

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**CAMPUS RADIO STATION AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES:
INTERROGATING ATL FM'S ROLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS**



MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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**A thesis presented to the Department of Journalism and Media Studies,
School of Communication and Media Studies, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
the degree of Master of Philosophy (Media Studies) in the University of
Education, Winneba**

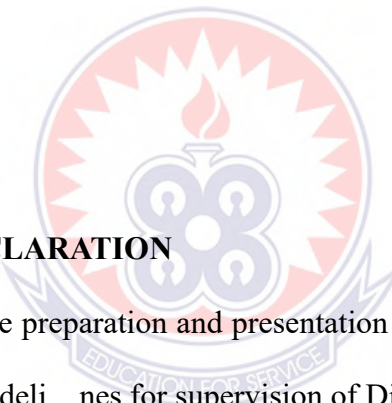
DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Louis Mensah**, declare that this Thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree.

Signature:

Date:



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby, declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. MICHAEL YAO WODUI SERWORNOO

Signature: 

Date:

DEDICATION

To my late grandmother, Obaapanyin Adwoa Tawiah.



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I am profoundly grateful to the Almighty God for the gift of life, divine guidance, and unceasing grace that have sustained me throughout my academic journey at the Department of Media Studies, within the School of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba. This journey has encompassed moments of both great joy and significant challenges, yet through it all, it is the Lord who has granted me the strength and perseverance to see through it.

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ABSTRACT

This study presents an exploratory analysis of ATL FM, a campus-based radio station at the University of Cape Coast, focusing on its role in the development of local communities within the Cape Coast Metropolis. Guided by the Democratic Participant Media Theory and Participatory Development Paradigm, the study employed semi-structured interviews with both the management, staff of ATL FM and community members to gather insights into the station's role in the development of the identified communities. In addition, the study used observation to collect data regarding programming and other initiatives geared towards community development. Findings of the study revealed that while ATL FM's programming and content generation were deemed satisfactory, there is a critical need for greater community involvement in all stages of its programme development, from conception to production. The study concludes by recommending that regulatory bodies, specifically the National Communication Authority and the National Media Commission, implement regulations mandating campus radio stations to allocate a quarter of their programmes to address developmental issues affecting the communities within the catchment areas of university campuses in Ghana.





CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Radio remains a pivotal medium for empowering marginalised populations, particularly using national languages in the context of development communication (Snyder & Stromberg, 2010). As McQuail (2010) observes, radio serves as an effective instrument for disseminating scientific knowledge, promoting political awareness, and advancing socio-cultural integration. Karikari (1994) further asserts that radio is indispensable to the cohesion, functionality, and evolution of modern society. While Abaidoo and Loggosu (2016) concur with Karikari's assertion, they emphasise radio's role primarily as a mass communication tool for the dissemination of news and information.

The evolution of radio, especially in the United States, was significantly shaped by societal expectations such as localism an orientation that reflects a community's unique informational and cultural needs (Dominick, 2005). In democratic societies, radio plays numerous developmental functions that underscore its broader societal significance (McQuail, 2000). It enables governments to educate, inform, and persuade the public on various policies, programmes, and initiatives (Dickinson, Mercer, & Barry, 1973).

Yet, despite its ubiquitous presence, radio has become so normalised in daily life that its societal importance is often overlooked. Ansah (1994) cautions against this complacency, noting that radio remains a unifying force, facilitating the formation of cohesive national identities and robust political institutions.

The history and development of the media, especially radio, in Ghana are inextricably linked with the country's political history (Anokwa, 1997). Radio is expected to perform

the same role of disseminating information and news relevant to the economic and social needs of society in Ghana. Besides its far reach as a mass media form, radio does not require literacy on the part of its audiences and is therefore accessible to the masses of people (Yankah, 2004). Myers (2008) states that there are three broad categories of radio: public service radio, commercial radio and community radio. These distinctions are like that of the National Communications Authority (NCA), Ghana. According to the NCA, radio broadcasting in Ghana comprises Public Radio, Commercial Radio and Community Radio.

The NCA states that “community radio is radio that is about, for, by and of a specific marginalised community, whose ownership and management is representative of that community, which pursues a participatory social development agenda, and which is non-profit, non-sectarian and non-partisan” (NCA 1: nd). The liberalisation of Ghana’s airwaves in the early 1990s culminated in the influx of radio networks in every nook and cranny of the country mostly in the private sector. One of the significant developments was the offspring of campus radio stations in the country. It is, however, instructive to note that even before the liberalisation of the airwaves, the three main public universities in Ghana during this period, University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the University of Cape Coast operated what (Serwornoo, 2016) termed as pirate or de-facto broadcasters.

From a global standpoint, it has been well documented that many campus radio stations originated as experimental broadcasting platforms (Sauls, 2009). In Ghana, the National Communications Authority (NCA) reported that, as of the fourth quarter of 2023, a total of 25 campus radio stations were operational (NCA, 2021). According to the NCA’s regulatory framework, community radio in Ghana is organised into two primary models:

traditional community radio, which serves socio-cultural communities within defined geographic boundaries; and campus radio, which operates under the jurisdiction of educational institutions.

Ghana's media landscape is characterised by a diversity of broadcasters, encompassing commercial, community, and public service radio stations. As noted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2004), these broadcasting categories are not mutually exclusive; rather, each fulfills distinct roles by catering to different segments of the population.

Campus radio as a form of radio broadcasting primarily operates within educational institutions, mostly universities or colleges. This form of radio plays a dual role of providing practical training for students in broadcasting, journalism, and media studies, in addition to its social responsibility function. Campus radio is classified as a distinct form of community radio, targeting primarily audience in the campus community, but its influence and outreach extends to the surrounding local communities (Foxwell et al., 2020).

Community radio is widely acknowledged as a distinct form of non-commercial broadcasting designed to address the unique needs, interests, and aspirations of specific communities, particularly those marginalised or underserved by mainstream media. It prioritises participatory communication, whereby members of the community are integrally involved in the production, management, and governance of the station (AMARC, 2023). According to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the core mission of community radio is to amplify local voices, preserve and promote indigenous culture, and facilitate grassroots democratic engagement (AMARC, 2023).

This participatory broadcasting model not only decentralises media control but also fosters community empowerment by enabling local populations to shape and disseminate their own narratives. Through this inclusive approach, community radio ensures more diverse and representative media content, ultimately strengthening community identity and democratic participation.

From the foregoing, campus radio is classified as a distinct form of community radio. Despite its operation within academic institutions, campus radio transcends the boundaries of campus life to serve the broader local community. In fulfilling their mandate, campus radio stations consistently prioritise local concerns, actively promote indigenous culture, and serve as vital forums for engaging with genuine community issues. This role is most effectively realised through the meaningful participation of community members in critical aspects such as decision-making, managerial responsibilities, and programme production (Foxwell et al., 2020).

Scholars (Fauteux, 2015; Moylan, 2022; Nanadakumar & Sridharraj, 2014), have categorised campus radio station under community radio station because of its unique role of creating opportunities for discussion of issues affecting people within a community. For instance, Fauteux's construct of campus radio presents some vital features of community broadcasting as providing "alternative, community, local, and independent" exceptional services unlike public or commercial media (Fauteux, 2015, p.7). Despite the prospects and enormous contributions of campus radio station to community empowerment and development, it seems scholars have not given this category the necessary attention as compared to that of public and commercial radio stations.

On the international stage, leading media and development institutions such as the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) have consistently underscored the critical role of community broadcasting in promoting social development, cohesion, and collective identity. Rather than fostering division or fragmentation, community radio serves as a catalyst for unifying communities around shared goals and values. As Opubor (2000, p.12) notes, the existence of a communicative platform through which individuals may “share initiatives, information, and meanings in the process of defining, developing, and preserving a collective identity and interests for survival within a certain geographical and/or cultural area” is essential to the very creation and sustenance of community itself.

In this regard, community radio has been widely recognised as a foundational mechanism for building robust community communication systems ones grounded in self-definition, participatory governance, and cultural preservation. The model promotes empowerment by facilitating access to communication, encouraging inclusive engagement in public discourse, and enabling community members to participate actively in decision-making and content creation. However, Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) caution that the success of such stations hinges not only on access to the medium but also on the internal coherence of the community and its capacity for problem-solving through deliberation, dialogue, and democratic participation. Consequently, the establishment of a community radio station represents both a structural and symbolic foundation that can determine its long-term viability.

Nonetheless, the concept of "community" within community radio is often fraught with ambiguity and contradiction, owing to its inherently multifaceted nature. As Delanty

(2003) highlights that the term may encompass a broad spectrum of contexts, from geographically defined populations to more abstract or fluid constructs such as subcultures, diasporic identities, virtual communities, or even national and transnational affiliations. This complexity presents both opportunities and challenges for the conceptualisation and operationalisation of community radio in diverse sociocultural settings.

1.1.1 Community and Campus Radio

Community radio operates as a bi-directional communication model wherein members of the community actively participate in and exert influence over content production and organisational structures. It is typically characterised by the use of local languages and is owned and managed by the community itself (Amadu & Alhassan, 2017). Community radio which is characterised by its participatory nature, serves as both a communication mechanism and a development platform, with its functions and priorities being democratically defined by the community it serves (Gumucio Dagron, 2001; Manyozo, 2018; Jallo 2007). Community radio serves as a vital platform through which local populations can hold governments accountable, advocate their rights, and catalyse social transformation (da Costa, 2012). As noted by Shukla, Wolfe, Mostafa, and Norman (2017), community radio serves as a credible and accessible alternative to mainstream media, offering a platform that actively facilitates community participation. It functions not only as a conduit for grassroots engagement but also as a medium for preserving and sustaining local languages and cultural expressions in everyday life. Furthermore, it plays a critical role in advancing values such as equitable access to education, economic and social justice, and in resisting systemic violence based on class, gender, race, or caste, while promoting transparency and accountability in governance. Berrigan (1979, as cited in Carpentier, 2011) underscores this participatory ethos by emphasising the

community's integral role as planners, producers, performers, and participants in community media, highlighting its function as a vehicle for community self-expression.

The strength of community radio lies in its unique capacity to provide a voice for all, particularly for the marginalised and economically disadvantaged, those who are often excluded from mainstream platforms of expression (Jallov, 2007). In contrast to commercial media, which primarily caters to broad audiences with profit-driven objectives, community media is fundamentally oriented toward serving those whose voices are otherwise unheard, without seeking financial gain from such service. The community radio (CR) model, as it is hereafter referred to, exists outside the confines of both state and corporate ownership or management. It offers a distinct alternative to conventional media by enhancing both individual empowerment and collective agency. As Cheney (1982) articulates, these stations function through a "two-way street" model of communication, where the interaction between sender and receiver is characterised more by mutual sharing than unidirectional transmission. A defining feature of community radio stations is their non-commercial nature and their emphasis on fostering active local participation in content creation and programming. Community radio has successfully navigated the technological limitations traditionally associated with the medium by establishing alternative feedback mechanisms such as local ownership structures, community surveys, and other participatory strategies aimed at fostering active community involvement. Although community radio may not always facilitate immediate two-way communication during broadcasts, it has nonetheless engaged its audience meaningfully through mechanisms such as listening clubs, participatory surveys, and direct listener feedback, all of which have informed and shaped programming content (Jallov, 2007). As a result, community radio has emerged as a vital instrument for development and social transformation. It provides communities with an

accessible platform to articulate concerns, share local news, and address challenges that directly impact their daily lives (Mtimde, 2000; Myers, 2011; Odine, 2013).

Community media is fundamentally intended to serve as a “voice for the voiceless,” fostering the inclusion of diverse perspectives and encouraging critical reflection among community members as a means of identifying and addressing local challenges (Amadu & Alhassan, 2017). For community radio to fulfill this mandate effectively, it must facilitate the meaningful participation of all stakeholders in every facet of its operation, including ownership, decision-making processes, content production, and distribution. Such a dialogic communication empowers stakeholders to contribute to change through raising community-based ideas to deal with community’s developmental issues. White and Chiliswa (2012) argued that staff of community radio should understand how the station works to achieve development goals. Staff should be capable of moderating discussion to elicit valuable ideas from stakeholders and ensure the voiceless are heard in the process. Amadu and Alhassan (2017) argue for the critical need to strengthen the capacity of community radio personnel by equipping them with the necessary skills to facilitate inclusive dialogue and meaningful debate on issues of significance to the broader community.

Despite offering a diverse range of programming, campus radio stations primarily concentrate on local concerns, addressing community-specific issues, news, information, music, arts, culture, politics, and other matters of local relevance (Osunkunle & Oludolapo, 2010). Regardless of the financial resources secured through government support, audience contributions, donations, advertising, or other channels, campus radio stations remain heavily reliant on the voluntary efforts and expertise of local community members and students who are deeply committed to the mission of their local or campus station. This dedication is reflected in the substantial number of

volunteer hours invested, hours that constitute the backbone of community media's global development and long-term sustainability (Fourie, 2001).

In Ghana, several prominent campus radio stations contribute significantly to the academic and socio-cultural discourse within their respective institutions. These include Radio Universe of the University of Ghana, Focus FM of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Radio Windy Bay of the University of Education, Winneba, Eagle FM of the Cape Coast Technical University, and ATL FM of the University of Cape Coast, which serves as the central focus of this study. Also, the researcher finds it quite interesting that the station keeps being nominated for international and local awards for its commitment to development and quality programming.

1.1.2 Development Communication

Manyozo (2008) identifies several terminologies used to describe radio broadcasting within the broader field of development communication. These include broadcasting for development, development radio broadcasting, radio for development, and development radio, terms that collectively denote the strategic use of radio technologies and programming to support planned development interventions, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the Global South. Within this context, Development Radio Broadcasting (DRB) is conceptualised as a theory-informed and methodologically grounded approach to leveraging radio as a developmental tool. It aims to strengthen local governance structures, reduce illiteracy and poverty, and promote socio-economic advancement (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1994; Eltzroth & Kenny, 2003; Manyozo, 2005).

According to Manyozo (2005), radio for development functions as a form of behaviour change communication, designed to disseminate scientific and technical knowledge to

largely illiterate and economically marginalised populations. This is achieved through content that is culturally relevant, educational, and contextually adapted. Historically, various types of broadcasters, commercial, public, state-owned, and rural-based, played key roles in advancing development communication agendas. These broadcasters often promoted Western-oriented models of socio-political and economic development across regions such as Latin America, Asia, and Africa. In early African contexts, rural radio initiatives were predominantly centralised, adhering to top-down models of communication aligned with the modernisation paradigm. Over time, however, these systems evolved towards more participatory frameworks that actively involved rural populations in the design and dissemination of development content (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1994; Manyozo, 2008).

By the 1970s, rural educational broadcasting had emerged as a prominent strategy for promoting agricultural practices and delivering targeted development messages to remote farming communities and other isolated rural audiences (Librero, 1985; Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1994; Manyozo, 2008). This shift reflected a growing recognition of the importance of engaging communities not merely as passive recipients but as active participants in the communication process.

In this context, Bessette (2004) defines *participatory communication* as a planned process that strategically integrates both media and interpersonal communication to facilitate inclusive development. Meshack (2004) adds that promoting community participation in development projects emerged as a solution to the inefficiencies of public sector delivery in rural and underserved areas. Participation is seen as a mechanism to mobilise local resources, enhance the sustainability of development outcomes, and bridge the disconnect between governments and local populations

(Meshack, 2004). Supporting this view, Waisbord (2000) argues that when communities and beneficiaries are actively involved in the communicative dimensions of development, they are better able to articulate context-specific knowledge, values, and worldviews that reflect their unique socio-cultural realities. Such participatory approaches ensure that development discourse remains relevant, grounded, and inclusive.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The literature has explicitly pointed out that community radio serves as transformative tool for local and rural development, particularly in addressing issues such as poverty, illiteracy, health, infrastructure deficits, and poor civic engagement. It draws from the Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Theory, which emphasise that community radio is not merely a communication tool but a participatory development mechanism (Bosch, 2014; Fombard & Jiyane, 2019). The context is grounded in the underperformance of community radio, especially in Ghana where developmental potential is high but remains untapped due to poor infrastructure, limited community engagement, and weak media integration.

Globally, scholars acknowledge the role of community radio in promoting grassroots development, civic participation, and the democratisation of information, particularly among marginalised populations (Bosch, 2014; Servaes, 1996). Despite this recognition, the extent to which community radio consistently fulfills this developmental mandate varies across contexts, raising concerns about the practical translation of its participatory ideals into sustained community impact.

Within the context of campus media, studies indicate that while campus radio stations are historically committed to inclusivity and community-oriented programming, they

often face institutional and financial constraints that limit their developmental effectiveness (Fauteux, 2015). Scholars further observe that many community and campus broadcasters increasingly deviate from their traditional development-oriented mandate by prioritising entertainment and commercial content, thereby weakening their role as agents of community development (Mpehongwa, 2024).

In Africa, studies further strengthen the global narrative that community radio is widely recognised as an agent of development, but is bedeviled with lack of funding, policy support and capacity to address local needs. Myers (2019) examined the disconnect between community radio and effective grassroots communication in Southern Africa. The findings highlight the need to empower community radio stations to promote best practices in agriculture and create health awareness through educational outreach, thereby enhancing the quality of life for rural inhabitants. Sabran and Karim (2018) examined the dual role of campus radio stations within African educational institutions, noting that these media platforms are originally conceptualised to serve both academic communities and the wider public. The intention behind their establishment often includes providing a voice for students, faculty and staff while simultaneously engaging with surrounding communities on matters of public interest, including education, health, culture, and local governance. Similarly, Kenyan community broadcasters have been criticised for relegating social issues to fringe time slots as they increasingly emulate commercial radio formats (Fairbairn & Siemering 2006).

In the context of these arguments, campus radio stations are uniquely positioned to act as bridges between academia and local communities, facilitating knowledge transfer, civic education, and participatory communication that could foster local development. However, Sabran and Karim (2018) also provide a recurring challenge many campus

radio stations experience compelling them to progressively drift toward commercial models of operation. This occurs due to a variety of institutional pressures, including inadequate funding from parent universities, the absence of sustainable operational frameworks, and the pursuit of financial self-reliance. As a result, instead of prioritising community-centered programming, many campus stations shift their focus to entertainment and commercially driven content, which alienates the very communities they are meant to serve.

A study by Serwornoo (2016) point out that while Ghana boasts a growing number of licensed community radio stations, many of these outlets are either heavily urban-centered, underfunded, or increasingly shaped by commercial interests. As a result, their ability to function as platforms for genuine community dialogue and development-oriented programming has been significantly compromised. Instead of empowering marginalised communities and amplifying local voices, these stations often prioritise entertainment and advertising, thereby sidelining pressing socio-economic issues.

In the case of Cape Coast, this under-utilisation is especially paradoxical. As observed by Adu-Gyamfi, Adjei, Nyaaba, and Anderson (2022) and the Ghana Statistical Service (2021), the city is endowed with rich cultural heritage, historical significance, and substantial tourism potential, but it continues to face persistent developmental challenges including high poverty incidence (14.3%), inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to basic services. This situation reflects a troubling contradiction: a city with immense symbolic and economic potential remains stifled by structural developmental constraints. Thus, community radio stations like ATL FM, could play a role in addressing this paradox by serving as a bridge between academic knowledge and grassroots concerns, and amplifying local development discourse.

However, studies have indicated that this potential is largely untapped. According to Segbenya et al. (2020), community participation through local media in Ghana remains minimal. Segbenya et. al. reechoed weak institutional support, limited funding, lack of policy enforcement, and insufficient community ownership. This lack of inclusive engagement is especially critical in a city like Cape Coast, where development should be community-driven, participatory, and inclusive. For a campus radio station like ATL FM, this calls into question the extent to which its operations translate into a commitment to community service or whether it has, like many others, shifted towards institutional and commercial priorities at the expense of public service broadcasting.

Moreover, studies conducted outside Ghana provide useful comparative insights into challenges confronting community and campus radio. For instance, Jumani's (2009) study in Pakistan and Gondwe and Mavindidze's (2014) research in South Africa reveal the absence of coherent communication strategies that support structured, sustained, and interactive dialogue between media institutions, local authorities, and community members. Although these studies were not conducted in Ghana, their findings resonate with concerns raised in Ghanaian media scholarship regarding weak participatory frameworks and limited institutionalised feedback mechanisms in community broadcasting. In the context of ATL FM, these insights draw attention to the need to critically examine the station's programming philosophy, its avenues for community feedback, and its effectiveness in facilitating collaborative development processes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. This study therefore responds to the limited Ghana-specific empirical evidence by examining how these broader challenges manifest within a campus radio setting.

Existing literature has extensively examined the contribution of community radio to local development, particularly within rural and marginalised contexts where access to mainstream media is limited (Bosch, 2014; Servaes, 1996). However, comparatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to campus radio stations as a distinct form of participatory media, especially regarding their developmental engagement with surrounding non-university communities. While Fauteux (2015) has examined campus radio largely within the context of student participation, educational broadcasting, and institutional communication, there remains limited empirical evidence within the Ghanaian and broader Sub-Saharan African context on how campus-based radio stations interact with, involve, and empower local communities within their broadcast coverage areas.

Against this background, the present study undertakes a critical examination of ATL FM, a campus radio station at the University of Cape Coast, with specific attention to its developmental role within the Cape Coast Metropolis. Unlike conventional community radio stations that are often established primarily to serve rural or underserved populations, ATL FM operates within a university environment while simultaneously reaching surrounding urban communities. This dual orientation raises important questions about the extent of community participation in its programming processes, the relevance of its content to local development needs, and how community members perceive its role and impact. Accordingly, the study investigates the nature of community participation in ATL FM's programming, examines how the station addresses the development needs of Cape Coast through its programmes, and explores community members' perspectives on ATL FM's programming and developmental relevance.

1.3 Research Objectives of the

This study aims to investigate the usefulness of ATL FM, a campus-based radio station operating at the University of Cape Coast to local communities within its scope of operation. Based on the problem, the study sought to:

1. Investigate the nature of participation of Cape Coast community members in the programmes of ATL FM.
2. Examine how ATL FM addresses the development needs of Cape Coast through its programming content.
3. Explore the perspectives of Cape Coast community members' on ATL FM's programming content.

