting indigenous communication forms, and incorporating them into educational curriculum. In rural development programmes, policy interventions should also be put in place to promote the regeneration and preservation of indigenous communication practices.

Keywords: Community Engagement, Digital Transformation, Development Support Communication (DSC), Ghana, Indigenous Communication, Modernization, Participatory Communication Theory, Rural Development

I. INTRODUCTION

The means and ways societies exchange ideas, make decisions, and mobilize for collective action could be termed as communication (Obregon & Tufte, 2017). As indicated by many scholars Communication is essential tool for human development (Obregon et al., 2017). Communication systems which represent community identities, norms, and values have evolved over time across cultural and historical contexts (Holliday, 2020). In spite of the fact that modern technologies have revolutionized communication, indigenous modes that are deeply rooted in oral traditions, symbolic representations, and ritualistic expressions remain vital tools for maintaining cultural heritage, promoting social cohesion, and facilitating governance (Kral, 2014).

It is important to state that across the world, traditional societies have relied heavily on indigenous forms of communication for development, cultural preservation and social cohesion (Mushengyezi, 2003). It is also significant to stress that over the centuries, the Native American groups and other societies across the globe have traditionally used drum messages, sand drawings, and smoke signals (Smith & Wallerstein, 2020) to communicate and even in the spiritual realm, Native American groups. Notably among these societies is the Aboriginal societies in Australia. They maintained intertribal interactions and sent diplomatic messages between clans using engraved wooden items and message sticks. In a similar vein, the *quipu*, a system of knotted cords, was used by the Inca civilization in South America to record and communicate information about trade and governance. In addition to being useful, these native communication technologies also carried profound cultural values and social structures (Akpabio, 2023).

At the continental level, African societies have historically developed sophisticated indigenous communication systems to serve diverse functions, including governance, conflict resolution, and social mobilization (Avruch, 2022). In various parts of West Africa, griots (oral historians) have played a crucial role in preserving and transmitting knowledge through storytelling, poetry, and songs (Adu-Gyamfi & Anane, 2021). The drum language, particularly among the Yoruba, Akan, and other ethnic groups, has been an essential medium for sending coded messages, coordinating events, and strengthening communal ties (Chanta-Martin, 2014). Similarly, the use of proverbs, praise poetry, and symbolic objects, such as talking drums and cowrie shells, has enabled African societies to maintain intricate systems of communication that remain relevant even in contemporary settings (Mensah & Acheampong, 2022).

According to Naaikuur et al. (2022), indigenous communication is still a crucial component of participatory governance and community participation in Ghana, especially in rural areas. Indigenous forms of communication remain essential to Development Support Communication (DSC) in the Bongo traditional area in the Upper East Region. Vital information on health, agriculture, conflict resolution, and environmental protection is spread through traditional means such as storytelling, drum signals, proverbs, town criers, and community gatherings (Amankwah, 2023). For example, storytelling teaches communities about modern topics like illness prevention and sustainable land use in addition to acting as a storehouse of cultural knowledge. Furthermore, symbolic actions like the "talking drum" reinforce social ties and a sense of community by conveying signals over long distances.

Despite their historical and contemporary significance, indigenous means of communication is confronted with growing challenges in Ghana and elsewhere. The rapid growth of modern communication technology, including television, social media, and cell phones, has altered communication preferences, particularly among younger generations (Nyarko, 2021). Furthermore, new forms of connection brought about by globalization and Western influences can diminish old behaviors. As a result, the significance of traditional media in development interventions is limited since many policymakers and development practitioners choose digital and mainstream communication tactics over indigenous ones (Agyemang & Boateng, 2020).

This study is to explore the ongoing importance of indigenous modes of communication in Ghana, with a focus on their role in Development Support Communication in the Bongo traditional area of Upper East region of Ghana. By examining community attitudes, barriers, and potential areas for integration with modern systems, this study aims to increase our understanding of how traditional and modern communication approaches can coexist to enhance community involvement and sustainable development.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In rural African, indigenous communication systems have long been essential for promoting social cohesiveness, cultural preservation, and communal growth. However, because modern communication technologies are becoming more and more dominant, indigenous communication systems relevance is quickly eroding. The use and efficacy of traditional communication techniques like drum languages, oral storytelling, and symbolic messaging are declining in the Bongo District as a result of their displacement by digital platforms (Mensah & Acheampong, 2022).

The generational divide is a significant factor in this loss, as younger generations are growing disengaged from old customs due to the effects of globalization and digitization. Because knowledge is passed down orally, these communication methods are susceptible to deterioration when elder generations pass away (Nyamekye, 2021). Furthermore, indigenous communication systems are further marginalized by development projects that often prefer using modern communication channels instead of blending that indigenous forms communication (Amankwah, 2023).