1.4 Research Questions

To effectively achieve the objectives of this study, the research will be guided by the following specific questions:

1. What is the nature of participation of Cape Coast community members in the programmes of ATL FM?
2. How does ATL FM's programming content address the development needs of communities within the Cape Coast Metropolis?
3. What are the perspectives of Cape Coast community members on ATL FM's programming content?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Higher education institutions play a vital role in the development of a society while campus radio stations are also expected to complement this role through publicising the activities that revolves around the mandate of these institutions. According to Ibrahim and Mishra (2016), the establishment of a college radio station is only reasonable if it meets the needs of its target audience. This study will, therefore, contribute to the

repertoire of knowledge in the area of campus radio stations and how it has affected its major stakeholders, thus the academic and local communities within its scope of operation. This study would also create avenue for students and other researchers to interrogate the findings, conclusions and recommendations for further studies.

In addition, with the expansion in the numbers of campus radio stations, this study would offer alternative means of improving their services to meet its divergent stakeholders. This study would serve as a reference document for other universities that intend to operate campus radio stations. In terms of policy, the study would provide indicators which the National Communications Authority and the National Media Commission could adopt to improve the standards of campus radio station operation to have a positive impact on all its category of stakeholders. Finally, stakeholders would benefit substantially from the operations of campus radio stations that would have a positive impact on their lives.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This study unlike previous ones on campus radio stations focuses on how local communities which also constitute part of stakeholders are affected by the operations of campus-based stations with the spotlight on ATL FM at the University of Cape Coast. It aims at establishing whether the local communities of ATL FM are affected in the positive or negative way and how the operations of the station could be tailored to meet their respective needs. For the purposes of this study, stakeholders are the university community and the immediate communities that fall within the stations' coverage or reach. Like most of the studies on campus radio stations, this study adopted the qualitative approach in investigating and did not generalise its findings. The study will draw data from primary sources.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters. Chapter One presents an overview of the background to the research, establishing the foundational context upon which the study is built. It further outlines the statement of the problem, the research objectives, and the purpose of the study. In addition, the chapter delineates the research questions and hypotheses that guide the inquiry. It concludes with a discussion of the significance of the study and its delimitations.

Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature. It discusses comprehensively, conceptual review basically on the concept of community radio, studies on community radio in Ghana and finally. Empirical studies and theoretical frameworks for the study will also be reviewed.

Chapter three talks about the methodology highlighting the research design that was utilised to execute the research. It also looked at sampling procedures, instrument for data collection, and the tools for analysis of data. Chapter four reports on the results stemming from the analysis of the data obtained from the field work. This will be complemented by discussion of the results referring to studies that support the findings of the current study. Chapter five focuses on the summary of the study, key findings, conclusions, recommendations, and implication for counselling. It ends with suggested areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents scholarly perspectives on key concepts related to the study as well as review of literature related to the current study. The review covers general studies on community radio, studies on community radio campus radio in Ghana and finally studies on ATL FM in particular. This is presented in themes based on the objectives of the study. The chapter adds a discussion of the theoretical framework that will guide the study, that is uses and gratification and participatory communication model.

2.1 History of ATL FM

The operation of ATL FM as a campus radio at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), predates the liberalisation of the airwaves in Ghana. The origins of ATL FM trace back to 1989 as a pioneering student-led initiative operating from Room 600 in Atlantic Hall at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). Initially conceived to serve the university community through educational and entertainment programming, the station represented an early experiment in campus broadcasting in Ghana (Serwornoo, 2016). This grassroots beginning reflects a broader global pattern of campus media emerging from student activism and institutional experimentation (Fauteux, 2015). The station's early years were characterised by limited technical capacity and informal operations, typical of many fledgling campus radio projects in the Global South during this period (Rennie, 2006).

An important milestone in the institutional transition occurred in 1993 when Atlantic Hall management assumed oversight of ATL FM's operations. Under the leadership of then-Hall Master Professor Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang and the Hall President, the

station secured critical support from alumnus Mr. Totobi Quakyi, then serving as Ghana's Minister of Information. This high-level intervention resulted in the donation of professional broadcasting equipment, including a 15-watt FM transmitter with a 32kilometer coverage radius (Serwornoo, 2016). The formal inauguration on October 10, 1993, marked ATL FM's transition from a student project to an institutional broadcasting service, operating under provisional authorisation until receiving its full license in 1997. This developmental trajectory illustrates the common challenges of campus radio stations in navigating between student initiative and institutional control (Serwornoo, 2016), while also demonstrating how strategic alumni networks can facilitate media development in African higher education contexts (Bosch, 2014). The upgrade in equipment significantly expanded ATL FM's potential audience beyond the university campus to include much of the Cape Coast metropolis, setting the stage for its eventual dual role in serving both academic and community development purposes.

From a humble beginning, ATL FM has waded its way to become one of the notable community radio stations not only in the Central region particular but the nation in general. As has been the characteristics of campus radio stations, ATL FM has enjoyed the support of students, the University community, individuals and organisations in and outside the UCC. ATL FM now operates under Campus Broadcasting Services Centre (CBS) operates from its own building through the contribution of students with the support of the Central Administration of the University. The station has also widened its scope by bringing on board TVUCC which is currently a social media television channel on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. In addition, the station operates ATLFMONLINE which provides up to the minute local and international news, podcasts, video on demand, announcements among others. Together, all these channels operate under the ambition of Campus Broadcasting Services Centre.

ATL FM is currently regarded as one of the most prominent radio stations not only within Ghana's Central Region but also across the national media landscape. It competes effectively among 28 stations in the Central Region and 56 in the Western Region, distinguishing itself within a densely saturated broadcasting environment. In 2016, ATL FM achieved two notable milestones that underscored its rising prominence. The station was honoured with the World Quality Commitment (WQC) Award in the Gold Category by Business Initiative Directions (BID), an international organisation that promotes excellence in total quality management. The award was presented at the WQC Convention in Paris (University of Cape Coast Press Release, 2016). Second, ATL FM's morning show host, Ama Bawa, was awarded Best Radio Personality (Central Region) at the 2016 edition of the Radio and Television Personality (RTP) Awards, further consolidating the station's influence and credibility (Prime News Ghana, 2016). These achievements are particularly significant given that no other radio station in the Central Region had, at the time, received such prestigious international and regional recognition.

Reinforcing its status, ATL FM was identified as the top-rated radio station in both the Cape Coast Metropolis and the broader Central Region in a study conducted by Segbenya, Antwi-Konadu, Peniana, and Adu-Poku (2020). Their findings highlighted the station's dominant reach and listenership within its geographic catchment area.

However, critical reflections on ATL FM's operational structure have also emerged in scholarly discourse. Serwornoo (2016) investigated the implications of broadcasting policy on the sustainability of community radio in Ghana, with ATL FM serving as a case study. The research specifically examined how National Communications

Authority's (NCA) policy frameworks influenced the station's funding models, programming content, and audience reach. Using a mixed-method approach comprising semi-structured interviews, direct observation, document analysis, and survey data, Serwornoo (2016) revealed that ATL FM experiences low audience participation in both programme design and content development. Additionally, the study found that out of the station's total weekly airtime of 168 hours, only 9 hours and 30 minutes were allocated to development-oriented programming. This suggests a disproportionate focus on non-developmental content, raising concerns about the station's alignment with the core objectives typically associated with community radio broadcasting.

Aside from the programming, Serwornoo (2016) also found that the NCA has limited ATL FM to broadcast within five kilometers radius and the station is not expected to generate advertising revenue beyond their operational expenses. Based on these relevant findings, Serwornoo (2016) made recommended that ATL FM should focus on developmental programmes that will benefit their major stakeholders such as students and lecturers. Also, the author called for open discussion between NCA and campus stations to ensure the regulations are not serving as hindrance to the success of campus radio stations. The findings of Serwornoo (2016) further recommended that the radio station needs to take into consideration the interests of stakeholders by providing them with content that would meet their needs. Even though the call has been for reconsideration of this phenomenon in the station for almost a decade, today, there has not been any empirical investigation to ascertain how ATL has heeded to this call for return to fundamentals of community radio stations: community ownership, control and participation.

Moreover, Serwornoo (2016) studied the challenges faced by the community radio stations in Ghana. The author investigated through interview with key stakeholders of the station and found that the station is pressured to engage in commercial advertising as a way to sustain their cost of production and distribution. In fact, Serwornoo (2016) found challenges in terms of professionalism of the staff as well as pressure from national stations for hosting their content. In this study, Serwornoo (2016) found that these challenges affected the sustainability of the stations as community owned entity. The influence of national stations on the content and production is gradually affecting the attention given to local stations. The challenges posed to ATL FM reveal that the profit interest of the station is stripping the station of its original intent of contributing to raising student presenters and contributing to make learning and education of students and lecturers through playing the information role of the station.

The work of Serwornoo (2016) has demonstrated the loss of grip of the community nature of the ATL FM stations. The rise of commercial interest has neglected the extent to which major stakeholders such as students and lecturers are reaping from the station. There is a growing low participation of students and lecturers in the production and distribution of the station because of the high dependence on professionals and low dependence on the students as workers (Serwornoo, 2016). The findings of Serwornoo (2016) have revealed that there is a growing need to investigate whether stakeholders of the station are feeling the impact of the station. The current study goes beyond assuming the presence or absence of impact to inquiring if such impact is experienced by the stakeholders.

In a study by Nartey (2013), the author investigated the role of two campus-based radio stations, that is ATL FM and Eagle FM, in educational broadcasting to students. Nartey

(2013) selected 200 student respondents to elicit their views on the impact of the programmes on their education. Using questionnaire, the author found that over 80% of the students found the programming of both stations to be less contributing to their knowledge of the programmes of study. In terms of participation, Nartey (2013) found the stations allow their audience to participate through phone ins, Facebook and WhatsApp but there is nothing beyond participation through the media. Moreover, Nartey (2013) found the stations to be operating as hybrid community radio stations because they are not fully owned and managed by the major stakeholders of their ‘campus community.’ The author found that financial constraints is major challenge facing the stations as community media.

It is no wonder Nartey (2013) called for a redefinition of the campus radio station through changes in the ownership, production and distribution dynamics of the radio stations. It has been almost a decade now since this call was made, however, the impact of campus radio stations on stakeholders is still not felt as expected (Serwornoo, 2016). As easy as it could be to state that there is little impact, the best is to explore the benefits through empirical research, hence the need for this study as a follow on Nartey’s call for redefinition of campus community station and to ascertain its impact on stakeholders.

2.2 Concept of Community Radio

Community radio broadcasting has been interpreted and implemented in diverse ways across different global contexts. Chiumbu (2014) argues that the concept of community radio is marked by definitional elasticity, reflecting how the meaning of “community” and the structures of community radio vary across social, cultural, and technological contexts. He observes that competing and evolving interpretations of what constitutes community radio continue to emerge, suggesting that the model remains dynamic and

contextually shaped. These ongoing conceptual contestations reveal the flexible and adaptive nature of community radio as an alternative media platform, one that is continually being redefined considering social, political, and technological shifts.

This evolving understanding is further underscored by Olorunnisola (2002), who notes that community radio has historically emerged in response to repressive socio-political environments, particularly among marginalised and minority groups in regions such as Europe, Australia, and North America. In these contexts, community radio has served as a counter-hegemonic tool, enabling disenfranchised populations to reclaim space within the public sphere, articulate their own narratives, and challenge dominant media discourses.

Communities that have experienced marginalisation, whether political, economic, or cultural, have frequently turned to community radio as a vehicle for asserting their fundamental human rights (ibid.). This perspective underscores how disenfranchised populations have appropriated the community radio model to give voice to their lived realities. In doing so, community radio emerges as a medium of liberation—one that enables oppressed communities to articulate their narratives and resist systemic silencing. This aligns with Freire's (1970) seminal assertion that the oppressed must be both the subject and agent of their own emancipation. When communities take ownership of and actively sustain their community radio initiatives, the medium is more effectively positioned to reflect and communicate the nuanced struggles and identities of those it represents. It becomes not only a communicative tool but a mirror of their social existence and cultural resistance.

Emphasising the importance of grounding community media in real-world contexts, scholars argue that community radio, and community media more broadly, should not

be understood in abstract or universal terms. Rather, their significance and function are intimately tied to the specific social, cultural, and economic conditions of the communities they serve (Howley, 2010). The operations, programming choices, and participatory practices of community media are shaped by local ethical values, communal priorities, and the lived experiences of members of the community. This perspective suggests that any attempt to define the role of community radio without reference to its unique context risks overlooking the practical and symbolic functions it fulfills for its constituents.

This perspective is reinforced by the recognition that numerous variations of community media exist globally, reflecting distinct sociopolitical and cultural contexts (Howley, 2005). Despite the diversity of models, a growing body of scholarly literature points to a consensus regarding the core characteristics that define a community radio station. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2001) emphasise that community radio is intrinsically oriented toward addressing the immediate and specific needs of a clearly defined community. This is achieved by employing local languages, cultural frameworks, and the lived experiences of the community as foundational elements in programming.

In this sense, community radio is expected to play a vital role in advancing the social, cultural, and economic development of its audience by remaining responsive to local concerns (Olorunnisola, 2002). A central feature of the community radio model is its prioritisation of both access and local relevance. As Siemering (2007) asserts, such platforms must not only be physically available to community members but must also be socially inclusive, thereby promoting representational legitimacy and participatory engagement within the broader media environment.

Moreover, scholars have stressed that the mandate of community radio extends beyond broadcasting alone to include fostering community development, nurturing local identities, enabling civic participation, and promoting political and social empowerment (Opubor, 2000). Central to these discussions is the recurring emphasis on development, often framed as socioeconomic advancement facilitated through localised media engagement.

However, a critical concern arises regarding the underlying assumptions embedded within certain narratives of community radio. Specifically, some interpretations appear to endorse a vision of development rooted in modernisation theory, which implicitly aligns with the paternalistic frameworks of the Global North. This raises important ethical and epistemological questions, particularly in contexts where development is externally defined rather than organically articulated by the communities themselves (Freire, 1970). Freire's critique underscores the necessity of redefining development as a dialogical and participatory process rather than a prescriptive trajectory imposed from outside.

These underlying assumptions raise critical questions that warrant deeper interrogation. First, what is the ultimate objective of the development paradigms that target marginalised or rural communities? Second, to what extent do these assumptions perpetuate a colonial logic, one that frames development as the transformation of non-Western societies into replicas of Western or industrialised nations? These inquiries compel a re-examination of the normative foundations of development communication and call for a more nuanced understanding of how community media, particularly community radio, can avoid replicating hegemonic modernisation frameworks while genuinely empowering local voices and preserving cultural autonomy.

Bosch (2014) observes that community radio is often examined through the lens of traditional theoretical frameworks that position alternative media within broader communication-oriented debates, particularly those related to development paradigms such as modernisation and dependency theory. The modernisation paradigm, which dominated development discourse from the 1940s through the 1960s and continues to inform certain practices today, is premised on the notion that underdevelopment stems from a lack of Western knowledge. Within this framework, development interventions are designed to disseminate information aimed at altering people's behaviours and lifestyles in alignment with Western standards.

In contrast, an examination of community radio in developed nations reveals strong governmental commitment and well-articulated legal and regulatory frameworks that safeguard and promote the sector. In European contexts, community radio development is most vibrant in countries with formal legal recognition and regulatory frameworks that enable community participation and sustainability (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). Such nations, exemplified by Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, demonstrate clear public policy commitments to nurturing the sector. These policies include funding mechanisms and institutional support that ensure sustainability and growth. According to Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008), community radio in these countries typically operates under a mixed funding model, combining resources from public and private grants, service delivery contracts, advertising revenue, and sponsorship arrangements.

The issue of funding emerges as a pivotal conceptual marker in both the definition and sustainability of community radio. It significantly influences the operational viability of community stations and serves as a barometer of the extent to which governments and civil society actors recognise and support community media as tools for democratic

communication and inclusive development. This is particularly relevant given the common assumption that media funders often expect some form of private or commercial return from their investment. In the case of community radio, however, such benefits whether in the form of advertising privileges or airtime for specific content may not necessarily align with or extend to the broader public interest of the communities served.

Community radio is widely recognised as a non-profit, community-driven broadcasting model that contributes significantly to media pluralism and social inclusion. In the European context, for instance, community radio is generally positioned as a medium free from commercial imperatives, even though limited advertising may be allowed under specific regulatory frameworks (O'Brien & Gaynor, 2012). Its primary mission lies in reflecting the diverse identities of local communities, promoting equitable access to media expression, and fostering participatory communication. As such, financial sustainability in community radio must be balanced carefully against the need to maintain independence, editorial integrity, and genuine community representation.

In the European context, robust legal and policy frameworks underpin the vibrancy of the sector. Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008), note that countries such as Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have established clear public policy commitments to community radio, often anchored in mixed funding models. These models include public and private grants, service delivery contracts, sponsorships, and advertising, ensuring financial sustainability while preserving community ownership and content integrity.

In Asia, community radio has taken on a more activist and oppositional role, especially in regions governed by autocratic regimes. Pavarala and Malik (2007) argue that while in the West, community radio is often seen as an instrument of self-expression for those excluded from mainstream media, in many Asian contexts, it operates as a tool of grassroots resistance. They emphasise principles such as community access, participatory content production, transparent governance, and self-reliance, arguing that these radios are built by and for the communities they serve. Notably, members of the public often serve as producers, journalists, and station managers roles that solidify the participatory ethos of the medium. However, challenges persist, particularly in terms of regulatory support and long-term financial viability.

In the Australian context, the community radio sector is underpinned by explicit legal and regulatory frameworks such as the Broadcasting Services Act 1992, which defines community broadcasting as a distinct tier of radio broadcasting with specific public interest objectives and licensing conditions separate from commercial services (Australian Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, 2025). This legislation mandates that community broadcasting services operate on a non-profit basis, serve specific communities of interest, comply with community broadcasting codes of practice, and facilitate participation in both programme creation and organisational decision-making. The Act also restricts commercial influence by prohibiting advertising, allowing only limited sponsorship announcements.

In North America, the community radio landscape is more heterogeneous. Fairchild (2001) describes it as having “multiple roots, varied paths of development, and multitudes of contemporary forms.” In the United States, community radio originated

with the establishment of Pacifica Radio in 1949, while in Canada, it evolved through increased access to low-power radio transmitters, particularly among Indigenous communities. Despite the lack of a singular definition, Fairchild identifies commonalities such as community control, access to production facilities, and participation in programming as defining features.

The South American experience offers a distinct historical trajectory. In the Latin American context, early community radio practices can be traced back to pioneering initiatives such as Radio Sutatenza in Colombia in 1947 one of the first rural and educational broadcasting projects and the emergence of miners' radio stations in Bolivia in the early 1950s, which functioned as tools of grassroots communication and worker solidarity (King, 2017). In Bolivia, legislation defines community radio as platforms managed and operated by peasant or Indigenous communities. Martin and Matos (2013) describe these stations as instruments of decentralised, plural communication systems that reflect and serve specific constituencies.

On the African continent, the practice and understanding of community radio are diverse but growing. The first experimental community radio station in Africa was established in western Kenya at Homa Bay in 1982, a pioneering initiative supported by UNESCO and the Kenyan government that catalysed later growth in community broadcasting across the continent (AMARC Africa & Panos Southern Africa, 2001). One of its major strengths is its adaptability to Africa's linguistic diversity and cultural complexity, enabling broadcasters to engage listeners across multiple indigenous languages and cultural contexts (Downing, 2001). The African division of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC, 2023) acknowledges this diversity, noting that while community radio practices vary widely across the continent, shared challenges

and common objectives create opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange. In South Africa, the development of a robust community radio sector is closely linked to the anti-apartheid movement, where radio served as a medium of resistance and empowerment (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001)

Across all these regions, a recurring theme in the literature is the association of community radio with *development*. However, this concept must be critically examined. While community radio is often celebrated for its role in promoting socio-economic development, it is essential to challenge the implicit assumptions of modernisation theory embedded in some discourses. As Freire (1970) cautions, development framed through a Western lens often presumes that communities must conform to externally defined standards of progress. Such assumptions risk reproducing dependency and undermining indigenous knowledge systems. Therefore, it is crucial to understand and evaluate community radio not as a universal model, but as a flexible medium shaped by, and accountable to, the unique cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts in which it operates (Berger, 1996).

Lush and Urgoiti (2012) explored the sustainability of community broadcasting by using Namibian stations as a case study. The authors investigated this by exploring three main sustainability areas that is social sustainability, institutional sustainability and financial sustainability. Based on evidence collected through consultative meetings and discussions with media stakeholders, Lush and Urgoiti (2012) found that community ownership and community participation greatly influence social sustainability of community broadcasting. On the other hand, Lush and Urgoiti (2012) found how the sticking to the not-for-profit strategies of relying on reinvesting generated revenue could lead to financial sustainability. They discovered that local programming as well as

developing the policies, structures and regulations will make community broadcasting stable.

Also, Singh (2010) studied Vivek High 90.4 FM of an Indian campus radio station to ascertain how the participatory communication aspect of community radio is ensured as well as the system of content generation, methods of resource generation and the extent of community participation. Using observation, interview and focus group discussion as data collection instruments, Singh (2010) revealed that campus radio stations are a balance of participative, somewhat participative and authoritarian system. This means that Vivek High 90.4 FM allows some moderate level of participation in terms of content creation rather than decision making and production entirely. Singh (2010) discovered that students consider themselves as listeners rather than producers of the radio station. Finally, Singh (2010) found that the station allows no community contribution for funds rather than the school control and owns revenue mobilisation for the operation of the station.

The findings of Singh (2010) confirm the fact that full participation where citizens are empowered is missing in campus radio stations. Moreover, the author's findings reveal school authority's financial contribution to the sustenance of campus radio station leads to their total control of the decision making and production of the station. It, therefore, stands to reason that "he who pays the piper calls for the tune" is happening in the case of community radio stations on campuses. This is risky in the sense that it reduces community radio on campuses to purveyors of the dominant coalition of the campus ideologies and whims rather than the collective view of the community on situations that affect their lives. Such a situation might not lead to full realisation of the benefits of

campus radio station as a tool for empowerment and development of students. This calls for further investigation into the impact of campus radio station on its stakeholders.