Additionally, the viability of indigenous communication techniques is limited by resource limits. They are less feasible in today's development initiatives due to their diminished functioning brought on by a lack of institutional involvement, money, and policy backing (Adu-Gyamfi & Anane, 2021). These culturally important behaviors risk extinction if they are not purposefully preserved and incorporated into contemporary communication systems.

In order to improve sustainable development, this study explores the significance, difficulties, and potential integration of indigenous communication methods with contemporary communication technologies in Development Support Communication (DSC) in the Bongo traditional area.

1.2 Research Objectives

Specifically, the objectives of the research are:

- i. To examine the current role of indigenous communication methods in facilitating community engagement, cultural preservation, and local governance in the Bongo traditional area.
- ii. To identify the challenges affecting the sustainability of traditional communication practices in the face of modernization and globalization.
- iii. To explore possible strategies for integrating indigenous communication methods with modern technologies to enhance their relevance and effectiveness in DSC.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Participatory Communication Theory

The foundation of this study is underpinned by the Participatory Communication Theory, which emphasizes the active participation of communities in communication processes. Participatory Communication Theory opposes traditional top-down communication approaches and promotes a dialogical process that empowers communities as co-creators of knowledge and solutions rather than passive recipients of information. By highlighting culturally relevant practices, Participatory Communication Theory fits in well with the study's focus on indigenous communication systems, which are naturally participatory and deeply ingrained in local cultural contexts (Manyozo, 2022).

According to the participatory communication theory, Communication is a two-way process that fosters understanding, collaboration, and group decision-making. Unlike linear theories of communication, this idea emphasizes inclusion, ensuring that minority viewpoints are heard and incorporated into development projects. In a typical rural setting like the Bongo Traditional Area, this participatory ethos is exemplified by indigenous communication tools such as drum languages, oral storytelling, and proverbs. These indigenous communication modes provide a feeling of trust and ownership throughout the community (Adu-Gyamfi & Anane, 2021).

In furtherance Participatory Communication Theory which emphasis on cultural context, emphasizes its applicability in analyzing indigenous communication. Research has indicated that communication tactics that align with regional customs and norms are more successful in promoting development and changing behaviours (Mensah & Acheampong, 2022). For instance, in the Bongo traditional area, storytelling is a vehicle for education and mobilization of the people and also source of entertainment to the indigenes and other people (Nyamekye, 2021).

However, the prevalence of Western communication patterns and technologies in the present day makes it difficult in deploying participatory communication model for the implementation of development programmes and projects. Development professionals and the communities they serve become estranged as a result of these models' frequent marginalization of traditional practices. In order to construct hybrid systems that preserve cultural authenticity while utilizing the advantages of current technologies, Participatory Communication Theory advocates for combining indigenous methods with contemporary tools (Amankwah, 2023). In order to bridge generational divides and increase the reach of these culturally relevant modes, mobile platforms could be modified to broadcast traditional drum messages.

The theory also highlights the necessity and deliberate effort to document and educate people in order to preserve indigenous knowledge systems. Since many indigenous practices are oral in origin, they are susceptible to deterioration, especially as younger generations grow more disengaged from traditional forms of communication. By including communities in attempts to preserve and document their cultural heritage, participatory approaches can aid in addressing this challenge and guarantee that these customs continue to be applicable in both local and international settings (Nyarko, 2021).

A strong foundation for comprehending the function of indigenous communication systems in development support communication is offered by the Participatory Communication Theory. Through its emphasis on cultural relevance, adaptability, and active community involvement, the idea promotes the integration and preservation of traditional practices within modern development frameworks. This method guarantees that development interventions are both culturally relevant and sustainable, in addition to improving the efficacy of communication tactics.

2.2 Conceptual Review

According to Wefwafwa (2014), indigenous communication systems are distinctive, adaptable, and interactive, and are ingrained in the cultural and social fabric of communities. The communication needs of the local communities are met by these systems, which make use of culturally relevant practices including drumming, oral storytelling, proverbs, symbols, and rituals (Chasi & Rodny-Gumede, 2020). Building trust, guaranteeing inclusivity, and promoting sustainable development efforts all depend on indigenous communication, which draws on cultural familiarity and collective memory (Nyamnjoh, 2017; Tomaselli, 2021).

Indigenous communication techniques have been used in rural areas in Ghana to address a range of development issues, such as public health, education, and agriculture. To promote behavioral changes connected to sanitation and hygiene practices, for example, storytelling has been used as an instructional method to transmit moral lessons and practical knowledge (Adjei & Ansah, 2022). Similar to this, proverbs are a succinct and powerful way to express complicated concepts, and they are frequently employed in group decision-making and dispute settlement (Mensah-Aborampah & Frimpong, 2022). One important indigenous communication technique that is frequently used to organize communities during political and social events, celebrations, and emergencies is drumming. Drum languages provide quick communication across long distances using rhythm and symbolism (Abdulai, Ibrahim, & Anas, 2023). Additionally, by strengthening shared cultural values and establishing emotional bonds, symbols and rituals improve

the efficacy of indigenous communication. In agricultural ceremonies, for instance, rituals are frequently employed to highlight the value of communal cooperation and environmental care (Amankwah, 2023).

One significant benefit of indigenous communication systems is their versatility, which enables their use in a variety of settings (Wefwafwa, 2014). To ensure that health communications are both comprehensible and culturally relevant, traditional communicators in certain rural Ghanaian communities have used proverbs and storytelling to spread knowledge about preventive measures during the COVID-19 epidemic (Adjei & Ansah, 2022). This adaptability emphasizes how useful these systems are for dealing with current development concerns (Wefwafwa, 2014).

However, the influence of globalized cultural patterns and the quick spread of contemporary communication technology pose serious challenge to the function of indigenous communication in development (Mensah-Aborampah & Frimpong, 2022). Many younger people have lost interest in traditional customs because they believe they are outmoded or incompatible with modern lifestyles, especially in rural and peri-urban areas (Adjei & Ansah, 2022). Notwithstanding these obstacles, indigenous communication systems—particularly when modified to support contemporary communication tactics—continue to show their worth as culturally relevant and participative instruments for involving communities in development initiatives (Amankwah, 2023).

In order to increase their relevance and durability, recent research support the merging of traditional and contemporary communication systems. To increase their reach while preserving cultural authenticity, for example, traditional messaging might be combined with modern channels such as radio shows or smartphone apps (Adjei & Ansah, 2022). Similarly, hybrid communication models that appeal to both traditional and modern audiences can be developed through public awareness campaigns that use drumming and other symbolic activities (Amankwah, 2023).

Indigenous communication networks continue to be essential to rural communities' development in Ghana. They are useful instruments for tackling issues in fields like health, education, and agriculture because of their cultural distinctiveness, adaptability, and participatory character (Boateng, 2015). In order to make these old modes of communication to remain relevant in a world that is becoming more interconnected, it is imperative that they are preserved and included into contemporary development initiatives.

Modern media technology like radio, television, and cell phones have changed the way people communicate, particularly in rural regions (Adjei & Ansah, 2022). As a result of their speed, effectiveness, and wide accessibility, some development practitioners place more value on these technologies than indigenous communication. Oral storytelling and proverbs, which were formerly essential to group conversation, are now seen as archaic by many younger people, who prefer digital media for amusement and information. As a result of this, indigenous communication methods have been reduced to supporting roles and are primarily limited to ceremonial or ritualistic occasions.

External cultural pressures brought about by globalization have weakened traditional values and customs (Mensah-Aborampah & Frimpong, 2022). According to Mensah-Aborampah and Frimpong (2022), the usage of indigenous communication methods has decreased as a result of the change in social norms brought about by Western lifestyles and communication patterns that have been spread through media and technology. The linguistic and symbolic subtleties of their own heritage are further distanced from younger people by their frequent adoption of foreign languages and idioms (Wefwafwa, 2014). The maintenance of indigenous communication methods and cultural identity is seriously threatened by this tendency.

2.2.1 Generational Gaps in Knowledge Transmission

In the past, elders have been the keepers of indigenous knowledge, passing down traditions and cultural knowledge orally to the younger generation (Adjei & Ansah, 2022). Oral tradition as part of the foundation of indigenous communication is predominantly pronounced in rural areas of Ghana (Obeng, 2023). However, the age gap has grown wider due to the quick development of digital technology and changing social values, which has caused traditional learning frameworks to deteriorate (Adom et al., 2024). The progressive decline of cultural practices and values is as a result of younger generations' growing lack of patience or drive to participate in traditional knowledge transfer methods (Mensah-Aborampah & Frimpong, 2022). This disparity is especially noticeable in rural youth's decreasing use of symbolic communications and drum languages (Obeng, 2023).

Their dependence on oral transmission without accompanying documentation is a significant weakness of these systems (Ayim et al., 2023). They are vulnerable to deterioration or loss over time due to the lack of written or digital records. In contrast to contemporary communication systems that profit from institutionalized preservation techniques like multimedia and archives, indigenous methods are frequently disregarded in knowledge preservation initiatives (Adom et al., 2024). Every generation that goes by could lose important cultural knowledge if it is not systematically documented (Ayim et al., 2023).