Gagliardone (2016) explored the role of mobile technology through community radio impact on governance. The author drew his theoretical insight from the liberating technology agenda. Using evidence obtained through observation in over two months of immersion in community radio stations; Pamoja radio and Radio Nam Lolwe of Kenya, Gagliardone (2016) discovered that the use of mobile phones to participate in radio programming is largely among a cohort of selected few who are associated with governance indirectly. Also, Gagliardone (2016) found that the issues raised through the community radio stations were not addressed by the government; rather the government depended on ethnicity and other factors to determine how to address the grievances of citizens. The finding of Gagliardone (2016) of the indirect influence of government officials in the participation of citizens in community media is quite insightful in understanding the power of government in determining the narrative. This indirect involvement in the community narrative has great influence on entrenching the hegemonic messages purported by government for the community members. That in essence defeats the purpose of community where individuals are empowered to tell their own story and contribute to their development through participatory communication. The current study will draw from Gagliardone (2016) findings to understand how the bureaucratic nature of the campus radio station affects the participation of the student stakeholders in programming and production.

Mohammed (2013) investigated the challenges posed to community radio stations in Ethiopia. Using secondary data from radio stations, Mohammed (2013) found that the concentration of ownership in the hands of government has reduced the Kenyan media

to a propaganda tool rather than a developmental tool. Moreover, Mohammed (2013) discovered that Ethiopian radio stations were equally engaged in manipulation of the audience rather than empowering the audience to participate in production and distribution of content. Okinyi (2019) discussed the role of community radio stations in Kenya in ensuring the participation of communities in development projects.

Okinyi (2019) ascertained that the 20 community radio stations contributed significantly to building peace in Kenya after the post-election disputes in Kenya in 2007 to 2008. Beyond the peace communication through the community radio stations, Okinyi (2019) also found that the radio stations engaged in providing agricultural information, health education as well as entrepreneurial training for community members thereby empowering to contribute to development in the community. However, Okinyi (2019) called on government to assist in reducing the policy and legislation challenges that hinder the establishment and operation of community radio stations in Kenya.

The recommendation of Okinyi (2019) brings to bear the impact of government regulation in community radio operation even in Ghana. For instance, Serwornoo (2016) found that the regulatory body, National Communication Authority, change in ownership regulation of campus stations as literally reducing the campus radio stations to commercial ventures under high bureaucracy of university administration rather than the ownership and control of students and lecturers. Such a regulation could lessen impact of campus-based stations, except empirical evidence is discovered to back recommendations for change in policy.

Amadu and Alhassan (2017) explored the level of participation and satisfaction of community members at Tamale Gaafii's FM. The authors sampled 150 participants and

elicited information through interviews and questionnaires. Using participatory communication theory, Amadu and Alhassan (2017) discovered that community members were limited to the listening stage of participation in Gaafii's FM production. This meant that programme design stage which involves decision making and the production stage which involves content creation were left to the managers and workers of the station. Amadu and Alhassan (2017) found that the community members only participated in the station's content creation through mobile phone in times. In detail, finding Amadu and Alhassan (2017), it was discovered that 42% of participants could not participate because of lack of mobile phones while others opted out due to lack of interest as well as illiteracy. Also, Amadu and Alhassan (2017) found that the level of satisfaction of participants was below average, and many did not feel the impact of Gaakii FM station on their lives. This implies that community radio stations are not actually living up to their name because production and decision making are left to the select few, thereby, denying the community participation in programming and production. This calls for an investigation on the impact of campus-based stations since literacy and technological devices will not be a challenge in affecting participation at different stages of the campus radio station.

Ibrahim and Mishra (2016) investigated the importance of online college radio as an educational tool for undergraduate students. the authors sampled 150 participants who participated in a survey about the importance and preferred content they want from college radio. Using participatory communication model and uses and gratification theories as guide, Ibrahim and Mishra (2016) found micro-dynamics and localised necessities for online college radio in that they discovered college radio was important in informing students about their student events, news and programmes. Ibrahim and Mishra (2016) revealed that the students preferred content that addresses their

educational and news need. Ibrahim and Mishra (2016) concluded that the massive support for college radio is as result of their expectation of information and education content from the radio. Ibrahim and Mishra (2016) described the role of college radio in providing educational content, and how it can augment the learning process among students through participatory means of learning and information sharing. However, it is not certain if every college radio station is living up to this expectation, hence the need for the present study.

Dominick and Paul (2020) explored the role of citizen participation in community radio programming and its potential to address the needs of local communities. Through the use of qualitative methods including interviews and focus group discussions they examined practices at Simli Radio and PAD Radio. Their findings revealed that both stations had implemented participatory mechanisms such as listening clubs, community fora (held outside of standard broadcast settings), phone-in segments, and panel discussions to actively involve community members in programming decisions and content creation. Importantly, Dominick and Paul (2020) observed that increased participation by community members contributed to both attitudinal change and active engagement in local development initiatives.

These findings suggest that when community radio stations facilitate inclusive participation, the resulting impact on the community is significantly enhanced. Strategies such as listening clubs and panel discussions not only deepen audience engagement but also empower community members to contribute meaningfully to content development and local discourse. Drawing from this, the current study aims to investigate the extent to which a campus-based radio station, specifically ATL FM,

impacts its stakeholders through participatory programming and community engagement.

2.3 Campus Radio as a form of Community Radio

Considering the establishment of university or campus-based community radio stations or student radio, research has pointed out that the idea initially started in the U.S.A in the 1960s (College Radio Manual) and was soon to spread to Canada, Europe and then to Africa. Campus based (community) radio stations have since been established in several universities across South Africa. It must be noted that these student-based radio stations are a form of community radio station serving institutional communities like universities and colleges. Community radio, as articulated in the

Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act of 1993 and the Broadcasting Act of 1999 is broadly defined as a participatory, non-profit, community-owned and controlled medium that is accountable to community structures and responsive to local needs. This foundational view aligns with Librero's (1985) assertion that listeners must be afforded platforms to identify and diagnose their problems, clarify objectives, and make informed decisions. In the context of student or campus radio, this underscores the necessity of a democratic structure that enables participation from all interested community members (Community Radio Manual, 1999). Indeed, as Steinberg (1995),

Teer-Tomaselli (2001), Masilela (1996), and Servaes (1996) all affirm meaningful community involvement is vital in fostering ownership and sustainability in community media.

Understanding the organisational profile of a campus radio station is crucial for examining its operational environment and management dynamics. Different scholars have proposed varied criteria to evaluate this profile. The commitment of campus radio

to its immediate community plays a pivotal role in shaping its function and credibility (Hardyk, Loges & Ball-Rokeach, 2005; Jallof, 2007). This requires a shared vision and a clear understanding among station staff of the broader social and developmental purpose of the station. Furthermore, effective organisational management involves identifying the various stakeholders engaged in the station's operation and ensuring equitable participation in governance and decision-making (Sana, Weston & Cepeda, 2012).

Equity in participation, particularly in the formation and functioning of management committees, is critical. Scholars such as Patil (2010) argue for the inclusion of community representatives in station governance to reinforce ownership and ensure that decision-making is inclusive. Organisational effectiveness can further be evaluated by examining policy literacy, volunteer engagement, and the presence of professional journalism training (Manyozo 2008).

Participation is not only structural but also content-based. According to the National Communications Authority (NCA, 2007), at least 50% of broadcast content in community radio should be generated with the participation of local community members. Research has explored this participatory dimension through various lenses, including volunteerism (Singh, 2010), active engagement in content production and broadcasting (Bamigboye & Osunkunle, 2021), and the media literacy and professional capacity of community contributors (Patil, 2014).

Campus radio stations play an essential role in meeting the informational needs of diverse community segments, regardless of socioeconomic or political backgrounds.

Informational roles include the dissemination of location-specific information (Mannar,

2014) educational broadcasting (Ravindranath & Thomas, 2013), and the promotion of local culture and communication (Alhassan et al., 2011). Additionally, these stations inform public opinion, raise awareness, and support problem-solving within communities (King, 2015).

Beyond information sharing, campus radio also serves significant developmental functions. Ngcezula (2008) highlights the station's role in providing tangible services and products, while Saini (2015) and Ngugi (2015) focus on the transformation of indigenous knowledge into broadcast content. These roles contribute to changes in everyday lives, including the amplification of marginalised voices (Patil, 2014), the empowerment of women (Nirmala, 2015), and the fostering of rural development through local dialect programming (Anyadike et al., 2015). Additional contributions include community mobilisation, social cohesion, training, and economic empowerment (Patil, 2010; Alhassan et al., 2011). These developmental impacts can be used as benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of campus radio stations.

Participatory communication is central to the philosophy of community radio, particularly in the Global South, where it has emerged as a critical tool for amplifying the voices of marginalised populations (Nirmala, 2015). Scholars such as Ambekar (2004) and Kumar (2003) emphasise the medium's capacity to foster civic engagement, diversify knowledge systems, and address health, educational, and cultural needs within rural and underserved communities. Albarran (2013) reinforces this view, noting the efficacy of campus radio in driving community-oriented change.

Despite its transformative potential, the campus radio sector remains underdeveloped in many contexts. Its current state, as indicated by the limited number of operational

stations, does not align with the expectations set out over the past decade. Existing research often focuses narrowly on specific aspects of community radio, rather than adopting a holistic approach. A comprehensive analysis that integrates organisational, participatory, and developmental dimensions is therefore necessary to gain a fuller understanding of the sector's challenges and prospects for growth.

2.3.1 Features of Community Radio

Across the diverse models of community radio globally, several core traits remain consistent. Fundamentally, community radio stations are defined as non-profit entities committed to social inclusion, a key rationale underpinning the argument for a distinct tier of community broadcasting. One of the defining operational characteristics is the reliance on volunteers, who assume various roles including administrative duties, technical operations, content production, and programme presentation.

In terms of ownership and governance, control is typically vested in a representative management board, ensuring that the station remains accountable to its community. Importantly, community members are not merely passive audiences; they are active participants in decision-making processes. This participatory model reinforces the station's embeddedness in the social fabric of its community.

Community radio guidelines further advocate strong, sustained engagement with local audiences, emphasising the importance of programming that reflects the community's voice and discourages standardised, networked content that lacks local relevance. Despite variations in licensing frameworks and regulatory structures across countries, most jurisdictions operate under a single regulatory authority for radio broadcasting. Additionally, there are often formalised processes for the advertisement and issuance of

licenses, which help to institutionalise community radio as a legitimate and recognised sector within the broader media landscape.

Access

The primary objective of community radio is to empower marginalised communities by providing them with access to a broadcasting platform through which they can articulate their concerns, express their interests and needs, and assert control over their cultural narratives and developmental trajectories (Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2001). Through this medium, communities are afforded the opportunity to safeguard their cultures, traditions, and heritage while promoting inclusive and participatory development.

To fulfill this mandate, it is imperative that community members are granted meaningful access, not only to relevant information but also to active roles in the station's daily operations. Such participation enables communities to shape the programming, management, and strategic direction of the station. However, for these participatory processes to be effective, a set of well-defined operational frameworks must be established and consistently maintained.

Moreover, given that community radio is intrinsically embedded in the social fabric of the communities it serves, it is essential that the station be physically located within the community. This physical proximity fosters trust, accessibility, and immediacy of engagement, reinforcing the station's legitimacy as a medium created *by* and *for* the people it aims to represent.

Ownership

One main attribute of community radio station is its community ownership where the people of the community are the owners of the station (Singh, 2010). At the core of this

ownership is the community's interest. Programmes are developed with the community members in mind and even with the broadcast of national news, the spotlight is on the community members. Selection of media personalities for the community radio prioritises locals within than those outside the community. For example, Simli Radio has played a pivotal role in enhancing awareness and disseminating knowledge related to community development challenges across multiple sectors, including culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture, and local governance. This has been particularly impactful among rural populations residing in the Dagbani speaking districts (Alhassan et al., 2011). This localised programming ensures that issues of community interest are given prominence to ensure attitudinal change and empowerment for action. Community based programming and content development are key for successful development activities geared towards effective promotion of development activities in rural areas than commercial radio stations.

Not-for-Profit

Community radio station is not for profit (Serwornoo, 2016). It is owned and operated by the community without focusing on profit as the prime motive. This sometimes informs us why they do not run full commercial advertising since their source of funding is donations from community members and sometimes government support. Serwornoo (2016) found that ATL FM, for instance, has been prohibited by the NCA not to run advertising beyond certain limits. This is so because of the not-for-profit license awarded to community radio stations (NCA, 2007). Because community radio is not a profit-making entity, it is focused on driving the community interest in terms of development, empowerment and involvement of community rather than making profit from its programming and operations. This not-for-profit feature of community radio station protects it from the headache of sacrificing community development on commercial

grounds (Mohammed, 2018). This, however, is the hallmark of commercial radio stations which kill politically laden stories, multinational sensitive stories and personality-based stories for the purposes of attracting more advertising and sponsorship from stakeholders (Alhassan et al., 2011). This does not promote community development activities, rather it hampers it.

Community radio stations on the hand empower the community members' businesses and creation of businesses to provide a stable source of funding for their programming. For instance, Alhassan et al. (2011) found that Simli Radio's activities have significantly contributed to promoting economic activities within its catchment area. The station has served as a platform for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to engage with broader audiences by offering business promotion segments and advertising opportunities at highly affordable rates, thereby enhancing their visibility and market reach. In essence, this is pivotal in community development activities because economic emancipation is the driving force that establishes political emancipation and consequently development activities. It is quite a change of narrative that ATL FM is currently in a dilemma of adopting business model to stand the competition with other media houses (Serwornoo, 2016). This has shifted the operation of the station towards profit oriented programming rather than development-oriented programming as expected from community radio. Serwornoo (2016) found that syndicated content as well as music, entertainment and sports have taken a chunk of the programming time leaving no time or slots for development programmes that impact the students and lecturers at the university.

Community radio stations are challenged with lack of expertise, resources such as advanced technological equipment for news gathering and reporting and lack of support from government (Serwornoo, 2016). These factors are mitigating the developmental

role that community radio stations are playing, thereby, rendering them victims for political and business tycoons' manipulation. To free them from this all-important role, some scholars are proposing government support for community media to acquire advanced equipment for their operation (Mohammed, 2018; Lush & Urgoti, 2012). Others are calling for reconsideration of the legislation and policies that limit the financial sustainability of community radio stations including campus radio stations (Serwornoo, 2016; Lush & Urgoti, 2012). Likewise, professional training seminars can help increase capacity building of community radio stations' workforce. Therefore, it is expedient that government turned its focus to community media, especially radio as a development partner in carrying development activities to rural communities since it encourages participation, community interest and non-profit outreach.

2.4 Participation in Community Radio Stations

Participation stands as a core defining feature of community media, distinguishing it from traditional media paradigms where audiences are treated as passive recipients of messages. Unlike mainstream media, community media intentionally blurs the boundaries between senders and receivers, embraces localised programming, situates itself within specific geographical contexts, and resists the norms of commercialisation and professionalisation that typically characterise corporate media structures. Hamilton (2000) advocates this deliberate non-professionalism, not as a shortcoming, but as a critical component of the participatory and egalitarian ethos of community media. He emphasises non-hierarchical forms of staff composition, interactive modes of communication, and grassroots approaches to content production.

To foster a progressive dialectical space that authentically reflects the "social moments of the unheard," community radio must be grounded in citizen-driven journalism and

non-professional production practices (Hamilton, 2000). These practices intentionally reject the elitist, top-down frameworks of mainstream media, replacing them with more democratic, inclusive alternatives. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through the promotion of volunteerism within station operations. As Girard (2007) argues, an active culture of volunteer engagement empowers community members and grants them access to practical skills, enabling them to generate local content, contribute knowledge and ideas, and ultimately foster a sense of collective development and ownership.

Through localisation of production, the station can receive feedback from the community members to help restructure its programmes. This will largely contribute to community members participation in the production of content and programme. Active engagement with the community demystifies professionalism by establishing community members as both receivers and producers of content (Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2001). Community radio encourages community participation in the management and programming of such media entities (Ibrahim & Mishra, 2016).

Unlike commercial radio stations which are managed and operated by private entities and individuals, community radio stations ensure that the community members are part and parcel of the content development. Also, they are actively involved in the operation of the radio stations, and the creation of programmes that benefit the community. One key factor that facilitates development is the need for participation. Participation ensures that local voices help shape the design and execution of development projects (Amadu & Alhassan, 2017; Singh, 2010). The famous incident of road constructors having a problem with a village in the Northern Region because the constructors wanted to pull down a tree in the middle of the road. The fact that the inhabitants considered the tree

as sacred explains how projects can face adverse opposition from members of a rural community if their participation is not sought using community radio. In fact, through community radio, the problems of a rural community are brought to bear and development activities can be tailored towards meeting the community needs.

Through community participation in community radio, there is always opportunity for literate community members to use the channel as a tool to educate community members in areas such as health, agriculture, livelihood, social life among others (Lush & Urgoiti, 2012). This is normally done in the local dialect of the people. The activities can help promote development without stress since community members were included in the pre-project stage up to the post-project stage. In commercial radio stations, this is not possible because the station exists to make profit. Anything that seems to hamper their profit-making opportunity is threat to commercial radio stations. Since community-based development programmes may not meet the interest of vast audience; commercial radio tends to focus on national rather than community issues.

According to Alhassan et al. (2011), in their case study on Simli Radio, community radio in Africa holds considerable potential as a grassroots communication tool for advancing rural development. The study demonstrates that community radio can facilitate participatory communication processes that directly support agricultural extension efforts by engaging farmers and rural audiences through local languages and listeners' groups. This localisation of content enhances accessibility and relevance, particularly among communities that are often marginalised by mainstream media.

Crucially, the study highlights the inclusion of marginalised voices, notably women, within community radio programming. Alhassan et al. (2011) note that

Simli Radio's gender-focused programming, aired daily, has contributed to creating space for female voices to be heard on sensitive and critical issues affecting families and communities across the Dagbon state. These initiatives represent a shift in public discourse, helping to dismantle cultural and communicative barriers that have historically silenced women.

In this context, community radio functions as a “voice for the voiceless,” empowering rural populations and promoting dialogue on issues directly affecting their livelihoods. Unlike commercial radio stations, whose operations are primarily profit-driven and often detached from community needs, community radio stations are more attuned to local interests and developmental goals. By prioritising community participation and representation, they are uniquely positioned to facilitate meaningful development activities and enhance civic engagement in rural areas.

2.5 Programming in Community Radio Station

Community Based Radio Stations (CBRS) have been recognised as a valuable tool in public health and economic development. They provide relevant and focused community focused programming that address community specific issues and concerns. Local voices within community radio serve as catalysts for raising local issues and fostering meaningful dialogue around topics of communal importance. Such engagement has the potential to generate substantial impacts on both health and broader development outcomes (Waters, James, & Darby, 2011). According to Jallof (2007), the developmental effectiveness of community-based radio is contingent upon the quality and relevance of its programming, specifically, that content must be well-researched, locally produced, and delivered in languages that the community comprehends. To this end, the present study examines the rationale and structure of programming at four

community-based radio stations, with a focus on whether programming design prioritises listener comprehension and community-centered participation in both the production and presentation processes.

Normatively, community radio content should be created by and for the community it serves. While many stations adhere to this participatory model, mixed-format programming remains common, incorporating music, talk shows, public affairs segments, and community information services (Tucker, 2013). Despite this diversity in format, one of the most significant functions of community radio is its role as a platform for the voices of the poor and marginalised, who are often excluded from commercial media spaces (Tucker, 2013). Accordingly, this study also seeks to evaluate whether programming rationale includes a deliberate commitment to amplifying these marginalised voices and integrating them into the participatory processes of content creation.

Examples from other regions illustrate this model in action. In Tanzania, as well as at Radio Mampita and Magneva in Madagascar, programming has been explicitly designed to promote community building in impoverished areas, with a particular emphasis on the inclusion of the poor in the content creation process (Tucker, 2013). Similarly, in the Philippines, the *Tambuli Radio Network* describes itself as “the voice of the small community for the development of the underprivileged” (Gumucio Dagon, 2001), underscoring the importance of community-led programming in advancing grassroots development.

ATL FM has ‘The Soul of the Coast’ as its slogan. Johnson-Turbes, Hall, Kamalu and Zavahir (2010) state that call-in shows and personal on-air interviews are formats unique to radio that can be effective for promoting social learning, and people reciprocally learn

from each other. Messages disseminated through community radio programmes can be strategically tailored to specific target audiences and embedded with interactive elements that address localised community concerns. Radio provides an accessible platform for two-way communication, particularly through live broadcasts where presenters engage directly with listeners via phone-ins and text messaging. These segments allow community members to freely express their views, opinions, and inquiries, thereby facilitating the dissemination of vital information, especially on health and other development-related matters.

Recent research into mammography promotion, grounded in social learning theory and emphasising listener interaction, has identified radio as a highly effective tool for the dissemination of health information (Johnson & Birk, 1993). A further example is drawn from urban radio in the United States, where “Black radio” stations serve as critical communication platforms targeting African American audiences. These stations typically allocate significant airtime to call-in programmes, on-air interviews, and community-driven promotions, as opposed to conventional news and public affairs segments.

Notably, Black radio has been recognised as a powerful medium for health promotion within African American communities. Kennedy et al. (2010) underscore its effectiveness in encouraging community partnerships and serving as an agent of social change. These stations actively promote drug awareness, educational advancement, nonviolent behaviour, and broader public health issues. Through such programming, Black radio demonstrates the broader potential of community-based media to function as a transformative public health tool, especially in underserved and marginalised communities.

Community-based radio represents programming that is produced by the community with focus on local concerns and issues. Unlike the mainstream media, the local people's participation is prevalent rather than merely talking about the community; the people themselves make suggestions about programmes. This strengthens local culture and cohesion with the recognition that the station belongs to them; it becomes a forum for a wide diversity of local opinions and views (Sterling, O'Brien & Bennett, 2007).

In rural Ghana, women's representation in radio programming remains limited, with social and health issues often underrepresented, reflecting broader gendered disparities in access to information and media participation (Krauss et al., 2016). These patterns reveal that important social and health topics, including women's concerns, are consistently marginalised in community radio content. This limited focus contrasts with the transformative potential of mass media as outlined by Schiavo (2014), who argues that platforms such as radio, television, print, and digital media, when appropriately tailored to the needs and preferences of their audiences, can serve as powerful connectors between communicators and the communities they aim to reach.

Degefu (2010) similarly emphasises the role of mass media in advancing public understanding of major health concerns, particularly HIV/AIDS, and affirms the media's capacity to facilitate informed discussions and raise public awareness. Within this context, community-based radio stations (CRSs) are seen as particularly effective in promoting public health discourse and addressing topical issues in accessible formats. Manyozo (2012) reinforces this position by identifying community radio as a critical platform for public health communication and local economic development, particularly within marginalised and underserved communities.

Further supporting this view, Chemwaina (2014), in his study assessing the role of community-based radio in enhancing rural development, concluded that despite limitations in programme content and interaction mechanisms, the presence of community radio has significantly improved the well-being of rural populations compared to periods when such media platforms were unavailable. These findings underscore the importance of improving content diversity and audience engagement strategies to maximise the developmental potential of community radio, particularly in addressing the informational needs of women and marginalised groups. For example, ATL FM a community/Campus-based radio station broadcasting in Cape Coast, has come up with different developmental programmes that have positively contributed to changing the community members' ways of life. These programmes include agriculture, health, marital values, environment, cultural issues, democracy, and religious teachings. Community radio programming often features experts, professionals, and opinion leaders who address a wide range of topics relevant to local audiences. Importantly, such programmes are not unidirectional; community members actively participate in their production through channels such as letters to the editor, phone-ins, and other interactive mechanisms. At ATL FM, for instance, political talk shows have emerged as one of the most prominent formats through which community members engage with pressing civic and political issues, reinforcing participatory discourse.

This participatory approach aligns with the position of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which emphasises the crucial role of community-based radio in shaping public dialogue. As UNESCO (2001) notes, community-based radio stations have a significant role to fulfil in creating and sustaining public opinion and political will to deal with the problem. This underscores the normative and strategic value of community radio in mobilising collective awareness,

fostering inclusive political engagement, and sustaining democratic practices at the grassroots level.

2.6 Community Radio and Community Development

Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte (2006, p. 83) define a community strategy or approach as “a set of decisions on who is to communicate what to whom, what for, when and how.” This definition underscores the intentional and structured nature of communication within development contexts. Communication strategies aimed at rural development have predominantly been explored through experimental studies conducted by researchers and practitioners in the field of communication for development. These studies have demonstrated the efficacy of diverse approaches, including the use of field workers, rural communication networks, and digital platforms such as the internet and social media, in facilitating meaningful community engagement.

For sustainable community development to occur, and for a genuine sense of community ownership to be fostered, it is essential that community radio stations adopt mechanisms that actively encourage participation from local constituents. In this regard, community participation is conceptualised by Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte (2006, p. 856) as “the educational and empowering process in which people, in partnership with those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, so that they increasingly assume responsibility to plan, manage, control, and assess the collective actions that prove necessary.” This perspective highlights participation not merely as involvement, but as a transformative process of empowerment, capacity building, and shared governance that lies at the heart of effective community media practice.

Community radio enables community members to access information, education, and entertainment by actively involving them as planners, producers, and performers

(Mtimde, Marie-Hélène, Nkopane, & Kodjo, 1998). This participatory model underscores that both community ownership and community participation are essential components of communication strategies aimed at fostering community development. For a community radio station to thrive and achieve its developmental objectives, it is crucial that members of the community develop a sense of ownership, which in turn encourages active engagement and meaningful contributions to the station's growth and sustainability.

Beyond its communicative function, community radio also plays a critical role in facilitating access to information and promoting participation in local-level decision making. This process enhances participatory governance and strengthens the democratic fabric of society. As Mahmud (2006) argues, such engagement not only fosters civic inclusion but also contributes to growth and poverty reduction, positioning community radio as a powerful tool for grassroots transformation and social equity.

Community radio also plays a critical role in local economic development, particularly through its support for marketing local businesses and enhancing livelihood opportunities. In a study conducted by Al-Hassan et al. (2011) on Simli Radio in the Tolon-Kumbungu District of Ghana's Northern Region, the findings underscore the station's contribution to economic empowerment and livelihood improvement. The study highlights that Simli Radio actively promoted Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development by offering a platform through which businesses could reach broader audiences, facilitated by reduced advertising fees (Al-Hassan et al., 2011, p. 4). Business owners interviewed in the study reported that advertisements aired on the station contributed significantly to increased sales and revenue, thereby improving their overall living standards.

Beyond marketing support, community radio stations also serve as educational platforms, equipping listeners with practical knowledge and skills to enhance their economic self-sufficiency. Chaudhary et al. (2021) emphasises this dimension, noting that community radio plays an instrumental role in transmitting vocational and life enhancing skills tailored to local contexts. In this regard, community radio emerges not only as a tool for communication but as a driver of economic empowerment and livelihood enhancement, particularly in marginalised and rural communities.

ATL FM, a campus-based community radio station situated at the University of Cape Coast, plays a pivotal role in promoting entertainment, education, and local development through its diverse range of socially oriented programming. One notable example is *Egyanom Afarifo*, a discussion-based programme focused on issues within the fisheries sector, designed to equip local fishers and stakeholders with relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their livelihoods and business practices.

Among its programming tailored to the needs of local communities is a Saturday Akan Morning Show, *Biribi Soronko*, which serves as a platform for discussing critical issues related to community development. The programme routinely hosts government officials from the Metropolitan Assembly, who respond directly to concerns raised by community members via live phone-ins, thereby fostering transparency, civic engagement, and participatory governance.

These examples demonstrate how community radio stations like ATL FM contribute meaningfully to community development by offering platforms for public dialogue, information sharing, and collective problem-solving. As highlighted by Girard (2001) and Myers (2011), community radio has proven to be an effective medium globally,

enabling people, particularly those in underrepresented or rural areas, to access and engage with information that is pertinent to their social and economic realities.

Community radio has increasingly been utilised as a vehicle for cultural development, particularly through the production of programmes that promote, preserve, and interrogate local cultural practices (Howley, 2005). By broadcasting in local languages and foregrounding indigenous narratives, community radio fosters cultural continuity while simultaneously serving as a space for critical reflection and dialogue.

In countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia, community radio stations have provided platforms through which community members actively engage in debates and discussions around cultural practices, particularly those perceived to constrain social and economic development (Banda, 2006). These dialogues allow communities to reassess traditional norms, encouraging the adoption of more progressive practices without dislocating cultural identity. Thus, community radio serves not only as a tool for cultural expression but also as an instrument of cultural transformation aligned with local development goals. For instance, there is a common practice in Shangani culture in Mozambique in which people marry a deceased spouse. The backbone of community radio is the use of local languages in programming. The use of local language has increased peoples' participation and increased confidence in the stations and in turn positioned the stations to contribute to the cultural development of their respective communities (Banda, 2006). Mzimba Community Radio Station in Malawi has emerged as a key institution in the preservation of local language and culture, positioning itself at the heart of cultural revitalisation efforts within the region. Through culturally resonant programming and the use of indigenous languages, the station has significantly

strengthened its relationship with the local communities, fostering a sense of ownership, identity, and cultural pride.

Community radio has long been recognised as a powerful empowerment tool, particularly in its capacity to foster participation in development communication (Manyozo, 2005). Scholars such as de Vos (1998, p. 407) define community participation as *“the creation of a democratic system and procedure to enable community members to become actively involved and to take responsibility for their own development.”* This participatory process fosters identity, cohesion, and shared responsibility (Levi & Litwin, 1986).

While these definitions are not specific to radio, they establish a conceptual basis for understanding participation as a collective, inclusive, and empowering process. In the context of community broadcasting, Carpentier (2011) offers a more precise definition, viewing participation as involving citizens directly in station programming, administration, and policy-making. Similarly, Manyozo (2008) stresses that participation must allow communities to deliberate, mobilise, and act on critical livelihood issues.

This participatory ethos necessitates access, not only in terms of listenership but also in ownership, content production, and governance (Al-Hassan et al., 2011). As UNESCO (2001) asserts, community radio must actively involve listeners in programme production, content creation, and aspects of station management in order to fulfil its developmental mandate. Unlike mainstream media, where communities are passive subjects, community radio enables people to *“make the programmes themselves”* (Al-Hassan et al., 2011). For instance, ATL FM at the University of Cape Coast broadcasts programmes in both English and local languages such as Fante and engages the

community through phone-in discussions and current affairs programmes that involve local stakeholders including students and residents (Obeng, 2023).

Participation is further reinforced through interactive formats like talk shows, which allow community members to express opinions, share experiences, and engage with governance issues (Munson, 1993, as discussed in *Media and Participation*, 2007). Community radio stations provide participatory spaces through interactive formats such as phone-in segments that allow listeners to contribute ideas, express opinions, and engage with issues of local concern (Diedong & Naaikuur, 2023). These methods ensure that radio serves as a mirror of the community and a medium for bottom-up development (Carpentier, 2011).

Empirical evidence shows that not all community radio stations practice full participation. For example, although Radio Nagercoil in India was established to represent the local community, actual community involvement in policy-making and station governance has been minimal (Fisher, 1990, as cited in Mhagama, 2004). Similarly, while Bush Radio in South Africa shows increased community involvement, station management retains control over key programming decisions, which contradicts participatory ideals (Mhagama, 2004).

The concept of participation is deeply tied to critiques of post-WWII modernisation theory. As Tandon (2008) notes, post-war development discourse, exemplified by President Truman's 1949 speech, cast the West as the model for development. This ideology, later institutionalised as the Western or modernisation paradigm, framed developing nations as dependent on Western knowledge, technology, and capital.

Dependency theory emerged in critique, portraying the world as a system dominated by imperial centres, such as the United States, which controlled the flow of resources to the peripheries (Stevenson & Greenberg, 1988). The result was a form of development that often-deepened inequality, reinforced dependency, and diminished the value of local knowledge and agency, consistent with the dependency critique of traditional development paradigms (Servaes, 1999). Rahnema (1988, as cited in Tamminga, 1997) likened this model to a virus that gradually eroded indigenous values and self-reliance.

In response to these critiques, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's 1975 report, "What Now? Another Development", argued for an alternative paradigm centred on basic needs, self-reliance, participation, sustainability, and local empowerment (Servaes, 1999). According to Carpentier (2011), the report championed a multiplicity of development approaches grounded in local realities and rejected top down/topdown, corporate-driven development agendas. Participation, in this context, is both a means and an end: a tool for achieving development and an essential outcome that enhances equity and agency (Carpentier, 2011).

While participatory rhetoric has become mainstream in development discourse, actual practice often diverges from theory. Eversole (2012) notes that participation remains difficult to define, initiate, and sustain. Lyndon et al. (2011) argue that genuine participation shifts power from planners to rural communities, but Vasoo (1991) points to the tension between technocratic control and democratic inclusion. As Craig and Porter (1997, p. 230) warn, many participatory development projects remain technocratic at their core, merely performing participation rather than enacting it.

In the media space, this disconnect is equally present. Although community radio aspires to inclusive participation, many stations face structural, managerial, and resource

constraints that limit full community control. Participation, in such contexts, risks becoming symbolic rather than substantive.

The literature reviewed affirms that community radio, when grounded in genuine participation, can be a transformative tool for social justice, cultural affirmation, and economic development. This requires not only access to airwaves but also shared ownership, inclusive governance, and local content production. It also demands a critical awareness of how development discourse can reinforce or challenge historical patterns of marginalisation. Ultimately, the essence of participation lies not in token inclusion but in enabling communities to set agendas, make decisions, and articulate their realities through their own voices. Community radio, as both a symbol and instrument of democratic media, must remain accountable to this goal.

2.7 Challenges to the Sustainability of Community Radio Stations

Despite their potential to empower communities and foster development, community radio stations face persistent challenges that threaten their sustainability and long-term impact. According to the Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA, 2007, p.14), critical issues such as programming content, organisational development, equipment maintenance, and financial management significantly undermine operational stability. These challenges, if unaddressed, can lead to the premature closure of stations.

Inadequate funding, limited technical expertise, and weak leadership are among the key factors impeding the growth of community radio, particularly in South Africa (Sewlal, 2014). Community stations are typically expected to self-generate funding, often relying on a combination of volunteers, donors, faith-based organisations, international development agencies, and limited advertising revenue. However, this fragmented funding model is often unsustainable. Megwa (2007) notes that while hundreds of

community radio applications have been processed in South Africa, few remain on air for long, primarily due to financial instability.

This precarious financial environment exacerbates other operational challenges, such as the inability to cover monthly operating costs, maintain broadcasting equipment, or invest in content development and programme research. These issues often result in the inability to pay and retain staff, which in turn affects programming quality and continuity. As community stations struggle, listeners migrate to more stable national or international broadcasters, which frequently do not cater to hyper-local needs.

A further challenge lies in high staff turnover, particularly among volunteers. While high turnover may reflect the station's success in training capable communicators, it also indicates that volunteers often use community radio as a stepping stone to better paying positions in commercial media. Mefalopulos (2008) underscores this challenge, noting that the continuous loss of skilled personnel necessitates ongoing training, draining already limited resources. In response, Lush Urugoiti (2012) recommend training older members of the community, who may be less mobile and thus more likely to provide continuity.

Beyond human resource challenges, internal competition and community fragmentation also present obstacles. Howey (2005) cautions that competing interests within the community can place undue demands on limited resources such as airtime, personnel, and equipment, turning the station into a site of conflict among different groups.

Moreover, the ideals of localism and community relevance are not always realised in practice. Mefalopulos (2008) argues that resource constraints often force stations to

prioritise national content over local news, compromising the foundational principle of community-centred programming. A seminar held in Nairobi in 2008, “*The Way Forward for Community Radio in Kenya*”, similarly identified several systemic barriers, including inconsistent policy support, high licensing fees, and lack of public awareness about the distinct role of community radio. The confusion between community and vernacular commercial stations has further eroded the public’s understanding of community media’s mandate.

Although community radio has been widely recognised for its potential to support local development, promote civic participation, and strengthen participatory governance, existing literature indicates that translating these ideals into practice remains a persistent challenge across many contexts (Diedong & Naaikuur, 2023). Studies on community and campus radio suggest that limited financial resources, weak participatory structures, and inadequate institutional support often constrain the ability of these stations to fully realise their developmental mandates. These challenges are not unique to any single country or station but reflect broader structural and operational constraints facing community-oriented broadcasting.

Within the context of campus radio, scholars have noted that stations operating within universities occupy a complex position, as they are expected to serve academic audiences while simultaneously engaging surrounding non-university communities (Fauteux, 2015). This dual responsibility raises important questions about programming priorities, community access, and mechanisms for sustained participation. However, there is limited empirical evidence, particularly within the Ghanaian context, that systematically examines how campus radio stations negotiate this balance or the extent

to which they contribute to local community development beyond the university environment.

It is within this broader theoretical and scholarly context that ATL FM, the campus radio station of the University of Cape Coast, becomes a relevant case for investigation. Rather than assuming a priori that ATL FM faces the same challenges identified in other settings, this study seeks to examine how the station's operations, programming practices, and engagement strategies align with the developmental ideals of community-oriented broadcasting. By focusing on community participation, development-focused content, and audience perceptions, the study aims to contribute empirical evidence to ongoing debates about whether and how campus radio can function as an effective platform for inclusive and participatory development within urban and semi-urban communities.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides the conceptual foundation for understanding how key ideas and principles explain social phenomena. In communication and media studies, theories are used to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and normative expectations placed on media institutions within society. They offer structured perspectives for interpreting how media systems are expected to function in relation to democracy, participation, and social development. Within this context, normative media theory emphasises how the media ought to operate to support democratic values such as freedom of expression, inclusiveness, and public participation.

Community radio aligns strongly with this theoretical position, as it is grounded in the principle that communication should be accessible to all segments of society. Normative theory views the media as a public resource that enables dialogue, representation, and

collective engagement. As such, community radio is conceptualised as a platform that empowers communities by giving voice to local concerns and facilitating social interaction. These theoretical ideals position community radio as a tool for participation and social transformation rather than mere information transmission.

2.9 The Democratic Participant Media Theory

The Democratic-Participant Media Theory (DPMT), developed by Denis McQuail in 1987, provides a valuable framework for analysing the role of campus radio stations like ATL FM in local community development. This theory emerged as a critique of the elitism, centralisation, and commercialisation characteristic of traditional media systems, arguing instead for grassroots access and community-driven communication (Fourie, 2001, p. 274).

DPMT posits that democratic societies must enable all individuals including marginalised and minority groups to actively participate in media production and dissemination. However, the over-centralisation of mass media often denies these groups realistic opportunities to engage meaningfully with mass communication platforms. In this regard, the theory critiques both the monopolistic tendencies of private media and the bureaucratic rigidity of state-run broadcasting, proposing instead the need for decentralisation, pluralism, and participatory communication (Roelofse, 1997, p. 58).

The Democratic Participant Media Theory is marked by the proliferation of local and community-based media platforms, including community radio stations, talk shows, phone-in programmes, interactive television, and the development of digital villages (Fourie, 2001). This theoretical model is a response to the limitations of centralised, mainstream media, advocating instead for decentralised, participatory, and accessible

communication systems that give voice to marginalised and underrepresented communities.

Unlike the dominant top-down media structures, the democratic participant model emphasises horizontal communication, localism, and the representation of subcultures often excluded from national discourses (Kwaramba, 2000). Within the context of community radio, the model supports media as a tool for conscientisation and empowerment, enabling communities to critically understand their realities, build confidence, and take collective action to transform their social, economic, and political circumstances. In doing so, community radio becomes not merely a channel for information dissemination, but a platform for participatory dialogue, self-determination, and grassroots development.

Participation “comes in a variety of forms (Zakus & Lysack, 2011, p.7). Carpentier (2011) grouped participation of individuals in community media into two through the phrases “participation through the media” and “participation in the media.” Participation through the media involves individuals’ participation in the mediated content through public debate and self-representation in the variety of public spaces. In the case of ATL FM, participation through the media could involve the phone in and the conversational currency offered by the station to the university community. On the other hand, Carpentier (2011) asserted that participation in the media involves contributing to the content creation and decision making in the community media. Carpentier (2011) further distinguishes between minimalist and maximalist forms of participation. This will involve students participating in the workforce of the station as well as having a seat in the dominant coalition of the station.

In addition to participation through and participation in dichotomy, Carpentier (2011) also classified participation into minimalist and maximalist forms. The description of the minimalist participation centres on media professionals retaining strong control over processes and outcomes, restricting participation to access and interaction, to the degree that one wonders whether the concept of participation is still appropriate." This minimalist approach to participation disempowers individuals and reduces their voice in decision-making and ownership of community media.

In contrast, Carpentier (2011, p.67-68) states that "the maximalist participation values the importance of dialogue and deliberation and focuses on collective decision-making based on rational arguments in a public sphere." With maximalist participation, citizens' power in decision-making and production is more strongly felt throughout the media processes.

In the context of the ATL FM case study, a minimalist approach to participation would mean that students and other key stakeholders are not adequately represented in the decision-making structures of the station. Conversely, maximalist participation would involve meaningful participation of stakeholders in both the decision-making and production processes of the community media outlet.

This theoretical framing around minimalist and maximalist participation provides a useful lens to analyse the nature and extent of participatory practices within the ATL FM case. Understanding where the case study falls on this spectrum can shed light on the power dynamics, representational inclusion, and overall democratisation of the community media in question. Unlike commercial and public broadcasting, community radio has unique features that allow the local community to play a role in content generation and also in the hierarchy of management of the station. This is because it is

assumed that the station is owned by the community and, therefore, can fit the description of “ideal public sphere” conceived by Jürgen Habermas.

As stipulated in (Habermas, 1989), the normative pressures and dialogic rationality both allow for community to flourish. Campus radio by its nature should manifest these qualities on university campuses and the communities within its spectrum. In this case, the station serves as the public sphere for independent individuals who are together as a public where each individual’s views matter in public discourse (Habermas, 1989).

The relevance of the Democratic Participant Media Theory to ATL FM lies in its ability to frame the station as a participatory platform that empowers local communities within its broadcast range. By examining ATL FM through the lens of DPMT, the study can assess whether the station facilitates genuine community involvement in programming, production, and decision-making processes. This theory highlights the importance of decentralised media and horizontal communication structures, which enables the station to include marginalised voices from the Cape Coast Metropolis in shaping content and influencing programming priorities (Fourie, 2001; Roelofse, 1997). Evaluating ATL FM using this theoretical framework allows the researcher to determine the extent to which the station embodies maximalist participation, fostering dialogue, deliberation, and collective decision-making, rather than merely offering tokenistic or minimalist engagement. In doing so, DPMT provides a structured lens to analyse how ATL FM’s operations align with ideals of inclusivity, representation, and community empowerment.

The participatory communication paradigm is considered as one of the well-known approaches in dissecting campus-based community radio network. Singh (2010) posits that campus radio is well situated in the tenets of participatory communication to bring

about development and also cause change in society. Critics of this model, (Melkote and Steeves, 2001), have firmly maintained that the horizontal process of communication, through which mass participation in the media and community empowerment serve as obstacles to achieving meaningful impact (Melkote & Steeves, 2001). Within the context of this study, the dynamics of stakeholder participation and the extent to which they derive satisfaction from the operations of the station are examined.

Participatory Communication in Campus Broadcasting

In the work of Serwornoo (2016), the author categorised theoretical approaches or paradigm on community media, and for that matter campus media into three. These three approaches are public sphere approach, participatory communication approach, and alternative media approach. The public sphere approach is proposed by Habermas (1989) and Wallace (2008) to explain community media as locality-based sphere for negotiating their cultural citizenship. In the public sphere paradigm, community media is regarded as community's property and it is used as a medium for communicating community narrative. In that sense, Serwornoo (2016, p.52) mentioned three concepts which are "normative pressures", "dialogic rationality" and "communicative rationality."