The problem is made worse by the fact that many government institutions and development partners do not include indigenous communication methods during the implementation of programmes and projects. According to Odoom et al. (2024), policymakers frequently favour standardized, contemporary communication technologies over

more conventional strategies that could improve contextual relevance and participative development. This top-down approach restricts development projects' capacity to be inclusive and sustainable (Adjei & Ansah, 2022).

Indigenous communication is further undermined by the disappearance of social spaces that historically fostered cultural continuity, such as gatherings for communal storytelling or festival rites (Mensah-Aborampah & Frimpong, 2022). A decrease in communal experiences has resulted from the rise of individualistic media consumption and the growing impact of Western lifestyles, which has weakened community relationships and decreased opportunities for knowledge sharing between generations (Obeng, 2023). Furthermore, the sustainability of traditional systems is still hampered by a lack of resources and infrastructure to support communal cultural practices (Ayim et al., 2023).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative research approach and used a combination of interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and participant observation to explore the viewpoints of stakeholders in the Bongo traditional area. The methodology enables an in-depth knowledge of the function and challenges of indigenous communication strategies. These three data collection techniques were used to enhance the information gathered from chosen respondents at various phases of the data collection procedure.

3.2 Sampling

Forty participants, including development professionals, cultural leaders, and community elders, were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. It was assumed that 40 participants would be sufficient to gather a variety of viewpoints that represented both contemporary stakeholders and traditional caretakers. Based on recognized needs and expertise in indigenous communication techniques, the respondents were chosen.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

In order to investigate the function of indigenous communication practices in the Bongo traditional area, this study used three main data gathering techniques: participant observation, focus groups, and interviews. To learn more about participants' experiences with indigenous communication techniques, semi-structured interviews were used. Elders, community leaders, and development professionals were among the respondents who were able to express their opinions through these interviews regarding the applicability, difficulties, and possibilities of conventional communication techniques in contemporary development settings. The flexibility of the semi-structured format allowed for the investigation of unexpected themes while keeping the study's goals front and center.

To promote group reflection among participants, focus group discussions (FGDs) were used. These conversations gave community members a forum to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using indigenous communication methods in modern contexts. FGDs made it easier to find commonalities and differences in opinion, adding complex insights on the cultural and pragmatic facets of conventional communication to the data. There were three FGDs with seven to ten participants.

Another important technique used in the study was participant observation. The researcher witnessed the practical implementation of indigenous communication techniques by actively participating in community gatherings and ceremonies. A greater comprehension of how these techniques operate within their cultural and social contexts was made possible by the useful background this approach offered. Insights from focus groups and interviews were enhanced by observations of drumming, storytelling sessions, and symbolic rituals, which gave the data a sense of authenticity and immediacy.

3.4 Data Analysis

Key patterns and recurrent themes that surfaced from the study were found through thematic analysis of the data. The impact of modernity, integration tactics, and cultural resistance were found to be major factors that influenced the results. A fuller comprehension of the interactions between these components within the study's setting was made possible using thematic analysis. These trends offered insightful information about how cultural dynamics continue to change in the face of modernization. In the end, the analysis uncovered crucial methods for combining traditional and contemporary influences, which were essential to the goals of the study.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

All participants gave their informed consent after being guaranteed anonymity and secrecy. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional review board, and respondents were granted the luxury of participation, with data integrity guaranteed both during and after data collection.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Relevance of Indigenous Communication

The results show that the Bongo traditional area cultural fabric still heavily incorporates indigenous communication techniques. Participants emphasized how well they worked to build engagement and trust, highlighting the timeless value of these conventional approaches. One of the elders who took part in the Focus Group Discussion remarked:

The drum speaks to the soul in ways that words cannot. It commands respect and unites the community. It has been passed down through generations, and even the youth feel the rhythm deep within, understanding its importance. Through the drum, we communicate without needing to be in the same space. Its sound reaches far and wide, transcending barriers, sending information across spiritual boundaries (Key Informant, 2024).

Another key participant during the semi-structured interview sessions stressed:

Proverbs, like the drum, carry wisdom that resonates through time. When spoken, they carry the weight of our ancestors' experiences, reminding us of our roots (Key Informant, 2024).

It was also discovered that indigenous communication techniques were crucial for promoting social cohesiveness and settling disputes within the community. To resolve conflicts and bring peace back, traditional leaders and opinion leaders use drumming, symbolic gestures, and group gatherings. In addition to fostering communal decision-making, this participatory method to dispute resolution develops trust and upholds community values. One important source highlighted the importance of these activities by saying,

Unlike modern legal systems that often divide people, our traditional ways ensure that conflicts are settled amicably, with both parties walking away as brothers. Our elders use dialogue, wisdom, and shared cultural values to restore peace rather than impose punishments. This approach not only resolves disputes but also strengthens relationships, preventing future conflicts from arising (Focus Group Discussion, 2024).