The normative pressures are systems and structures of the community that impact the production and distribution of community media content. In the case of the campus broadcasting services, the administrative structures, the curricular activities as well as extracurricular activities can impact the production and distribution of community media.

Dialogic rationality is basically ensuring open discussion of ideas necessary for empowerment and change. In this case, the voices of students, staff, community

members and other relevant members of community media on campus should be heard in the community stations. Lastly, public sphere approach requires understanding of communicative rationality which is the genuine discussion that promotes social change (Habermas, 1989). Communicative rationality involves providing a conducive environment for communication by eschewing egocentrism and promoting sincerity and autonomy.

Participatory communication paradigm is based on the ideas of Singh (2010), Morris (2003) and many others. Participatory communication model focuses on the horizontal process of communication, through which collective involvement in media-making and community empowerment act as catalysts to any positive, desired change (Melkote & Steeves 2001). In this approach, community media is expected to reflect three main attributes which are inclusiveness, egalitarianism and openness. Serwornoo (2016) explained inclusiveness as the universal acceptance of dissenting views in the community media. It involves representation of all voices including the marginalised and the voiceless in the community radio production, distribution and structures. In the case of campus broadcasting station, all stakeholders within the campus system should have a say in the programming and content of the campus station. Without such inclusivity, participatory communication cannot be realised.

The second feature is egalitarianism which involves offering equal opportunities for all members to be represented in the production, distribution and management of the community media. This implies representation of all members in generation of content as well as programmes in the community media. Participatory communication model also demands openness in the community media. Openness means allowing any issue

that is worthy of discussion to be heard in the community media for deliberation. Openness involves creating conducive platforms for all voices to be heard. Participatory communication model ensures that all stakeholders are agents capable of designing and telling their own situation rather than been objects ready to consume information from informant (Serwornoo, 2016).

Atton (2002) combined these two approaches into what is termed as alternative media approach. Atton (2002, p. 52) posits that “alternative media must be organised to include the social process of communication, such as organisational structure, content and how the content is produced, financed and distributed.” This involves the creation of community as community’s local sphere for mediating diverse views on community situation. In essence, the collective ownership and participation in public sphere approach is balanced by equal and open access opportunity for all rational members in the community to participate in the discussion about the community’s situation and the way forward. In this sense, community media becomes a tool and platform for empowerment to achieve positive behavioural and social change that will trigger growth and development.

To better appreciate the importance of participatory communication model as theoretical guide for the current study, the researcher adopted the version by Faisal Amadu and Alhassan (2017) who developed a four staged participation model based on the symbiotic relationship between Carpentier (2011) and Arnstein’s (1969) theses on participation in community radio.

The first stage is the programme design stage. Amadu and Alhassan (2017) discussed programme design stage as the decision-making stage where community members voices are heard to hem of affairs of deciding programmes. This stage also involves the

planning of the entire broadcasting; hence it predicts the time, the language as well as mechanism of broadcasting. This is actually where true and active participation takes place in the station. In the sense of the current study, it is expected that the local communities who form integral part of stakeholders are included in decision making, programme design and implementation will show the extent to which they realise the impact of the station on their lives.

The second stage is programme production stage. This involves the actual production of the station by recording of content as well as covering live information. This implies that there is the need to include stakeholders in the actual production of the radio stations such as including the stakeholders in panel discussion, staff work as well as heading of programmes.

The third stage of participation is the listening stage, which entails active audience engagement during broadcasts. At this stage, stakeholders contribute by participating through phone-ins, joining radio listener groups, or engaging in community discussions based on programme content. Mechanisms such as listening clubs, out-of-broadcast events, and other interactive formats are employed to facilitate listener involvement and feedback on issues raised during broadcasts.

The final stage of participation, as outlined by Amadu and Alhassan (2017), is programme financing. This dimension captures the stakeholders' financial and material contributions to the sustainability of the station. It includes activities such as sponsoring broadcast programmes, placing advertisements or announcements, paying subscription fees, and making voluntary donations, whether in cash or kind. These financial engagements serve as indicators of both community investment and the perceived relevance and impact of the station's programming.

In this study, participation is conceptualised as a multi-dimensional construct and is used as a primary criterion for evaluating the station's impact on its stakeholders. The four stages, planning, production, listening, and financing, collectively provide a framework for assessing the depth and breadth of community involvement in campus radio operations.

2.10 Participatory Development

Unlike Western democracies, where media systems evolved alongside democratic institutions and robust civil societies, the media infrastructure in many developing countries is rooted in colonial legacies that made minimal provision for indigenous socio-political and cultural contexts. As Roelofse (1997) observes, these nations inherited systems marked by a lack of communication infrastructure, a scarcity of professional skills, economic underdevelopment, limited cultural production resources, and high levels of illiteracy all further complicated by linguistic diversity. In the postcolonial era, this structural dependency often persisted in the form of neocolonialism and cultural imperialism, necessitating a reorientation of media toward serving national development, autonomy, and cultural identity (McQuail, 1987).

According to Melkote and Steeves (2015), development communication has evolved toward participatory approaches that affirm the right of people to engage in decisions affecting their lives. This normative framework calls for open, democratic structures and emphasises holistic, context-specific approaches to community development. Rather than prescribing universal answers, this framework serves as a conceptual platform to build community based, culturally grounded development models.

As Amartya Sen (2000) argues, development must transcend economic and technological indicators; it must be conceived as a process of expanding substantive

human freedoms. In this light, community media, particularly community radio, becomes an ideal medium for facilitating such freedoms. Bell and Morse (1999) and Roelofse (1997,) similarly posit that current development thinking centers on people's active participation, both as individuals and as part of broader sociopolitical structures. The ability to participate in development initiatives is increasingly seen as central to achieving outcomes that people value, and that they have reason to value.

Accordingly, Sen (2000) advocates development models that actively dismantle systemic inequality, poverty, tyranny, and intolerance, while simultaneously building inclusive public institutions. From this perspective, media, especially local, independent radio, should not function as a top-down tool of persuasion, but rather as a facilitator of community engagement and empowerment (Roelofse, 1997).

Development communication, therefore, must embody both the transmission of relevant information and the empowerment of marginalised voices to exert greater control over their social, economic, and political environments.

In this model, community radio functions both as catalyst and facilitator of change. It serves as a participatory medium through which citizens engage in reconstruction, development, and democratic discourse (Mtimde, 2000). It assumes a shared cultural framework among its listeners, fostering social cohesion and reinforcing common purpose through participatory content creation, ownership, and governance (Fairbairn & Siemering, 2006). Through this community radio becomes a platform for grassroots self-determination for community members act as volunteers, presenters, content creators, and station managers,.

Scholars argue that the participatory foundations of community radio make it a critical instrument for rural development, particularly in communities that remain marginalised

by state and commercial broadcasting structures. An emphasis on access, local participation, empowerment, and community ownership enables community radio to support inclusive communication processes through which communities articulate their own development priorities and drive social change. As a result, community radio functions not merely as an alternative medium but as an alternative development paradigm grounded in democratic communication and grassroots community agency (Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2001; Manyozo, 2012).

The participatory development paradigm is particularly relevant to ATL FM because it provides a framework to evaluate how media can serve as a tool for local empowerment, social inclusion, and sustainable development. Applying this theory enables the study to examine whether ATL FM's programmes contribute to enhancing human capabilities, fostering civic participation, and supporting community-driven problem-solving (Sen, 2000). By investigating the station's engagement strategies such as phone-ins, listener groups, community panels, and stakeholder involvement in programme design the study can determine how effectively ATL FM operationalises participatory development principles in practice. This perspective also helps to highlight gaps where community voices may be underrepresented or overlooked, offering a clear basis for recommendations to strengthen inclusivity, stakeholder agency, and the overall developmental impact of campus-based radio broadcasting.

This study applies the Democratic Participant Media Theory (DPMT) and the Participatory Development paradigm to interrogate the developmental role of ATL FM within the Cape Coast Metropolis. While the theoretical framework outlines the normative expectations of community and campus radio, this section demonstrates how these theories are operationalised in the context of the present research.

The Guided by the Democratic Participant Media Theory, the study investigates ATL FM as a participatory communication platform rather than a conventional broadcasting outlet. DPMT provides the analytical lens for examining the extent to which ATL FM enables grassroots access, decentralised communication, and inclusive participation in media processes. Specifically, the theory interrogates the nature and depth of participation among whether community members and other stakeholders, examining whether they function primarily as merely passive recipients of content or as active contributors who are actively engaged in programme production, content decision-making, and institutional governance.

Drawing on Carpentier's (2011) distinction between minimalist and maximalist participation, the study examines where ATL FM falls on this spectrum by analysing stakeholder involvement in programming design, on-air discussions, production roles, and feedback mechanisms. This allows the research to interrogate power relations within the station and determine whether participation is substantive or symbolic.

The participatory communication framework further guides the study in examining the nature of interaction between ATL FM and its surrounding communities. Using the four-stage participation model proposed by Amadu and Alhassan (2017), the research analyses stakeholder engagement across programme design, production, listening, and financing. This framework is applied empirically to assess how inclusive ATL FM's programming processes are, the degree of openness in content generation, and the opportunities provided for community members to influence broadcast priorities. By doing so, the study moves beyond abstract notions of participation to measurable practices that reflect community ownership and agency.

In addition, the participatory development paradigm informs the study's assessment of ATL FM's contribution to local development outcomes. Drawing on Sen's (2000) conception of development as the expansion of human capabilities, the research examines whether ATL FM's programmes enhance civic awareness, promote dialogue on social and economic issues, and support community-driven problem-solving. The theory provides a basis for evaluating how the station facilitates empowerment, inclusion, and collective action through platforms such as phone-in programmes, community discussions, and stakeholder panels. It also enables the identification of gaps where certain voices may be marginalised or excluded from the development discourse.

These theoretical perspectives offer an in-depth understanding of ATL FM's role as a campus-based community radio station operating within a dual academic and community context. Guided by Democratic Participant Media Theory and the principles of Participatory Development, the study does not consider whether ATL FM fulfills its normative mandate; rather, it explores how its participatory practices are experienced, enacted, and sustained, and how these practices shape its contribution to community development within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Together, these theoretical perspectives enable the study to systematically analyse ATL FM's role as a campus-based community radio station operating within a dual academic–community environment. The study assessed whether ATL FM fulfils its normative mandate and further examined how its participatory practices shape its effectiveness as a tool for community development within the Cape Coast Metropolis, through the lens of Democratic Participant Media Theory.

2.11 Chapter Summary

The theoretical basis, conceptual review, as well as, empirical studies analysed in this chapter, have provided evidence that community/campus radio has the tendency of imbuing participatory and developmental issues in their programming to promote the development of the communities they operate in. However, the literature did not focus entirely on campus radio as most scholars equate community radio to campus radio. From the literature there seem to be limited studies on the usefulness of campus radio to local communities, and this has necessitated this study.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted for the study. It provides a detailed discussion of the research design, including the rationale for the chosen approach. The chapter also describes the participants selected for the study, the criteria and strategies used for their selection, and the data collection methods employed. In addition, it discusses the procedures undertaken to ensure the credibility, trustworthiness, and rigor of the study, including the refinement of interview guides and observational protocols prior to the main data collection.

In addition, this chapter addresses the approaches to data analysis, providing a rationale for each analytical technique used in interpreting the data. The methodological principles discussed here are aligned with the overall research objectives and are intended to support the process of answering the study's key research questions. These procedures collectively ensure the rigour, coherence, and transparency of the study's empirical inquiry.

1. What is the nature of participation of Cape Coast community members in the programmes of ATL FM?
2. How does ATL FM's programming content address the development needs of communities within the Cape Coast Metropolis?
3. What are the perspectives of Cape Coast community members on ATL FM's programming content?

3.1 Research Approach

A research approach refers to the overarching strategy or plan that guides how a study is conducted, including how data are collected, analysed, and interpreted to answer the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Broadly, research approaches are categorised into three main types: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods. Quantitative research focuses on numerical data, statistical analysis, and generalisable results, while qualitative research explores experiences, behaviours, and social phenomena in depth, emphasising context and meaning. Mixed-methods research combines both quantitative and qualitative elements to provide a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

The study adopted the qualitative research approach for data analysis due to the focus and nature of the research questions. Qualitative research provides a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena within their natural contexts, allowing researchers to interpret events, behaviours, and values from the participants' perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2021). This method allows the researcher to obtain culturally specific information about the opinions, behaviours, and values of a given population within a particular social setting.

In support of this, Flick (2022) posits that qualitative analysis focuses on identifying emerging themes, patterns, concepts, and insights from the data, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study. In the context of ATL FM, this approach allows the researcher to uncover the nuances of community engagement, programming practices, and the developmental impact of the radio station on the Cape Coast Metropolis. This typically involves the use of descriptive observations expressed in non-numerical terms to capture the complexities of social realities (Silverman, 2021).

According to Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2022), while numerical data may present a surface-level impression, qualitative data often reveal the underlying meanings and contextual factors influencing behaviour, such as the extent of listener participation, stakeholder satisfaction, and the effectiveness initiatives in addressing local development concerns. In this context, the study explored the lived experiences of both two staff of ATL FM and community members to provide insights that are directly relevant to evaluating the station's role in fostering development.

The nature of qualitative data sources such as interviews, observations, and narrative scripts determines the types of questions researchers pose, which are generally exploratory and discovery-oriented (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). In the context of this study, these sources were employed to examine ATL FM's role in community development, capturing insights from the station's staff and local community members. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to describe their experiences, perceptions, and involvement in programme planning, production, and broadcast, while observations of selected programmes provided a contextual understanding of operational dynamics and audience engagement. To achieve meaningful exploration and discovery, the researcher applied strategies such as connecting observations with interview narratives and examining interactions between students, staff, and community members (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021). This approach enabled the identification of emerging patterns, themes, and insights regarding stakeholder participation, programme relevance, and the station's developmental impact, ensuring that the study captured the complexities of ATL FM's operations within its natural social and institutional setting (Flick, 2022; Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2022).

The qualitative data analysis in this study followed a general inductive process, which allowed insights to emerge naturally from the data rather than being shaped by pre-existing theories or rigid hypotheses (Thomas, 2021). This process enabled the researcher to examine interviews and observations from ATL FM without imposing assumptions about the station's influence on community development. Themes surfaced organically from participants' accounts, reflecting their lived experiences with programme planning, content production, and listener engagement. These themes were interconnected, centering on ideas such as stakeholder participation, the developmental relevance of programming, and community empowerment, which ensured coherence and transparency in the analysis. Multiple interpretations of the data were considered, including differences between management and community perspectives, which provided a nuanced understanding of ATL FM's role in local development. The credibility and validity of the findings were further strengthened by grounding conclusions in participants' lived experiences rather than researcher-imposed frameworks (Silverman, 2021).

The researcher deliberately tailored each method to the specific context of ATL FM. Semi-structured interviews were designed to elicit in-depth accounts from both management, staff and community members regarding their experiences with programme design, production, and participation. Observations were focused on selected development-oriented programmes to capture real-time interactions, audience engagement, and the dynamics between students, staff, and local listeners. The inductive analysis allowed the researcher to identify themes specific to the Cape Coast Metropolis, such as the degree of community ownership, the effectiveness of participatory mechanisms, and the responsiveness of ATL FM's programming to local development needs. Connecting methodological tools to these contextual realities, ensured that data

collection and analysis were not abstract or generic, but firmly grounded in the lived experiences and perceptions of the station's key stakeholders. This connection provided a robust framework for understanding how ATL FM contributes to community development, and it directly informs conclusions about the station's strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement.

3.2 Research Design

A research design refers to the overall strategy that a researcher employs to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical manner, ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). It serves as a blueprint for collecting, measuring, and analysing data, and guides decisions regarding methodology, sampling, and data analysis procedures. Various research designs exist, including experimental, correlational, descriptive, and case study approaches, each suited to different types of research questions and objectives. For studies seeking to explore complex social phenomena in their natural contexts, qualitative designs such as case studies are particularly valuable because they allow for an in-depth understanding of processes, behaviours, and experiences (Yin, 2003).

For the purposes of this study, a case study design was adopted. The case study is a widely acknowledged qualitative research strategy, particularly suited for conducting in-depth exploration of contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts (Yin, 2003). This approach enables the researcher to examine a specific case, in this instance, a community radio station, in a manner that captures the nuances of local dynamics, stakeholder interactions, and the contextual factors that shape meaning and experience. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), case study research allows for the construction of multiple perspectives of reality, thereby embracing the subjectivity, temporality, and

contextual specificity inherent in social phenomena. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further emphasised that the case study approach is particularly valuable when the objective is to develop a rich, holistic understanding of a complex issue, rather than to test formal hypotheses. In this study, the case study design is thus instrumental in uncovering the depth and complexity of community radio operations, stakeholder engagement, and developmental impact within a localised setting.

Yin (2003) identifies several types of case study designs, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory, each aligned with distinct research purposes. In this study, a combination of exploratory and descriptive case study designs is employed to examine the role of ATL FM in contributing to the development of the communities it serves. The exploratory component seeks to uncover emergent patterns, generate preliminary insights, and identify the dimensions of community participation and development fostered by the station. In contrast, the descriptive component provides a comprehensive account of specific programming, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and institutional practices, offering a rich, contextualised portrayal of ATL FM's operations. As Creswell and Poth (2018) explain, exploratory case studies help researchers understand what is happening, while descriptive case studies document how and why these phenomena occur within real-world settings. Together, these approaches support a holistic understanding of ATL FM's contributions to community development, making them appropriate for the complex, context-specific nature of the research objectives.

Stake (2000) further categorises case studies into intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Intrinsic case studies focus on understanding a specific case due to its unique characteristics, while instrumental case studies use a particular case to gain insights into a broader issue. Collective case studies involve studying multiple cases to investigate a

phenomenon. This study employs elements of an intrinsic case study design to produce in-depth and detailed insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants as stipulated by (Stake, 2000). The study deliberately selected ATL FM as the intrinsic case because of its distinctive characteristics as a campus-based community radio station operating within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The station's unique programming orientation, patterns of stakeholder engagement, and community-centred development initiatives create a clearly defined context that makes it suitable for detailed examination. The spotlight on this bounded setting, is intended to provide a detailed examination of how ATL FM operates, the challenges it encounters, and the extent of its contributions to community development within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

In qualitative research, a case study may focus on various units of analysis, including an individual, an event, a programme, a community, or even a specific time period (Patton, 2002). Irrespective of the selected unit, the fundamental aim of a qualitative case study is to deliver a rich, in-depth description and nuanced understanding of a bounded system within its natural, real-life context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In doing so, the researcher can explore contextual dynamics, multiple perspectives, and interrelated variables, which are often essential for capturing the complexity of social phenomena. Case studies aim to interpret and reconstruct past experiences while simultaneously generating insights applicable to future practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The more a researcher seeks to capture individualised experiences and unique variations, the more appropriate qualitative case study methods become (Patton, 2002). Conversely, when standard outcomes and uniform measures of performance are prioritised, quantitative methods may be more suitable.

Qualitative research is grounded in the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed through interaction between the researcher and participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This epistemological stance emphasises the co-creation of meaning within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. Accordingly, the aim of this case study is to deepen understanding of the similarities and differences in social constructions as experienced and interpreted by various stakeholders within the research setting. The study seeks to uncover the contextual meanings and nuanced interpretations that shape the lived experiences of individuals involved in or impacted by the operations of this community radio station by exploring these multiple realities. Patton (2002) posits that case studies are particularly valuable for capturing individual differences and unique variations in experiences, allowing the researcher to learn extensively from a few exemplars of the phenomenon under study. This study, therefore, seeks to explore and describe the role of ATL FM in community development through context-specific insights.

For the purposes of this study, ATL FM serves as the bounded case through which the dynamics of community radio are examined. Specifically, the research focuses on the experiences of four community members and two staff members of the station, who are engaged both as active participants in its programmes and as beneficiaries of its services. This in effect allowed the researcher to generate a context-specific understanding of how ATL FM contributes to community development. Through detailed descriptions and the examination of lived experiences, the case study provides an opportunity to explore the complexities of social interaction, media engagement, and local development initiatives (Creswell & Poth, 2021).

3.3 Sampling Techniques

This study is concerned with investigating the campus radio's role in local community development in a society. Sampling technique directs researchers to know whom to interview (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Qualitative sampling arguably does not concern itself with a large superficial representation of individuals. Instead, the aim is to get in touch with respondents who will be able to share their unique slice of reality, and all these slices of experiences put together to illustrate the range of variation and similarity obtained by the researcher. This implies that the researcher did not start with a specific sample size in mind.

The researcher keeps sampling until there is a saturated information about the phenomenon under study (Elmusharaf, 2012). Also, the sampling technique for a study is mostly dependent on the objectives of the study (Given, 2008). An intelligent sampling strategy enables researchers to make systematic contact with communicative phenomena with a minimum of wasted effort (Given, 2008). In view of this, the purposive sampling technique was used for this study.

3.3.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is defined by Oliver and Jupp (2006) as a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher makes decisions about which individuals to include in the sample based on a variety of criteria such as participants' knowledge of the research issue or capacity and willingness to participate in the research.

In quantitative research, the idea of random predominates, with the aim of generalisability, which means the results of the study will be applied to the wider population (Patton, 2002). However, qualitative research requires a different sampling technique from the randomly selected and probabilistic sampling often employed by

quantitative researchers (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). In qualitative research, the typical approach to sampling is purposive, with the aim of “generating insights and in-depth understanding” (Patton, 2002 p.230).

Many researchers who adopt the qualitative approach use a sampling technique that directs their choice of what to observe or whom to interview (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Lindlof and Taylor (2019) also note that no qualitative researcher can capture every event as it unfolds, thus, the purposeful selection of data sites for a particular study.

Similarly, Wimmer and Dominick (2013) also argue that purposive sampling includes data or subjects that are selected for possessing specific features that are in line with the study.

Creswell (2014) also posits that, the purposive sampling technique considers the selection of sites and participants that will aid the researcher in understanding the problem and the research question. He further points out that, when using the purposive sampling, decisions need to be made about who or what is sampled, what form the sampling should take and how many people or sites need to be sampled. Purposive sampling, according to Bernard (2002), entails the researcher determining what information is needed and then going out to find people who can and are able to provide it based on their expertise or experience.

Guided by these principles, this study adopted purposive sampling to select participants who could provide both institutional and community perspectives on ATL FM’s role in local development. The selection of participants from the station and community members who call into the programmes was because of their direct involvement in content conceptualisation, management, and implementation, making them critical sources for understanding the station’s institutional intentions and strategies.

The community members were chosen based on their consistent participation through phone-ins, and SMS interactions. Their sustained engagement positioned them as active stakeholders rather than passive consumers, enabling them to provide reflective accounts of the station's responsiveness, inclusivity, and developmental relevance within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

3.4 Sample Size

Creswell and Creswell (2018) define sample as a subset of a larger population, carefully selected to provide insights into the characteristics of the whole. In qualitative research, the sample serves as a representation of specific perspectives, experiences, or phenomena rather than aiming for statistical generalisation. This process involves examining the characteristics of a sample through which researchers can generate in depth understandings and interpret the meanings participants ascribe to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Unlike quantitative research, where larger, randomly selected samples are required to generalise findings to a population, qualitative studies aim for in-depth understanding of processes, perceptions, and experiences within a specific context (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), sample size is a “terra incognita,” with no fixed threshold; what matters is whether participants provide sufficiently diverse and rich perspectives to answer the research question (p. 129). Similarly, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggest that for homogeneous groups or studies with clearly defined phenomena, saturation often occurs within 6–12 interviews, making smaller samples adequate for generating meaningful qualitative insights. Bernard (2002) further emphasises that qualitative research focuses on identifying participants who can provide

expertise, relevant experiences, or deep engagement with the phenomenon, rather than capturing numerical breadth.

In line with these principles, six participants were selected for the study using purposive sampling. A preliminary review of programme records, social media interactions, and general observation was done to identify frequent contributors to the station's community-oriented segments. From this pool, four participants were purposively chosen based on their consistent engagement on programmes through phone calls and sms, diversity of perspectives, capacity to articulate their experiences and willingness to participate and were available for the study. For the management of the station, the General Stations Manager directed the researcher to the Deputy Stations Manager and a Programme Producer who were available. The sample included two institutional actors, the Deputy Station Manager and a Programme Producer whose roles provide strategic and operational insights into programming, community engagement, and participatory communication practices. These participants offer an organizational perspective on how ATL FM navigates its dual identity as a campus and community radio station, which is central to the research focus. In qualitative studies, depth of engagement is often more critical than numerical breadth. The relatively small sample allowed for detailed exploration of perceptions, institutional intentions, and participatory experiences.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Data collection for this study was carried out in a systematic and phased manner to ensure depth, credibility, and contextual accuracy. The process began with preliminary familiarisation visits to ATL FM, during which the researcher observed the station environment, programme flow, and staff interactions. These visits helped the researcher gain contextual understanding of the station's operations and establish rapport with

management staff and programme producers, which is essential in qualitative research to encourage openness and trust (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Following this initial familiarisation, participants were approached based on their relevance to the study objectives. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to each participant and obtained their voluntary consent before any data were collected. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with the select management staff, the producer and active community members. Interviews were carried out face-to-face at locations convenient to participants, including the ATL FM premises and selected community settings. Each interview followed an interview guide but allowed flexibility for probing and follow-up questions to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and involvement with ATL FM's programming and community engagement initiatives. In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted non-participant observations of selected ATL FM programmes that focused on community issues and development-related discussions. The observation process involved listening to live broadcasts and, where possible, attending studio sessions without interfering in programme production. During these sessions, the researcher took detailed field notes focusing on programme content, interaction patterns, language use, audience participation mechanisms such as phone-ins, and the inclusion of community voices. These observations complemented the interview data by providing firsthand insight into how participation and development-oriented programming were enacted in practice.

Data collection occurred over a defined period to allow repeated engagement with the field and enhance the credibility of the findings. Interviews were documented through detailed field notes taken during and immediately after each session to ensure accuracy and minimise loss of detail. Throughout the data collection process, these field notes were carefully reviewed and expanded where necessary, and subsequently analysed to ensure completeness, consistency, and faithful representation of participants' responses. This combination of interviews and observations enabled triangulation, strengthening the trustworthiness of the study's findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.4.1 Interview

A semi-structured interview guide was developed, focusing on the objectives and research questions of the study. The main goal of research interviews is to obtain people's views, experiences, beliefs, and/or motivations on specific topics (Seidman, 1998). Qualitative data collection methods, in contrast to purely quantitative methods such as structured questionnaires, are considered to offer a deeper, more nuanced understanding of complex social phenomena (Gill et al., 2008). In line with this perspective, the current study employed in-depth semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method. These interviews were conducted with two key informants at ATL FM, specifically the Deputy Station Manager (representing the Station Manager) and a programme producer. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in probing emerging themes, while still maintaining focus on core areas relevant to the study's objectives, thereby enabling the researcher to explore participants' experiences, insights, and contextual knowledge in rich detail.

In addition, four regular callers/listeners from selected local communities who call to make contributions or ask questions on local development focused programmes were interviewed. The researcher conducted face-to-face interview with each of the participants thus the Deputy Station's Manager of ATL Radio and a programme producer at the station's premises and the four community members who are ardent listeners frequently call into community development programmes. The four community members were interviewed at various locations within the Cape Coast.

Participants were encouraged to speak freely and in-depth about the topic under investigation, without being restricted by predetermined or narrowly focused short answer questions (Given, 2008). The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face at the ATL FM station premises, in a quiet room within the building complex to ensure minimal distractions and privacy for participants. The interviews lasted between 35 to 50 minutes, depending on the depth of discussion and participant engagement. Notes were also taken during the interviews to record non-verbal cues, environmental context, and any immediate observations. This careful documentation ensured that the data collected was rich, detailed, and suitable for thematic analysis, capturing both the verbal and non-verbal dimensions of participants' experiences with ATL FM programming and community engagement.

This open-ended approach allowed for the emergence of unanticipated insights, enabling a richer understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. However, it is essential to acknowledge that no single interview technique is universally applicable to all research settings or participants. As Denzin et al. (1974) assert, the effectiveness of an interview method is contingent upon the specific context, the nature of the inquiry, and the individual characteristics of respondents. Therefore, flexibility and adaptability

were key considerations in the interview process to ensure relevance, comfort, and depth in participant responses.

Seidman (1998) posits that the term "interviewing" applies a variety of techniques (including face-to-face, focus group, and telephone interviews). Therefore, the interview involved posing questions to respondents for answers on face-to-face sessions. Respondents were encouraged to give their opinions on situations without interruptions by the researcher.

3.4.2 Observation

In qualitative research, the researcher is not a detached observer but an active instrument in the data collection process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Observation, particularly participant and nonparticipant observation, allows the researcher to gain deep insights into the lived experiences, behaviors, and interactions of participants within their natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldaña & Omasta, 2021). As Tracy (2020) emphasises, qualitative inquiry values the presence of the researcher as a vital component in meaning-making, making direct observation a powerful technique for gathering contextual and behavioral data.

This study employed structured non-participant observation, supplemented by reflective journaling, to capture qualitative information on the operations of ATL FM. The rationale for adopting structured non-participant observation and reflective journaling was informed by the researcher's prior professional experience with campus radio stations, which positioned him to understand the nuances of broadcast environments and to establish rapport with individuals involved in the station's operations. Observations

were used not only to supplement data from interviews but also to enrich the understanding of the day-to-day dynamics at the station (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The process of data collection for this study involved several interrelated stages, carefully designed to ensure credibility, trustworthiness, and depth of understanding consistent with qualitative research principles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher adopted multiple data collection strategies, including non-participant observation, in depth interviews and field notes to generate a rich, context-specific information on ATL FM and its surrounding communities.

As part of the data collection process, the researcher undertook familiarisation visits to ATL FM to establish rapport with key management, staff, and some community members. These preliminary engagements were essential for building trust and reducing power imbalances between the researcher and participants which form a crucial aspect of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During this phase, the researcher observed the radio station's daily operations, programming activities, and interactions between staff and community members to gain a contextual understanding of the research setting.

The observation process spanned six months. During this period, the researcher listened to ATL FM regularly and made in-person visits to the station twice per week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays totaling 60 visits. These visits varied in length, from one to three hours. While at the station, the researcher engaged informally with staff members and made detailed observations of the studio environment, workflows, and interpersonal interactions. A reflective journal was used throughout to document impressions, thoughts, and observed behaviors. This journal

served as a critical tool for comparing experiential observations with the narratives gathered during interviews, thereby enhancing the study's credibility and interpretive depth (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021).

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility and probing to explore emerging themes in greater depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach provided participants the freedom to elaborate on their experiences with ATL FM, their perceptions of its role in community development, and their personal engagement with its programmes.

Field notes were reviewed to verify the accuracy and completeness of the data. This process of triangulation involving integrating interviews, observation data, and field notes contribute towards enhancing the credibility and dependability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is an inherently active and iterative process. Researchers engage in close, deliberate readings of the data, often re-reading transcripts multiple times to search for underlying meanings, patterns, and nuanced insights (Polit and Beck, 2008). In line with this approach, the current study adopted thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke (2022) identify as one of several core qualitative data analysis methods, including content analysis, discourse analysis, and comparative methods. Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility and its capacity to yield rich, detailed accounts of participants' experiences. According to Braun and Clarke (2022), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a specific research question.

Through this strategy, the researcher organised and simplified complex qualitative data into manageable, meaningful categories that directly addressed the study's research questions. It allowed for a comparison of the narratives of community members with those of ATL FM's Deputy Station Manager and a programmes producer, thereby exploring convergences and divergences in perceptions. To complement the interviews, the researcher also engaged in non-participant observation of selected ATL FM programmes that specifically targeted community development, offering an additional layer of insight.

The analysis process began with the transcription of all audio-recorded interviews into written text. Following this, the researcher undertook an initial immersion phase, reading through the full dataset to gain a holistic understanding, as recommended by Creswell (2003). According to Seidman (2006), interviews often resemble forms of storytelling that reveal meaning through the use of narrative. In this spirit, the participants' narratives were examined for language, tone, and structure, and key phrases and expressions were categorised and coded to support the emergence of themes.

The coding process was guided by a set of pre-existing codes, as suggested by Crabtree and Miller (1992), which were supplemented by inductive codes that emerged during the analysis phase, in accordance with Creswell (2014). Once initial codes were assigned, similar or related codes were grouped into broader thematic categories. This helped structure the data into analytical units of meaning, as advised by Braun and Clarke (2022).

Themes were then reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately represented the full dataset. Some themes were merged, redefined, or discarded based on their relevance and recurrence within the data. Each final theme was clearly defined to reflect its

contextual meaning, and findings were triangulated with observational data to enhance validity.

In the final stage of analysis, the identified themes were supported with direct quotations from participants and field observations, providing empirical grounding and authenticity to the findings. This approach produced detailed, context-sensitive insights that would not have been easily attainable through quantitative or structured methods alone (Rubin and Rubin, 1995).

3.7 Trustworthiness and Credibility

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is fundamental to ensuring that the study's findings are credible, dependable, and authentic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence that qualitative researchers can place in their data, interpretations, and conclusions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It ensures that the research process is rigorous and the findings reflect participants' true experiences within their context (Moon et al., 2016).

Trustworthiness in this study was enhanced through several strategies, including prolonged engagement, triangulation of data sources, maintaining an audit trail, and providing thick descriptions of the research context. These techniques are consistent with established principles for ensuring rigour and integrity in qualitative inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

The application of these strategies allowed the researcher to engage in prolonged interaction with the study setting through repeated visits to ATL FM and sustained observation of selected programmes over an extended period. This allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the station's operations, programming

routines, and patterns of community participation, thereby reducing the risk of superficial or misleading interpretations. Triangulation was achieved by combining data from multiple sources, including semi-structured interviews with management staff and community members, non-participant observation of programmes, and field notes. This enabled the researcher to compare perspectives across participants and validate findings through convergence of evidence.

An audit trail was maintained by documenting all stages of the research process, including interview guides, field notes, and analytical decisions. This ensured transparency and allowed the logic of the study to be traced from data collection through analysis. Thick description was achieved by providing detailed contextual accounts of ATL FM's programming environment, participant experiences, and interaction dynamics, enabling readers to assess the transferability of the findings to similar campus radio contexts. Together, these strategies ensured that the study's findings credibly reflect participants' lived experiences and the realities of campus radio engagement within the Cape Coast Metropolis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a fundamental component of sound social research practice. As Neuman (2006) asserts, researchers must proactively engage with ethical issues from the earliest stages of study design to ensure that the research process upholds integrity, respect, and accountability. In the present study, ethical principles were strictly observed, with particular emphasis on voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality, in line with established research ethics guidelines (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To begin with, participants were informed about the purpose, objectives, and significance of the research to enable them to make an informed decision regarding their participation. Participation was strictly voluntary, and individuals retained the right to decline or withdraw at any stage without any repercussions. Consent was sought prior to data collection, in accordance with accepted ethical standards in social research. The study also ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants. To protect anonymity, respondents were not required to disclose their names or any personally identifying information on the interview guides. In terms of confidentiality, all data collected were handled with strict discretion. The researcher made it clear that information provided would be used solely for academic purposes, and that no identifying details would be disclosed or shared with third parties.

Furthermore, the researcher fully disclosed their identity and role to participants, thereby promoting transparency and eliminating any potential concerns about deception. These ethical safeguards were put in place to foster trust, enhance data credibility, and ensure that the study adhered to the highest ethical standards in qualitative research.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a systematic overview of the research methodology employed in the study. It detailed the qualitative research design adopted, with an emphasis on the use of a naturalistic approach to explore and understand the phenomenon within its real-world, context-specific setting. The chapter outlined the rationale for selecting a case study strategy, discussed the methods of data collection and analysis, and justified the use of qualitative tools such as semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation to elicit rich, in-depth insights from participants.

Furthermore, the chapter addressed critical ethical considerations, including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality, ensuring that the study adhered to established ethical standards in social research. Collectively, these methodological choices were guided by the aim of producing a contextually grounded, participant-informed, and ethically sound understanding of the research problem.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter delves into the pivotal role of ATL FM, a campus radio station, in the development of local communities within the Cape Coast Metropolis. It comprehensively analyses the findings gathered in this study. The discussions aim to unravel the multifaceted influence of ATL FM on community engagement, local governance, education, cultural promotion, and social development. The purpose of this chapter is to present qualitative data derived from the observations of programme broadcasts at ATL FM, as well as interviews with four regular callers from communities within the Cape Coast Metropolis, the Deputy Station Manager of ATL FM, and a programme producer. The chapter presents the results of the data gathered from the study. After the coding and categorisation, major themes and their sub-themes emerged. The findings are, therefore, presented under the themes to provide answers to the following research questions:

4. What is the nature of participation of Cape Coast community members in the programmes of ATL FM?
5. How does ATL FM's programming content address the development needs of communities in Cape Coast Metropolis?
6. What are the perspectives of community members on ATL FM programming content?

In response to research question one, three key themes emerged from the data: levels of community engagement, representation in programming, and barriers to participation. Research question two generated themes centered on the role of education and capacity building, promotion of social cohesion and community development, and advocacy for

social change. For research question three, the dominant themes identified were programming content and relevance, accessibility and outreach, and prompt feedback and responsiveness.

The researcher triangulated the perspectives of interviewing respondents with personal observations at ATL FM for a six-month period. Additionally, an interview was conducted with the Deputy Station Manager of ATL FM to obtain management's perspective on the station's operations in relation to the research questions. Consequently, data interpretation and discussion were structured according to the identified thematic areas, ensuring a comprehensive analysis that integrates participant responses, managerial insights, and researcher observation.

4.1 RQ1. What is the nature of the participation of local communities in the programming of ATL FM?

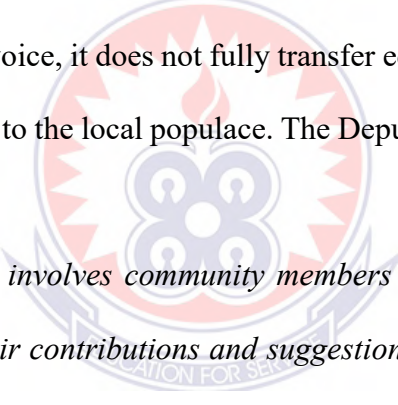
The purpose of the study was to explore the nature of participation of local communities in ATL FM's programming. The nature of participation specifically refers to the form, depth, and extent of involvement of community members in the ownership, management, production, and use of the medium. Participation in this sense goes beyond audience listenership to encompass active engagement in programme creation, editorial decision-making, and governance structures (Carpentier, 2011). The findings, therefore, delves into how participation occurs, how the voices of the community members are prioritised.

The views of the deputy station manager and community members were solicited to answer the research question. The views of the deputy station manager and the community members were validated through observation by the researcher. Based on the qualitative data collected, several themes emerged with key stakeholders such as the

deputy station manager, and two local community members. The themes were: *moderated participation and consultative and episodic.*

4.1.1. Moderated Participation

One of the themes from the research question is moderated participation. This form of participation is primarily mediated, occurring within structured spaces provided by the station such as phone-ins, short message service (SMS), WhatsApp, and social media interactions. It allows listeners to contribute to programmes, comment on ongoing discussions, and respond to prompts posed by presenters, but it is controlled. Moderated participation, therefore, is characterised by access and interaction, rather than shared decision-making or collaborative content creation. While the station's model facilitates a degree of community voice, it does not fully transfer editorial authority or programme conceptualisation power to the local populace. The Deputy Station Manager of ATL FM indicated that:



The station involves community members in our programmes through their contributions and suggestions via phone-ins and other digital platforms.

(Deputy Station Manager, ATL FM)

On the part of community members participation, respondent 1 confirmed the information from the station's manager that he mostly participates in station's programmes through phone ins, SMS and social media. Respondent 1 commended the station's effort of engaging community members but noted that there is room for improvement. The respondent said:

"I've always participated in ATL FM's programmes through calls and SMS. The agriculture segment in the Akan morning show encourages home gardening and household animal

rearing. I believe they should engage us to introduce new segments."

(Respondent 1, Community Member)

The researcher observed that ATL FM mainly utilises the participation of community members on the programmes of the station through phone ins, sending of sms and social media interactions. Though Ibrahim and Mishra (2016) encourage active participation of community members in the management and creation of content of programmes of community radio, ATL FM ensures this through phone ins and social media interaction.

While ATL FM facilitates verbal participation through call-ins and on-air discussions, the community feedback is recognised. However, participation is monitored and structured as a means to maintain editorial flow, comply with scheduling constraints, and moderate the volume and quality of contributions.

"I've always participate in ATL FM's programmes through calls and SMS. The agriculture segment in the Akan morning show encourages home gardening and household animal rearing."

(Respondent 1, Community Member)

Respondent 2 observed that:

"I contribute to the topic under discussion for the programme but we are not consulted when they are deciding on the topics."

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

These perspectives underscore the reactive nature of participation, where community members are invited to respond to pre-determined content rather than co-create or shape

the station's programming agenda. In other words, ATL FM facilitates audience interactivity, but the station maintains control over content and programme structure, creating a moderated participatory environment.

ATL FM currently operates within a minimalist participatory model. Although it provides platforms during on-air programmes and occasional visits, it falls short of involving them in editorial decisions thus limiting its democratic potential.

The Democratic Participant Media Theory (DPMT) provides a useful lens for interpreting ATL FM's moderated participation. DPMT, as articulated by McQuail (2010), argues that media should function as a democratic space, enabling citizens to express opinions and also to participate in shaping content, influencing decisions, and exercising communicative power. ATL FM partially adheres to these principles by creating platforms for audience engagement, decentralising communication flow, and amplifying community voices through phone-ins and social media.

However, the station falls short of full realisation of DPMT's ideals. While listeners can interact, the structural power over programming, content selection, and editorial decisions remains with the station's management. Carpentier's (2011) draws distinction between interaction and participation pointing out that interaction occurs when audiences respond to content, whereas participation involves sharing decision-making power. ATL FM's current practice falls within a minimalist or moderated form of participation which promotes expression but does not redistribute authority.

ATL FM provides space for community dialogue on issues such as agriculture, health, and education, reflecting PDP principles in practice. The agriculture segment on the Akan morning show, for instance, encourages community members to share

experiences on home gardening and household animal rearing, creating a knowledge exchange platform. Nevertheless, the station's reliance on phone-ins and digital interactions limits the depth and transformative potential of participation. Participation is therefore moderated, constrained by broadcast logistics, time schedules, and Ibrahim and Mishra (2016) argue that community radio reaches its transformative potential when audiences are empowered to co-create content and engage in station governance. In ATL FM's case, moderated participation achieves the first goal—audience expression but falls short of genuine co-creation.

4.1.2 Consultative

Within the context of this study, Consultative Participation is one of the themes that emerged out of this research question. This form of participation facilitates interaction, dialogue, and discursive influence but does not extend to shared institutional decision-making. Through the lens of Democratic Participant Media Theory and the Participatory Development Paradigm, the analysis demonstrates that while ATL FM facilitates meaningful community voice and representation, structural power over programming processes remains concentrated within station management.

Participation is not only about circulation of information but also about creating dialogic processes in which local knowledge is articulated and exchanged (Servaes, 1999; Gumucio-Dagron, 2001). Also, scholars such as Arnstein (1969) have long warned that many development contexts remain at the level of consultation where voices are invited but influence on structural decisions is limited.

The findings from ATL FM within the consultative frame suggest that community members interact actively and influence discussion, but do not share in decisions concerning programming architecture, scheduling, or editorial policy.

Evidence from interviews with management, producers, and community members confirms that ATL FM intentionally creates opportunities for community voices to be heard within programme discussions. These opportunities reflect structured consultation rather than co-production.

The Deputy Station Manager explained:

“Our mandate as a campus-based community radio station is to serve the University community and the surrounding communities in Cape Coast. We allow stakeholders to speak on issues affecting them. Their views shape discussions, but the responsibility for programme design and editorial direction remains with us.”