The study also showed that traditional governance systems and cultural assets are preserved through the use of indigenous communication techniques, which are crucial for knowledge transfer between generations. By using proverbs, folklore, and storytelling to teach younger generations, elders in the community play a vital role in fostering moral principles and historical awareness in the conversation of the community. However, there have been worries expressed that the youth's slow reduction in using indigenous communication methods may erode the process of transmission and eventually cause cultural identity to erode. One respondent pointed out

If our children do not learn these communication methods, we may lose not only our history but also the wisdom of our ancestors. These traditions are not just about passing information; they shape our identity and values. Once they disappear, it will be difficult to reclaim the sense of unity and purpose that has held our people together for generations. (Participant Interview, 2024).

These results are consistent with previous research. For instance, culturally meaningful activities like storytelling and drumming are essential to building trust and unity in rural communities, according to Adu-Gyamfi and Anane (2021). In a similar vein, Mensah and Acheampong (2022) emphasize the dual function of storytelling as a vehicle for mobilization and teaching. These findings are supported by this study, which shows that these approaches are still applicable in spite of the difficulties brought on by modernity.

Notably, though, participants voiced concern that these customs would disappear as a result of a generational divide. This research confirms a rising worry expressed by Nyamekye (2021), who cautions that because indigenous communication systems are oral, they are susceptible to deterioration if not actively documented.

4.2 Challenges in Modern Contexts

The survey found that younger generations are using traditional traditions less frequently, which is one of the major concerns. These traditional approaches are becoming less popular as a result of the proliferation of contemporary communication tools like social media and cell phones. The following fear was shared by the participants in one of the FGDs:

Our youth no longer understand the language of the drums. They are more attuned to WhatsApp and television. The connection that once existed between the youth and our traditional forms of communication is being lost in the digital world. Our drumming and dancing now sound nuisance in the ears of the youth of today. Even funerals grounds, they prefer modern music to our traditional drumming. When we gather as a community, fewer people are willing to participate in discussions using our traditional methods. They find it easier to engage through their phones and digital platforms. We fear that if these practices are not taught to the younger generations, they will fade away. The rise of modern communication has made it harder to maintain the authenticity of our indigenous forms. (Key Informant, 2024).

This sentiment highlights a critical issue discussed by Nyarko (2021), who argues that modernization accelerates cultural erosion by introducing foreign communication paradigms that overshadow local traditions. For instance, while social media platforms offer efficiency and global reach, they often fail to incorporate the participatory ethos inherent in indigenous systems, thus diminishing their cultural relevance.

4.3 Opportunities for Integration

Participants acknowledged the possibility of fusing traditional practices with contemporary communication tools in spite of these obstacles. One strategy to make sure these techniques stay relevant was to broadcast traditional messaging using mobile media. Instead of replacing everything, other participants pointed out that modernization might present chances for adaptability. As an illustration, one elder shared

We can use mobile phones to spread our traditional stories and messages. The same platform that connects us to the outside world could be used to carry our drums and proverbs messages across. If we combine the power of the drum with the reach of modern technology, we can create a platform that bridges the old and the new. It's about adapting, not replacing. (Key Informant, 2024)

This finding supports Amankwah's (2023) suggestion to create hybrid communication models that combine conventional techniques with contemporary instruments and implies that modernization's effects are not all detrimental. This dual viewpoint on the effects of modernization is essential to comprehending how strategic innovation might be used to counteract cultural degradation.

Another participant suggested

We should record and share the stories and wisdom of our elders online, ensuring that the next generation can access and appreciate them. The internet can become a tool for preserving our traditions in an ever-changing world. (Key Informant, 2024).

These results lend credence to the body of research supporting hybrid models. Mensah and Acheampong (2022), for instance, point out that traditional themes can be amplified through digital storytelling while maintaining their authenticity. Furthermore, as Nyarko (2021) notes, using mobile and digital platforms can help close the generational divide by bringing indigenous activities to the attention of younger audiences.

The study shows that in the Bongo traditional area, indigenous communication techniques are still essential for sustainable development, community involvement, and conflict resolution. However, the preservation of these techniques is seriously threatened by the problems brought about by modernity, such as the younger generations' decreased usage of traditional customs. To ensure their continued relevance, the study emphasizes the necessity of carefully integrating indigenous communication methods with contemporary communication technologies. Communities may conserve their heritage while adjusting to the needs of a world that is changing quickly by creating hybrid models that combine the cultural depth of traditional communication with the reach of modern technologies. Future research should explore how these hybrid models can be implemented at a broader scale and evaluate their effectiveness in fostering community participation and sustainable development.