(Deputy Station Manager, ATL FM)

This is consistent with findings from Ghanaian community radio research. Alhassan (2005) indicated that community radio stations in Ghana often seek to serve as platforms for local voices and grassroots concerns yet must operate within organisational guidelines and regulatory frameworks that limit how much control communities can exert over programming. Likewise, Tietaah, G. K. M., Amoakohene, M. I., & Smith, M. S. (2019) observe that while community radio in Ghana was envisioned as a space for empowering ordinary citizens, stations frequently balance this vision against institutional mandates, professional broadcasting standards, and licensing requirements. Together, these scholars show that Ghanaian community radio endeavours to give communities a voice but does so within a structured environment shaped by formal obligations and accountability systems.

The Programme Producer observed:

“Our listeners who are mainly from the communities sometimes raise issues we did not initially prioritise. When this happens, it influences how we steer the conversation and may even determine follow-up topics.”

(Programme Producer, ATL FM)

Wilkins and Tufte (2005) describes this as a form of dialogic participation within managed communication environments, where dialogue is encouraged and community voices are valued, yet institutional authority is preserved. In practice, this means that while community contributions influence discussions and bring local realities to the forefront, they do not translate into control over programme design, editorial choices, or long-term decision-making which are hallmarks of consultative rather than active participation.

Responses from community members confirmed that their involvement was interactive and meaningful, though clearly bounded by institutional limits.

“Some fisherfolks, including myself, have had the opportunity to go to ATL FM studio ATL FM for discussion on issues affecting fisherfolks”

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

Similarly, a community member noted:

“When we call into the in-and-around segment and talk about issues on the development of Cape Coast, most of the times, the authorities

act on them. Some of the issues we raise has to do with sanitation, education, infrastructure, patriotism etc.”

(Respondent 3, Community Member)

Another community member said:

“ATL FM gives us voice, especially on issues affecting traders and families.”

(Respondent 4, Community Member)

These accounts trace a consistent pattern in how community members experience participation through opportunities to express their views, feel included, and influence discussions, yet their involvement does not extend to shaping the station’s structures or decision-making processes. This observation is supported by Servaes (1999) and Gumucio-Dagron (2001), who note that while participatory media enable communities to voice concerns and engage in dialogue, such engagement often stops short of granting control over institutional or organisational decisions. Similarly, Fraser (1990) notes that access to public dialogue does not automatically translate into decision-making power, highlighting the gap between voice and structural influence in participatory contexts.

In Ghana, the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN) has promoted participatory principles, yet operational realities frequently result in consultative rather than transformative models. Stations must meet regulatory requirements, maintain broadcast standards, and ensure sustainability. Consequently, managerial oversight remains necessary, limiting full decentralisation of power.

Within the Participatory Development Paradigm, communication is conceived as dialogue rather than transmission (Servaes, 1999). ATL FM embodies this dialogic

principle by foregrounding experiential knowledge. Community contributors articulate lived realities related to fishing, agriculture, youth employment, and market conditions. These contributions enrich public understanding and potentially influence policy awareness.

Gumucio-Dagron (2001) stresses that participation becomes meaningful when communities see their realities reflected in communication processes. The testimonies from respondents suggest that ATL FM achieves this reflective function. However, there is emphasis on empowerment through shared control, an element that is not fully realised in the station's governance structure.

Therefore, consultative participation at ATL FM can be conceptualised as structured responsiveness. The station actively seeks input, integrates local voices, and adjusts discussions accordingly. However, producers determine feedback they deem relevant into future programming,

This feeds into Arnstein's (1969) "consultation" rung of participation where stakeholders are heard but not empowered to make binding decisions. While critics may interpret this as limited participation, it is important to contextualise such arrangements within regulatory, institutional, and professional realities.

Consultative participation contributes meaningfully to ATL FM's relevance within the Cape Coast community. The station creates opportunities for fisherfolk, farmers, youth leaders, and women's groups to discuss issues that affect their daily lives. Community members increasingly regard ATL FM as a space where concerns can be shared and publicly examined. Such engagements promote shared understanding, raise awareness, and support collective reflection on local challenges. Public dialogue emerging from

these discussions often strengthens community consciousness and reinforces the station's developmental role.

Clear boundaries, however, shape the extent of this engagement. Community contributors are invited to participate in discussions, yet they do not determine which programmes are introduced, how they are structured, or what long-term editorial priorities guide the station. Absence of community involvement in agenda-setting and policy formulation means that participation influences conversations without extending into institutional control. Impact therefore occurs mainly at the level of discourse rather than governance.

Participation at ATL FM is best described as consultative—interactive, visible, and meaningful, though not transformative. Community members actively engage in programme discussions, help shape how issues are framed on air, and experience recognition within the broadcast space. These experiences underscore access and voice which are central to Democratic Participant Media Theory, as well as the dialogic orientation of the Participatory Development Paradigm. Shared authority over organisational decision-making, however, remains limited.

4.1.3 Episodic

Another theme that emerged under the research question is episodic participation. Episodic participation occurs at specific moments or segments, particularly during phone-in shows and interactive discussion slots. Participation in this form is not continuous throughout programming; rather, it is event-based, time-bound, and dependent on technological access. In this form of participation, audience interaction is often structured around specific airtime windows rather than embedded across the entire production process (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994; McNair, 2017).

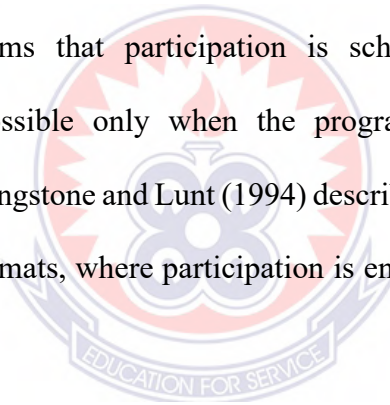
The phone-in segments at ATL FM, phone-in is classified as episodic participation. These segments in discussion shows or programmes of the station create temporary spaces for audience interaction, usually after the main discussion has been introduced by hosts or studio guests.

The Deputy Station Manager explained:

“We design certain programmes to include phone-in sessions, especially when it comes to community issues. That is when listeners actively participate.”

(Deputy Programme Manager, ATL FM)

This description confirms that participation is scheduled rather than embedded. Interaction becomes possible only when the programme format permits it. Such arrangement is what Livingstone and Lunt (1994) describes as controlled audience access within broadcast talk formats, where participation is encouraged but carefully managed within time constraints.



The Programme Producer added:

“The phone-in window usually lasts between 10 to 30 minutes, depending on the programme. The phone lines are not opened throughout because of time pressure and programming structure.”

(Programme Producer, ATL FM)

Here, participation is shaped by airtime availability. The opportunity to contribute depends not only on willingness but also on timing. This highlights the idea that episodic participation is bounded by broadcast logistics rather than sustained engagement. In this

context, Guo (2015) explains that participation in mediated spaces is often “event-centered,” meaning that it occurs within designated communicative moments rather than as an ongoing process of shared decision-making. Such event-centered participation is enabled by technological access but constrained by production timelines. This means that even when stations promote openness, the structure of programming limits how and when community voices are heard. As explained by Amadu and Alhassan (2018) and Obeng-Quaidoo (1986), phone-in formats create moments of voice, but do not automatically translate into sustained influence over station policy or programming direction. This means that even when stations promote openness, the structure of programming limits how and when community voices are heard.

Community members confirmed that their participation is often tied to specific time slots.

“Calling into the programme is mostly difficult because of the number of people who call at the same time.”

(Respondent 1, Community Member)

Another community member explained:

“The discussion are always interesting, but we are told to wait until the phone lines are opened. If you’re unable to get your call through, then it means you’ve to call another time.”

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

These reflections show that participation is contingent upon timing rather than continuous inclusion. Scholars such as Dahlgren (2009) argue that mediated participation often depends on structured communicative opportunities, meaning citizens participate within institutional rhythms rather than shaping those rhythms themselves.

Episodic participation at ATL FM is also heavily dependent on access to communication tools. Participation during phone-in sessions requires access to a mobile phone, call credit, or internet connectivity for social media engagement.

“Network problems can also prevent you from getting through. By the time the call connects, the programme may have moved on.”

(Respondent 4, Community Member)

These accounts reveal that episodic participation is not equally accessible to all listeners. Participation becomes mediated not only by institutional scheduling but also by technological and economic factors. Norris (2001) highlights how digital and communication inequalities shape access to participatory spaces, even when platforms appear open.

Myers (2011) observes that while call-in formats create an impression of open participation, structural inequalities such as affordability of airtime and network coverage influence who can engage. Thus, episodic participation may inadvertently privilege those with reliable technological access.

At ATL FM, episodic participation therefore operates at the level of momentary engagement. Listeners influence the immediate flow of discussion but rarely shape long-term programming or editorial decisions. Fraser’s (1990) argument about the gap between communicative access and communicative power is relevant here: callers gain access to speak, but control over the platform remains elsewhere.

Within Democratic Participant Media Theory, episodic participation represents a minimal but meaningful form of democratic engagement. It broadens access and allows

citizens to publicly articulate concerns. Downing (2001) argues that even limited spaces for voice can challenge dominant narratives and create pluralistic discourse.

From the perspective of Participatory Development Paradigm, episodic engagement falls short of sustained dialogue or empowerment. Servaes (1999) describes continuous interaction and shared meaning-making as hallmarks of participatory communication. Episodic participation, because it is time-bound and fragmented, does not fully realise this dialogic ideal.

Thus, while phone-in segments increase visibility and immediate responsiveness, they do not transform structural relationships within the station.

4.5 RQ2: How does ATL FM address the development needs of communities in Cape Coast communities through its programming content?

The study explored ATL FM's experiences in meeting the developmental needs of the local communities through its programmes. The data revealed that ATL FM plays a significant role in shaping the local media landscape. The station's programming brings a myriad of benefits to the local communities, serving as a source for information, education, and empowerment. Three themes emerged from the data: *education and capacity building; social cohesion and community building and; advocacy and social change*.

4.5.1 Education and capacity building

The qualitative data revealed that through educational programmes, such as talk shows, and discussions, ATL FM addresses critical issues including education, and local culture, thereby enhancing the community's knowledge and awareness. From the data gathered, community-centered programmes offered by ATL FM often feature experts

and local leaders, providing a platform for learning and discussion that is directly relevant to the community's needs in terms of education and capacity building. The responses below bring to the fore ATL FM's commitment to the development of communities in Cape Coast.

" Although I did not go far in formal schooling, programmes on ATL FM especially those focused on the fishing community have helped us learn best practices, safety measures, and how to manage our fishing income."

(Respondent 1, Community Member)

Expert-led programme segments go beyond general discussion to provide practical knowledge that can influence everyday behaviour. In the context of participatory and development communication, such programming shows how community radio can turn specialised expertise into guidance that is relevant and useful for local communities (Carpentier, 2011; McQuail, 2010). Agricultural topics, which are a common feature in educational broadcasting and closely linked to daily livelihoods, can inspire self-initiative, build local skills, and support sustainable practices at the household level. It highlights the ability of media to foster learning that directly benefits communities and contributes to locally driven development (Obregon & Tufte, 2010; Yankah, 2017).

"Through the Time with School of Agriculture segment on ATL FM, I have gained practical knowledge that helped me start a small garden at my family house."

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

Touching on the practical impact of ATL FM's development-oriented programming, a participant highlighted how expert-led discussions translate into personal learning and behavioural change.

“Educational discussions on ATL FM, particularly those led by experts, have improved my understanding of agriculture and influenced how I apply farming practices at home.”

(Respondent 3, Community Member)

From observation of these programmes and the responses, it is clear that ATL FM plays a significant role in addressing community development needs through targeted educational and capacity-building programming. Programmes such as “Egyanom Afarifo” which targets the fisherfolks within coastal communities and Biribi Soronko which is an Akan version of the weekday morning shows serve as vital platforms for informal education, particularly for occupational groups like fisherfolk who may lack access to formal schooling but possess a deep interest in sector-specific knowledge. These programmes frequently feature all relevant stakeholders from local chief fishermen to policy actors. The content is accessible in local languages during culturally appropriate times which is an indication that ATL FM effectively fosters inclusive learning and community participation.

On a broader scale, these findings reinforce Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada's (2016) perspective that community media can empower marginalised populations when it bridges the gap between local knowledge systems and professional expertise. Carpentier (2011) further argue that such dialogical media spaces provide "meaningful access and participation," which are essential for democratising development processes. In the same vein, Rodriguez (2001) underscores the transformative potential of

community media in building civic agency and grassroots capacities, especially when it promotes locally generated solutions.

ATL FM's programmes extend beyond educational objectives to foster local capacity building among residents of Cape Coast through the inclusion of culturally relevant content, responsive scheduling, and community engagement. The station's alignment with the specific needs of the Cape Coast populace reinforces the potential of campus radio as a development tool, particularly when informed by participatory communication principles. However, ATL FM could further enhance its developmental impact by introducing more targeted programmes that address pressing local issues and by actively involving indigenous community members in content creation and programme planning. This approach would not only deepen community ownership but also ensure that the station remains a truly inclusive platform for local development.

4.5.2 Social Cohesion and Community Building

ATL FM has grown to become more than just a platform for broadcasting representing a voice for the people. Through its programmes, the station brings together students, staff, and community members as a way of strengthening community bond and creating a sense of belonging and shared purpose. The station creates opportunities for dialogue and cultural expression thereby strengthening social ties and addressing local development needs (Girard, 2001). As Fraser and Estrada (2001) note, when radio becomes a space for people to connect and collaborate, it serves as a powerful tool for building inclusive and cohesive communities.

ATL FM reaches out to everyone in the community, making people feel heard and valued. Its programmes spark dialogue, celebrate cultural connections, and invite participation, creating a sense that each voice matters in shaping local conversations and decisions.

"Our mission goes beyond broadcasting music or news; we aim to amplify the voices of every segment of the community. Whether it's students, lecturers, or local residents, we intentionally create programmes that encourage dialogue, cultural sharing, and civic participation.

(Deputy Station Manager, ATL FM)

ATL FM connects the community together around shared concerns and common goals. Featuring local leaders, experts, and university members gives listeners a sense of connection and inclusion, helping them feel part of conversations that affect their daily lives.

"ATL FM helps us feel united as a community. They feature local leaders, experts, government officials, lecturers, and community members from UCC to discuss issues affecting our daily lives. It feels like a forum for social bonding with a common objective of developing our communities."

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

The station through its programmes promotes social cohesion and a sense of belonging among listeners. This provides space where mutual understanding, cooperation, and collaboration can flourish, reinforcing the communal identity and a sense of responsibility for local development.

"ATL FM creates a sense of belonging among people in the community. Its programmes reflect the experiences and concerns of various groups. By discussing cultural activities

and community challenges, the station promotes mutual understanding and cooperation"

(Respondent 4, Community Member)

ATL FM's active engagement of diverse voices across Cape Coast metropolis has contributed significantly to providing a platform for dialogue, mutual understanding, and a shared commitment to progress. As reflected in the responses of community members, ATL FM goes beyond being a broadcaster to act as facilitator of social bonds, a platform for civic engagement, and a contributor to local identity. In this context, ATL FM stands out as a model of how campus radio can serve as a catalyst for unity and grassroots development.

4.5.3 Advocacy and Social Change

This theme focused on ATL FM's role in advocacy and championing social change in communities within Cape Coast. ATL FM serves as a platform for raising awareness on issues that directly affect the lives of residents, positioning itself as a catalyst for informed dialogue and civic engagement (Rennie, 2006; Girard, 2001). It contributes to community development by amplifying local voices, promoting cultural identity, and facilitating public discourse on pressing social, economic, and political issues.

The station actively promotes cultural identity and pride, using programmes to celebrate traditions, festivals, and community achievements (Howley, 2010). This cultural advocacy not only strengthens a sense of belonging among listeners but also fosters social cohesion by highlighting shared values and collective concerns. Moreover, ATL FM facilitates discussions on pressing social, economic, and political matters, such as education, health, gender issues, and governance (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008). By

doing so, the station empowers listeners to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes and encourages community members to take action on matters affecting their daily lives.

The Deputy Station Manager explained the advocacy role of the Station, stating that:

"Our programming is designed not just to inform but to inspire action. We feature discussions on critical local and national issues, and we give our audience the tools to engage with these topics. Whether it's a social campaign, community initiative, or public policy debate, ATL FM aims to mobilize people toward positive change."

(Deputy Station Manager, ATL FM)

The role of ATL FM in addressing community concerns extends beyond mere broadcasting; it actively creates a space for residents to voice their experiences and challenges. The station demonstrates its influence in prompting dialogue and encouraging responsiveness from authorities through discussion on local issues.

"ATL FM has become the voice for many in Cape Coast. They discuss issues like sanitation, poor roads, education, and youth unemployment, giving us space to talk about them. Often, after these discussions, city authorities take some action, showing that the station is taken seriously."

(Respondent 1, Community Member)

The station's advocacy campaigns on public health and environmental issues demonstrate the practical impact of participatory media in shaping community awareness

and behaviour. ATL FM leverages its programmes and initiatives, to bridge knowledge gaps and encourages citizens to act on pressing local challenges, even when formal authorities are slow to respond

"ATL FM has consistently advocated a cleaner Cape Coast and better public health. The station runs campaigns, including jingles about reckless riding by motorcycles and tricycles, raising awareness even when city authorities are slow to act."

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

ATL FM exhibits the watchdog role of community media to highlight local issues and facilitating dialogue between residents and authorities. The station's ability to influence both public opinion and local governance depicting its legitimacy as a participatory platform that promotes accountability and civic engagement (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008; Segbenya et al., 2020).

"ATL FM does more than entertain; it highlights problems like environmental cleanliness, road safety, and youth-related issues. These discussions raise public awareness and encourage accountability from authorities, positioning the station as a platform leaders cannot ignore."

(Respondent 4, Community Member)

From the perspective of the respondents, ATL FM mobilises groups and brings change to society. The station has been a persistent voice for community wellbeing, advocating this through programming and direct content creation, even in the absence of strong institutional response. The qualitative data revealed that the impact of ATL FM is most evident in areas such as Apewosika, Kokoado, Amamoma, Kwaprow, Kwesi Pra,

Akotokyir, Ankaful, Duakro, Ola and Kakumdo which are satellite communities of the University of Cape Coast. Aside from these communities, the larger Cape Coast metropolis, and some communities in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Municipality, Mfantsiman Municipality and Abura Asebu Kwamankese all in the Central Region have benefitted significantly from ATL FM's broadcasts.

4.6 RQ3: What are the perspectives of Cape Coast community members on ATL FM programming?

The study explored community members' perspectives on ATL FM's programming within the Cape Coast metropolis, positioning audience experiences at the centre of the inquiry. In community media scholarship, the meanings audiences attach to programming are essential in understanding whether a station contributes meaningfully to local development and democratic communication, particularly in the case of campus-based radio embedded in its immediate social context (Rennie, 2006). Community radio is theoretically grounded in the principles of participation, access, representation, and dialogic engagement, distinguishing it from top-down and commercially driven broadcasting models.

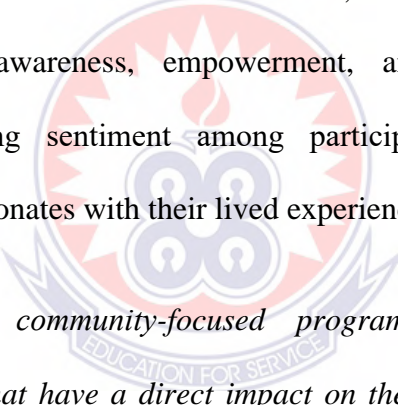
Within this framework, the analysis sought to understand and interpret how community members perceive, experience, and evaluate ATL FM's programming content. By foregrounding participants' narratives and lived experiences, the study generates contextually grounded insights into the extent to which the station reflects the normative ideals of participatory communication and inclusive public discourse articulated in community media literature (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Howley, 2010).

The research question was examined under three thematic lenses: *development oriented, inclusivity, and elitist platform.*

4.6.1 Development Oriented

Beyond music and entertainment, ATL FM carries programmes that address local livelihoods, social services, and governance, including shows targeting specific groups such as fishermen and students (Serwornoo, 2017; Tsegah, 2013).

Under the theme *Development-Oriented*, community members expressed their views on the programme content of the station that focuses on the development of their communities. Participants pointed out the station's focus on issues that directly affect their social and economic wellbeing within the Cape Coast Metropolis. They described the station as relevant, community-driven, and socially responsive. To them, ATL FM is portrayed not merely as a source of entertainment, but as a meaningful platform that contributes to local awareness, empowerment, and shared responsibility for development. A recurring sentiment among participants was that the station's development content resonates with their lived experiences.



“The station’s community-focused programmes consistently address issues that have a direct impact on the development and wellbeing of our communities.”

(Respondent 1, Community Member)

Community members interpret the station's programming as practical and solution-oriented. Consistent with studies on Ghanaian community radio, development-focused broadcasting is valued because it connects media engagement to improvements in daily life and enhances access to relevant information and authorities (Alhassan, 2005; Obregon & Tufte, 2010; Yankah, 2017). Participants in this study echoed this understanding, explaining that ATL FM deepens their knowledge of educational opportunities, public health concerns, and community governance.

The station plays an important role in promoting civic awareness:

“The station invites officials from the Metropolitan Assembly to educate us on legal and socio-cultural matters, and through these discussions, it nurtures a stronger sense of civic responsibility and patriotism among us”

(Respondent 3, Community Member)

This alludes to the perception of ATL FM as a bridge between institutional structures and the wider community. In line with Serwornoo (2017) and Tsegah (2013), respondents described the station as strengthening the relationship between the station and its surrounding communities by making policy discussions accessible and relatable.

From the lens of Democratic-Participant Media Theory, meaningful development communication requires not only the dissemination of information but also the active involvement of citizens in shaping the agenda (Carpentier, 2011; McQuail, 2010). Participants suggested that ATL FM moves in this direction by creating spaces for dialogue and feedback.

“They allow us to call, send messages, and sometimes come to the studio. It makes us feel that our voice matters in the development of this area.”

(Respondent 4, Community Member)

The researcher’s observation during live programmes further affirms these perceptions. Development-oriented discussions often generated active interactions, reflective storytelling, and constructive criticism. Callers shared personal accounts of sanitation challenges, educational concerns, tourism, trade and commerce and youth unemployment. The atmosphere was conversational rather than hierarchical, suggesting

that development was treated as a collective endeavour rather than a top-down prescription.