The study's conclusions also highlight how important indigenous communication methods are to promoting sustainable development, cultural continuity, and community involvement in Ghana's Bongo District. The study emphasizes the difficulties presented by modernization as well as the timeless value of these ancient approaches, arguing that a thoughtful blending of indigenous and contemporary communication techniques could improve community development initiatives and successfully cross generational gaps.

The study's conclusions support the Bongo traditional area indigenous communication traditions' longstanding significance and ingrained existence. Participants underlined how crucial these techniques are for encouraging involvement, establishing trust, and advancing social cohesiveness in the neighborhood. According to one crucial informant, the drum's symbolic power demonstrates the breadth of indigenous communication methods. The drum emphasizes the emotional and communal resonance that traditional traditions hold throughout the community because of its capacity to transcend physical barriers and transmit messages beyond spiritual realms. This is consistent with the findings of Adu-Gyamfi and Anane (2021), who contend that storytelling and drumming are important forms of indigenous communication that foster togetherness and trust in rural communities.

Furthermore, participants' descriptions of the usage of proverbs emphasize the cultural richness ingrained in these modes of communication. In addition to imparting wisdom, proverbs facilitate the transfer of knowledge across generations. This result is consistent with Mensah and Acheampong's (2022) research, which highlights the dual function of storytelling as a tool for education and a catalyst for community action. Participants' worries about the slow deterioration of these communication methods among younger generations, however, are a serious cause for concern. One person pointed out that the loss of these conventional channels of communication will cause cultural identity and wisdom to erode. This fear mirrors Nyamekye's (2021) observation that the oral nature of indigenous communication practices is vulnerable to erosion, particularly when the younger generation is less engaged with these traditions.

Furthermore, the study found that settling disputes and reestablishing communal harmony depend heavily on indigenous communication practices. The discourse and consensus-building that characterize the participatory approach to conflict resolution stand in sharp contrast to the punitive tactics that are frequently imposed by contemporary legal systems. As highlighted by participants, traditional dispute resolution procedures generate a sense of unity and community, rather than separation. The literature on indigenous governance systems, which contends that these conventional approaches are more successful in preserving societal harmony and averting future conflicts, is supported by this study (Adu-Gyamfi & Anane, 2021).

Despite the continued relevance of indigenous communication practices, the study also identifies significant challenges, primarily the declining use of these methods among younger generations. The rapid advancement of technology, particularly the widespread use of mobile phones and social media platforms, has shifted communication habits, especially among the youth. As one participant highlighted, the connection between the youth and traditional communication methods, such as drumming, is being lost in the digital age. This sentiment is echoed by Nyarko (2021), who argues that modernization has introduced foreign communication paradigms that often overshadow local traditions. The preference for digital platforms over traditional modes of communication, such as communal gatherings and drumming, highlights a critical challenge to the preservation of indigenous practices.

Furthermore, there is a generational gap as a result of the shift from traditional to modern communication means; younger people are less aware of the cultural value of customs like drumming and proverbs. Since the knowledge of these customs is frequently transmitted orally through in-person interactions, which are progressively being displaced by digital communication, this separation threatens the survival of cultural heritage. The study found a decrease in in-person connections, which could further undermine the communal and authentic aspects of indigenous communication.

The study found a number of chances to incorporate traditional communication techniques with contemporary technology, despite the difficulties presented by modernization. Participants were upbeat about the possibility of incorporating conventional communication techniques into modern platforms. For instance, several participants proposed disseminating conventional messages and narratives via social media and mobile devices. This viewpoint supports hybrid communication models that blend conventional techniques with contemporary resources, as advocated by Amankwah (2023). Traditional messaging could reach a wider audience by utilizing mobile technology, especially younger generations who are more used to digital communication.

The study also emphasized how digital platforms, like the internet, may be used to preserve and share indigenous knowledge. In order to ensure that future generations may access and value these traditional activities, one participant suggested documenting and disseminating elders' stories and wisdom online. This supports the claim made by Mensah and Acheampong (2022) that traditional messages can be amplified through digital storytelling while maintaining their authenticity. Communities can close the generational divide and guarantee that indigenous knowledge survives in the digital era by using contemporary technologies to document and disseminate traditional traditions.

Additionally, a viable way to improve community involvement in development processes is through the use of hybrid models that blend contemporary platforms with traditional communication methods like drumming and storytelling. In addition to maintaining the ethnic diversity of conventional communication, this strategy makes it more approachable for younger audiences who are using digital media more frequently. According to Nyarko (2021), using digital and mobile platforms can help pass on indigenous customs to the next generation, halting the loss of cultural heritage.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Indigenous communication methods remain integral to the socio-cultural fabric of rural Ghana, serving as powerful tools for fostering sustainable development. This study underscores their enduring relevance, particularly in promoting trust, participation, and community cohesion, even as they face significant challenges from the rapid adoption of modern communication technologies.

Rural communities in Ghana still rely heavily on indigenous communication techniques, which are effective means of promoting sustainable development. Even though, they are confronted by many obstacles due to the quick uptake of contemporary communication technology, this study emphasizes their continued usefulness, especially in fostering trust, involvement, and community cohesion.

5.2 Recommendations

The study emphasizes the necessity of recording and preserving indigenous communication traditions in the Bongo traditional area, using a methodical methodology. The creation of thorough records, including written papers, audio recordings, and digital archives, should involve cooperation between local government agencies, cultural institutions, and educational institutions. Authenticity will be ensured by establishing district-level archives and

inclusion of elders in the documenting process. Additionally, digitizing these practices and making them available on social media and other platforms would help improve their long-term preservation and worldwide reach.

It is necessary to implement focused educational programmes in order to close the generational divide in cultural transmission. Workshops must be held in community centers and schools to educate students about the historical relevance and practical uses of indigenous communication techniques. While youth engagement initiatives like festivals and exhibitions can promote active involvement, incorporating these customs into school curricula will help strengthen cultural identity. The direct transfer of information will be further facilitated by mentoring programmes that match young people with elders, guaranteeing the continuation of traditional practices.

Lastly, integrating indigenous communication methods with modern technology will enhance their relevance in contemporary society. Hybrid communication models using mobile applications, SMS platforms, and digital storytelling via social media can preserve and promote these traditions. Mobile broadcasting through community radio and digital platforms will make traditional drumming, storytelling, and proverbs more accessible. Collaborating with technologists to develop innovative tools and launching awareness campaigns will further emphasize the coexistence of traditional and modern systems, ensuring the sustainability of indigenous communication practices.

REFERENCES

- Abdulai, M., Ibrahim, F., & Anas, A. (2023). Traditional drum communication and its relevance in modern Ghanaian society. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 35(1), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2023.2012345>
- Abdulai, M., Ibrahim, H., & Anas, A. L. (2023). The role of indigenous communication systems for rural development in the Tolon District of Ghana. *Research in Globalization*, 6, 100128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resglo.2023.100128>
- Adjei, E. A., & Ansah, M. A. (2022). The storytelling tradition at Larteh, Ghana: Implications for language vitality. *E-Journal of Language*, 1(5), 28–35. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejlang.2022.1.5.28>
- Adjei, J. K., & Ansah, M. O. (2022). Indigenous communication and development: Exploring the role of traditional media in rural Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Communication*, 14(2), 34–49.
- Adjei, K., & Ansah, M. (2022). The impact of modern media technologies on indigenous communication in rural Ghana. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14(2), 145–160.
- Adom, D., Agyeman, E. A., & Boateng, D. B. (2024). Generational knowledge transmission and the survival of indigenous communication systems in Ghana. *International Journal of African Studies*, 10(1), 78–95.
- Adom, D., Thulla, P. F. Y., Fofanah, I. M., Nyadu-Addo, R., & Yeboah, E. (2024). The perceptions of indigenous language and cultural synergy in Ghana and Sierra Leone: A cross-cultural study. *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, 5(5), 701–716. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20245510>
- Adu-Gyamfi, E., & Anane, K. (2021). Cultural resilience and indigenous communication: Insights from rural Ghana. *Journal of African Communication Studies*, 12(3), 45–60.
- Adu-Gyamfi, S., & Anane, S. (2021). Youth perspectives on the decline of traditional communication forms in rural Ghana. *Journal of Indigenous Knowledge and Development Studies*, 4(2), 115–129. <https://doi.org/10.4314/jikds.v4i2.10>
- Agyemang, F., & Boateng, A. (2020). The impact of globalization on traditional communication systems in Ghana. *African Studies Quarterly*, 14(2), 89–102.
- Akpabio, E. (2023). Indigenous communication: A global perspective. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Amankwah, A. (2023). Rituals and symbols in indigenous communication: Enhancing community engagement in development. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 35(2), 145–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2023.1987654>
- Amankwah, J. (2023). Symbols, rituals, and sustainable development in Ghanaian agriculture: The communicative power of tradition. *Development Communication Review*, 19(3), 112–127.
- Amankwah, S. (2023). Hybrid communication models for rural development: Integrating traditional and modern methods. *Development Communication Review*, 15(1), 23–38.
- Avruch, K. (2022). Culture and conflict resolution. In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies* (pp. 254–259). Springer International Publishing.
- Ayim, F., Danso, S., & Kumi, M. (2023). The vulnerability of oral tradition: Documentation and preservation of indigenous knowledge in Ghana. *African Journal of Indigenous Studies*, 7(4), 202–219.
- Ayim, M., Abdullah, A., Bentum, H., Amponsah, E. B., Cudjoe, E., Manful, E., & Osei, I. (2023). Contributing to indigenous social work practice in Africa: A look at the cultural conceptualisations of social problems in Ghana. *Journal of Social Work*, 23(2), 147–162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211055487>
- Boateng, F. (2015). *Indigenous communication and development in Ghana: Challenges and prospects*. Ghana Publishing House.



- Chanta-Martin, N. (2014). When language makes you dance: The relationship between dance, tonal language, and drum languages among the Yoruba of South West Nigeria (Master's thesis). Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). <https://ntnuopen.ntnu.no/ntnu-xmlui/handle/11250/261937>
- Chasi, C., & Rodney-Gumede, Y. (2020). *Decolonising communication studies: African perspectives and practices*. Routledge.
- Holliday, A. (2020). Culture, communication, context, and power. In J. Jackson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication* (2nd ed., pp. 56–70).
- Kral, I. (2014). Shifting perceptions, shifting identities: Communication technologies and the altered social, cultural and linguistic ecology in a remote indigenous context. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 25(2), 171–189.
- Manyozo, L. (2022). *Media, communication and development: Three approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Mensah, J., & Acheampong, T. (2022). Storytelling and drumming as tools for community engagement in rural Ghana. *International Journal of Communication Research*, 18(4), 312–328.
- Mensah, P., & Acheampong, L. (2022). Bridging the gap: Indigenous communication in the era of digital development. *Ghana Journal of Communication Studies*, 14(1), 85–102. <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjcs.v14i1.5>
- Mensah-Aborampah, K., & Frimpong, G. (2022). The power of proverbs and traditional wisdom in conflict resolution and communal life in Ghana. *International Journal of African Culture and Communication*, 6(2), 44–60.
- Mensah-Aborampah, Y., & Frimpong, D. (2022). Contemporary use of proverbs as a tool for directing everyday communication with young Akan speakers. *Convergence Chronicles*, 3(1), 511–522. <https://doi.org/10.53075/Ijmsirq/66577657765767677>
- Mushengyezi, A. (2003). Rethinking indigenous media: Rituals, ‘talking’ drums and orality as forms of public communication in Uganda. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 16(1), 107–117.
- Naaikuur, L., Diedong, A. L., & Dzisah, W. S. (2022). Stakeholders and community radio: Promoting participatory governance in Ghana. *Legon Journal of the Humanities*, 32(2), 118–144.
- Nyamekye, B. (2021). Generational gaps and the decline of indigenous practices: A case study in Ghana. *Journal of Endangered Cultural Practices*, 10(3), 56–72.
- Nyamekye, R. K. (2021). Oral traditions and the threat of digital extinction: The case of Akan storytelling. *International Journal of African Studies*, 6(1), 56–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/ijaf.2021.041>
- Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2017). Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the currency of conviviality. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43(5), 987–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2017.1372568>
- Nyarko, E. (2021). The impact of globalization on indigenous communication practices in rural Ghana. *Journal of African Communication Studies*, 29(4), 234–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1754500X.2021.1907589>
- Nyarko, K. (2021). The impact of modernization on indigenous communication in Ghana. *African Cultural Studies Review*, 19(2), 101–116.
- Obeng, P. (2023). The decline of drum language among Ghanaian youth: Causes and implications. *Journal of Indigenous Communication*, 8(1), 91–105.
- Obeng, R. (2023). The effects of globalized media on northern cultures: A case study of Dagomba, Frafra, and Wala ethnic groups in Tamale Metropolis. *Journal of African Communication Studies*, 29(4), 234–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1754500X.2023.1907589>
- Obregón, R., & Tufte, T. (2017). Communication, social movements, and collective action: Toward a new research agenda in communication for development and social change. *Journal of Communication*, 67(5), 635–645.
- Obregon, R., Waisbord, S., Tufte, T., & Haugen, E. (2017). Communication, development, and public health. In R. Obregon & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The handbook of global health communication* (pp. 3–19). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Odoom, F. A., Tufte, T., & Mefalopulos, P. (2024). Participatory communication in the provision of development services in the Ghanaian decentralised government system: Evidence from the Central Region. *Discover Sustainability*, 5, 266. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-024-00336-w>
- Odoom, R., Agyekum, B., & Nkrumah, A. (2024). Policy and practice: Integrating indigenous communication into Ghana's development frameworks. *Policy and Communication Review*, 12(1), 38–52.
- Smith, J., & Wallerstein, L. (2020). *Traditional communication methods of Native American tribes*. Indigenous Press.
- Tomaselli, K. G. (2021). *Rethinking culture, media and communication*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wefwafwa, M. (2014). The role of indigenous communication in sustainable development in Africa. *African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, 13(1), 1–10.