These perspectives demonstrate that community members perceive ATL FM's programming as authentically development-oriented. The station is viewed as a trusted and empowering communicative space that stimulates awareness, nurtures participation, and supports collaborative approaches to addressing local challenges within the metropolis.

4.6.2 Inclusivity

Inclusivity emerged as a dominant theme in community members' perspectives on ATL FM programming. Participants described the station as accessible, representative, and reflective of diverse social groups within Cape Coast and its surrounding communities. In the context of community media theory, inclusivity refers to the deliberate effort to provide equitable access to media production, participation, and representation for various segments of society, particularly those marginalized in mainstream media (Rennie, 2006).

“ATL FM gives ordinary people like us the chance to speak. It is not only for lecturers or students; even market women and artisans can call in and share their views”

(Respondent 1, Community Member)

Another respondent similarly observed,

“When they discuss issues affecting Kwaprow or Amamoma, they allow residents to contribute. That makes us feel part of the station”

(Respondent 3, Community Member)

These narratives suggest that listeners perceive ATL FM as intentionally creating communicative spaces that transcend social and institutional boundaries.

Community members further highlighted that ATL FM creates opportunities for participation through phone-ins, studio interviews, community-based discussions, and the use of locally understood languages such as Akan. The use of indigenous language programming reduces literacy-related barriers and broadens the participatory base of the station, enabling wider engagement across educational and socio-economic backgrounds. This aligns with Fraser and Estrada's (2001) assertion that community radio becomes meaningful when it fosters active involvement and ensures that programming reflects the lived experiences of its audience. As one respondent explained,

“Because they speak Akan on some programmes, everyone understands and can contribute, even those who are not highly educated.”

(Respondent 4, Community Member)

Furthermore, respondents noted that ATL FM features students, lecturers, local leaders, market women, youth groups, and ordinary residents in its discussions. This diversity of voices strengthens perceptions of fairness and representation, reinforcing the station's legitimacy as a community-centered platform. Such inclusivity contributes to social

4.6.3 Elitist Platform

One of the themes that emerged from the data is the perception of ATL FM as an “elitist platform.” While participants acknowledged the station's developmental contributions, they also raised concerns that its institutional location within the University of Cape Coast influences its programming orientation. In community media discourse, tensions often arise when campus-based stations attempt to balance academic identity with

grassroots accessibility (Rennie, 2006). In this study, some of the respondents perceived that most of programmes are predominantly tailored to the university community and are largely delivered in English, which may inadvertently limit full participation by some local residents.

One community member noted,

“Sometimes the programmes are too academic and dominated by English. It feels like they are speaking more to students and lecturers than to us in the community.”

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

This perception highlights broader concerns about linguistic accessibility and symbolic representation. Language, as scholars argue, is central to inclusion and participation in community broadcasting (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). When English becomes the dominant medium of discourse, sections of the local population particularly those who are more comfortable in Akan feel distanced from active engagement.

However, respondents were quick to clarify that ATL FM is simultaneously performing well in its locally oriented programmes. Participants observed that community-focused programmes are often oversubscribed, attracting high levels of phone-ins and active listener engagement. A respondent explained,

“I have been listening to ATL FM all the time and the programmes that focus on the local communities gets more participation than the other ones in English”

(Respondent 2, Community Member)

This suggests that when content is channeled to the needs of the people and linguistically accessible, community response is very strong.

There were also calls for expanding and diversifying local content to better reflect the cultural heritage of the Fante people and other tribes within the Central Region. Some participants recommended that more programmes should be dedicated specifically to indigenous culture, oral traditions, chieftaincy matters, and community history.

“There used to be a programme called ‘Mpanyin Ahyia’—The Elders Have Met. It brought together traditional leaders and elderly people together to discuss our customs and values. Programmes like that should come back.”

(Respondent 3, Community Member)

This statement highlights the community’s desire for culturally grounded programming that affirms identity and preserves heritage.

This theme, therefore, does not suggest outright exclusion but highlights a perceived imbalance between academic-oriented and community-driven content. While ATL FM is recognised for its strong local programmes, participants emphasised the need to expand such offerings, introduce greater variety, and deepen focus on Fante culture and regional traditions. Addressing these concerns could further strengthen the station’s inclusive mandate and reinforce its legitimacy as a truly community-centered broadcaster.

ATL FM is appreciated for its achievements, yet community members yearn for a more deliberate expansion of local, culturally and development embedded programming to ensure broader participation and representation.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis of ATL FM, a campus-based radio station in the Cape Coast Metropolis, focusing on its contribution to local community development. Drawing on the Democratic Participant Theory, the findings were structured around the three core research questions guiding the study.

On a whole, these findings unearthed ATL FM's multifaceted role as the disseminator of information and facilitator of participatory development and social change. The chapter therefore contributes significantly to understanding how campus radio act as a catalyst for grassroots empowerment and sustainable community development.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the research findings, followed by the conclusions drawn in relation to the study's objectives and research questions. It also offers practical recommendations based on the evidence gathered and the insights developed throughout the study. In addition, the chapter provides suggestions for future research, highlighting areas where further inquiry could enhance understanding or address limitations identified in the current study.

5.1 Summary

This study examined the usefulness and developmental impact of ATL FM, a campus based radio station operating at the University of Cape Coast, on the local communities within its broadcast reach. Specifically, the study sought to: (1) investigate the nature of participation of Cape Coast community members in the programmes of ATL FM; (2) examine how ATL FM addresses the development needs of Cape Coast through its programming content; and (3) explore the perspectives of community members' on ATL FM's programming content.

To achieve these objectives, the study employed a qualitative case study design situated within an interpretive research paradigm, which was appropriate for facilitating the collection, interpretation, and analysis of context-rich, qualitative data. A purposive sampling technique was utilised to identify and engage participants who possessed relevant knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under investigation. The final sample included four community respondents and the Deputy Station Manager and a programme producer of ATL FM.

In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted non-participant observations of selected programmes, enabling the triangulation of data sources and a deeper understanding of the station's operations, community engagement strategies, and developmental orientation.

This study employed a semi-structured interview guide as the principal research instrument, enabling a more grounded and nuanced understanding of the role ATL FM plays in fostering community development within its operational locales. The qualitative nature of these interviews yielded rich, in-depth insights into the respondents' perceptions, emotions, and lived experiences.

All ethical considerations outlined by the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Education, Winneba, were meticulously observed throughout the research process. Given the interpretive paradigm underpinning this study, data analysis necessitated a balanced interpretive approach, one that integrated both the researcher's contextual understanding and the respondents' subjective interpretations.

To facilitate rigorous analysis, thematic analysis was employed as the primary analytical method. The identification and interpretation of themes followed the procedures articulated by Owen (1984), which emphasize recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness as criteria for thematic emergence. This methodological approach enhanced the validity of the findings and supported coherent construct formation. Emerging themes were discerned through close engagement with the interview transcripts, interpreted through the dual lenses of respondent articulation and the researcher's own experiential and theoretical background.

5.2 Summary of Key findings

Following the assessment of the data, several key findings emerged, forming the basis for the conclusions. From the first research question which sought to investigate the nature of participation of Cape Coast community members in the programmes of ATL FM, it emerged that participation of programmes happen mostly at the programme execution or broadcast of programmes.

The study found that community participation in ATL FM's programming is primarily moderated, occurring through structured platforms such as phone-ins, SMS, WhatsApp, and social media, while editorial control remains with station management. Participation is interactive and visible, allowing community members to express views and influence on-air discussions, but it does not extend to shared decision-making or programme governance. The station operates within a consultative framework where community input shapes discourse but does not determine agenda-setting, scheduling, or long-term policy direction. Engagement is also episodic and time-bound, confined to designated interactive segments rather than embedded throughout the production process. Overall, participation at ATL FM is dialogic and responsive but structurally limited, reflecting a minimalist rather than transformative participatory model.

Research question two examined how ATL FM addresses the development needs of Cape Coast communities through its programming content. The findings show that ATL FM supports community development through education and capacity building, social cohesion, and advocacy for social change using locally relevant and participatory programmes. Participants consistently viewed ATL FM as a trusted and inclusive platform that educates, unites community members, amplifies local voices, and stimulates collective action on pressing social and development issues. As described by

Carpentier, 2011; Obregón and Tufte, 2010, expert-led discussions, local-language broadcasts, and livelihood-focused programmes enhance community knowledge, skills, and awareness, particularly among marginalised groups. Inclusive spaces for dialogue, cultural expression, and civic engagement strengthen social bonds and promote collective problem-solving within the communities (Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada, 2016; Rodriguez, 2001). These practices align with the Developmental Participatory Media Theory (DPMT), which emphasises participation, local ownership, dialogue, and empowerment as key mechanisms through which media contributes to sustainable grassroots development and social transformation (McQuail, 2010; Carpentier, 2011).

Research question three sought to explore the perspectives of Cape Coast community members on ATL FM programming, situating audience experiences as central to assessing the station's contribution to local development and participatory communication (Rennie, 2006). The findings indicate that community members largely perceive ATL FM as development-oriented, citing programmes that address livelihoods, governance, education, and social wellbeing as relevant, practical, and empowering as recommended by (Alhassan, 2005; Obregón & Tufte, 2010). Inclusivity also emerged strongly, with participants highlighting opportunities for participation through phone-ins, studio discussions, diverse guest representation, and the use of local languages such as Akan, which enhances access and representation across social groups (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Howley, 2010). However, some participants expressed concerns that the station can appear elitist due to its university base and frequent use of English, which may limit full engagement by sections of the local population. Overall, participants viewed ATL FM as a trusted and responsive community platform that educates, gives voice to ordinary people, and fosters participation, while also calling for expanded local-language

content and culturally grounded programming to deepen inclusion and community ownership.

5.3 Conclusions

The findings suggest that ATL FM promotes community participation largely during the execution or live broadcast of its programmes, mainly through phone-ins and other interactive formats, while community involvement in content planning and station management remains limited. Although the station decentralises communication flow and creates visible spaces for interaction, decision-making authority remains concentrated within management. Consequently, ATL FM reflects a minimalist form of democratic participation where access and expression are prioritised, but structural power-sharing and co-ownership which are central to DPMT's transformative ideal are not fully realised.

The study further shows that ATL FM demonstrates commitment to its developmental orientation and community impact, initiatives that foster social cohesion, and advocacy-oriented discussions that enhance knowledge, skills, and civic awareness. The station contributes to education, capacity building, social cohesion, and advocacy for social change through locally relevant content, inclusive dialogue, and livelihood-focused programming. Community members perceive the station as trusted, empowering, and responsive, particularly in amplifying local voices and fostering collective reflection on development challenges. It can be concluded that ATL FM functions as a development-oriented community platform that advances participatory communication, although the station needs to expand structural inclusion.

5.4 Limitations

Despite yielding valuable insights into ATL FM's role in community engagement and development, this study is not without limitations. Foremost, the research focused solely on a single campus-based radio station within the University of Cape Coast. While the findings provide a rich understanding of ATL FM's programming, participatory practices, and community interactions, they may not fully reflect the experiences, strategies, or impacts of other campus or community radio stations across Ghana. This limitation restricts the generalisability of the results to broader contexts.

Also, the study employed a qualitative case study design with a purposive sample of four community members and general station manager and a programme producer. Although the study was an in-depth exploration of respondents' perceptions and lived experiences, the small sample size may not capture the full diversity of community perspectives, listenership patterns, and engagement behaviours. Consequently, some nuanced viewpoints or variations in participation could have been underrepresented.

In addition, temporal and logistical constraints limited the duration of observations and interactions. The study was conducted over a finite period, which may have prevented the capture of longer-term trends in programme engagement or seasonal variations in community participation. Similarly, the study did not include systematic monitoring of listenership metrics, which could have complemented qualitative insights with quantitative evidence of the station's reach and impact.

Furthermore, language and literacy factors posed potential challenges. While efforts were made to accommodate participants' preferred languages, the predominance of English in certain programmes may have hindered some respondents' ability to fully articulate their experiences or engage deeply with all programme content. This limitation

may have influenced the richness and comprehensiveness of some responses, particularly among listeners less fluent in English.

Finally, while this study prioritised qualitative insights to explore community members' perspectives, the absence of quantitative corroboration such as audience surveys or programme analytics limits the scope for triangulating findings. Future research integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches could provide a more comprehensive assessment of campus radio's developmental impact, community reach, and effectiveness as a participatory medium.

5.5 Recommendations

Drawing on the discussions and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

To begin with, ATL FM should adopt more structured participatory mechanisms that involve community members in programme planning, design, and evaluation. The station should consider establishing community advisory boards comprising representatives from various community groups, including youth, women, traditional leaders, local business operators, and civil society organisations. Such boards would serve as consultative platforms where community development priorities are identified and integrated into programming decisions. Additionally, the station should organise periodic community fora and stakeholder consultations to gather input on emerging local issues and evaluate existing programmes.

Expanding participation to include community-driven content creation workshops would further empower residents to contribute meaningfully to programming. These workshops will equip participants with basic broadcasting, storytelling, and content development skills. Strengthening participation across all stages of programme production would

enhance community ownership, promote accountability, and reinforce the station's credibility as a truly community-oriented radio platform.

Also, the station should increase the frequency and diversity of programmes broadcast in Akan and other locally relevant dialects. This would ensure that development information reaches audiences with varying literacy levels and socio-economic backgrounds. Beyond language, ATL FM should integrate culturally relevant communication strategies such as storytelling, community drama, oral traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems into its programming. These culturally embedded approaches can enhance message comprehension, audience connection, and behavioural change.

Additionally, ATL FM should introduce structured capacity-building initiatives for community correspondents and volunteer contributors. Training local residents in basic journalism, reporting, and programme production would promote grassroots storytelling and increase the representation of diverse community perspectives. Empowering community members with media skills would also strengthen participatory communication, enhance sustainability, and support long-term community development.

Finally, it is recommended that the National Communications Authority and the National Media Commission to develop and implement policy guidelines that encourage campus radio stations to intentionally allocate at least 40% of their programming to address the development needs of surrounding communities. Such a policy directive would reinforce the developmental role of campus-based broadcasting and ensure that university radio stations maintain strong community engagement mandates alongside their educational functions.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The study was conducted in only one radio station in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It is therefore suggested that a follow up study is conducted using a multiple case study design to draw the similarities and differences in the way the various campus radio stations in the development of communities.

Moreover, further research can be carried out to evaluate the impact of campus-based radio stations and the traditional community radio stations on communities.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Deputy Station Manager

1. What is the programme philosophy of ATL FM?
2. How does the station focus on the needs of local communities?
3. What is the source of funding for ATL FM's operations?
4. How's the representation of local communities in the programmes of ATL FM?
5. How does ATL FM create a sense of belonging for individuals who may feel disconnected from their community?
6. How does ATL FM empower local individuals and groups to take action and make positive change in their communities?
7. What strategies has ATL FM adopted to stay relevant and engage with its communities amidst a constantly evolving media landscape?
8. How does ATL FM adapt to meet the changing needs of local communities under its catchment area?
9. How does the University's role as owner of the station affect its programme content, design and review?

Regular Listeners

1. How often do you listen to ATL FM?
2. How has ATL FM helped to bring to light issues and challenges affecting your community?
3. How accessible is ATL FM to you?
4. Which of ATL FM's programmes discuss issues affecting your community?
5. What is the level of members of your involvement in the programmes of ATL

FM?

6. What can the station do to help empower people in this community?
7. What issues about this community do you want ATL FM to factor in their programme content?
8. What can ATL FM do to help address local issues and challenges affecting your community?



APPENDIX II: ATL FM PROGRAMME AND SYNOPSIS

Format of synopsis

1. Programme Title
2. Target
3. Time
4. Duration
5. Language
6. Content
7. Format (Live /Recorded)
8. Objectives

HEAVEN EARTH

Title: HEAVEN TO EARTH

Objective: To exhort listeners

Content: An hour of pure exhortation worship songs

Time: 5:05am – 6:00am

Duration: 55 minutes

Language: English.

Public Engagement through social media (SMS / Whatsapp /Facebook)

Format: Live

SHOW RUN

- 5:05am – 5:55am - Sign On
- 5:40am – 5:50am – Exhortation Message
- 5:50am – 5:55am – Sign Off
- 5:55am – 6:00am – Jingle Play

ATLANTIC WAVE (MON-FRI)

Title: ATLANTIC WAVE

Target: LSM 5 – 10

Time: 6:15am – 9:55am

Language: English / Content: A magazine show with Music, Sports and

Health Tit-Bit Segment

Format: Live

Duration: 3 hours, 30 minutes

SHOW RUN

- Jingle play: 5:55am
- Announcement will be aired at 6:40am.
- Health Tit-Bit: 6:55am – 7:00am. A professional Doctor's voice will be recorded and played.
- VOA /BBC: 7:00am
- Matters Arising / Phone In-Segment: after 7:05am
- Sports: 7:40am – 7:55am
- Birthday Wishes: 7:55am- 8:00am
- News Bulletin: 8:00am
- Commercials /LPM: 8:10am – 8:15am
- News Peg: 8:45am – 9:30am. Bringing resource persons to come and discuss what's making the headlines.
- Discussion of Local issues : 9:30am – 9:50am

METRO MIX(MON-FRI)

Title: METRO MIX

Target: Middle Class

Time: 10:30am – 2:00PM

Duration: 3 hours 30 minutes

Language: English

Content: Variety of music genre with information and acknowledgment of sponsors, Entertainment news, Public engagement through social media (Facebook, whatsapp, SMS)

Format: Live

SHOW RUN

- 10:30am – 10:40am – Sign on
- 11:30am – 11:40am – Jingle Play
- 11:40am – 11:50am – Music
- 11:55am – 12:00noon – Jingle Play
- 12noon-12;30pm-News
- 12:40pm – 1:30pm – Music /LPM
- 1:30pm – 1:35pm – Jingle Play
- 1:35pm – 1:50pm – Music /LPM/Interview
- 1:50pm – 1:55pm – Sign off DRIVE:

Title: OCEAN DRIVE

Target: LSM 5 – 10

Time: 3:30pm – 8:00pm

Duration: 4 hours 30minutes

Language: English

Content: Music Education, entertainment, sports, interviews, acknowledgment of sponsors, listeners playlist

SHOW RUN:

- 3:30pm – 3:40pm – Sign On
- 3:40pm – 3:50pm – Music
- 3:50pm – 4:00pm – Jingle Play
- 4:00pm – 4:15pm – Music
- 4:15pm – 4:20pm – Educate the listeners on how to write thesis, proposals
etc.
- 4:20pm – 4:40pm – Interviews/Music
- 4:40pm – 4:50pm – Jingle Play
- 4:50pm – 5:00pm – Music
- 5:00pm – 5:05pm – VOA
- 5:05pm – 5:10pm – Jingle Play
- 5:10pm – 5:15pm – Music/LPM
- 5:20pm – 5:25pm – Teams profile
- 5:25pm – 5:30pm – Music
- 5:55pm – 6:00pm – Jingle Play
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – joy news
- 7:05pm – 7:10pm – Jingle Play
- 7:10pm – 7:20pm – Announcement
- 7:20pm – 7:50pm – Slow Jam
- 7:50pm – 7:55pm – Sign Off

SPORTS (WEDNESDAY) – PAE MU KA

Target: Sports Lovers

Time: 2:05pm – 3:00pm

Duration: 5:55pm

Language: Akan

Content: Discussion and acknowledgment of sponsors

Format: live

TALKING SPORTS (SATURDAY)

Title : TALKING SPORTS

Target: Sport Fans

Time: 12:15pm – 1:55pm

Duration: 1hour 40minutes

Language: Akan

Content: Discussion (updates interviews, acknowledgement of sponsors)

Format: live



SHOW RUN

12:15pm – 12:25pm – Sign On

12:25pm – 12:55pm – Foreign Tit-bit and Discussion

12:55pm - 1:35pm – Local Discussion

1:35pm – 1:50pm – Public Engagement via social media and phone in

1:50pm – 1:55pm – Sign Off

SUNDAY SPORTS (SCOREBOARD)

Title: SUNDAY SPORTS

Target: Sports Fans

Time: 3:00pm – 5:30pm

Duration: 2hours 30minutes

Language: Akan

Contents: Sports Commentary, Updates, Discussion, Interviews, Public engagement,

Phone - In, SMS, Whatsapp, Facebook

SHOW RUN FOR SUNDAY (SCOREBOARD)

- 3:00pm – 3:05pm – Sign On
- 3:05pm – 5:25pm – Acknowledging of Sponsors/ Commentary/ Public Engagement
- 5:25pm – 5:30pm – Sign Off

OCEAN RHYTHM

Title: OCEAN RHYTHM

Target: LSM 3 – 10

Time: 10:05pm – 12:00midnight

Duration: 1hour 55minutes

Language: English

Content: slow and mid-tempo

Format: live

Public engagement by social media

SHOW RUN

- 10:00am – 10:05am – Sing On
- 10:10pm – 10:45pm – Music
- 10:45pm – 11:00pm – Public engagement via social media
- 11:00pm – 11:55pm – Music



- 11:55pm – 12:00midnight – Sign Off

GOSPEL HIGHWAY (TUESDAY)

Title: GOSPEL HIGHWAY

Target: Christians

Time: 8:10pm 10:00pm

Duration: 1hour 50minutes

Language: English

Contents: Mix Sound, Contemporary Gospel Music, Public Engagement through Social Media.

SHOW RUN

- 8:10pm – 8:15pm – Sign On
- 8:15pm – 8:45pm – Music
- 8;45pm – 9:00pm – Public Engagement
- 9:00pm – 9:50pm – Music
- 9:50pm – 9:55pm – Sign Off



ADADAMU SPECIAL (WEDNESDAY)

1. Title: ADADAMU SPECIAL
2. Target: Old Folks
3. Time: 8:10pm – 10:00pm
4. Language: Akan
5. Duration: 1 hour, 50 minutes
6. Format: Live
7. Content: Old Local Music, Public Engagement through Social Media

SHOW RUN

- 8:10pm – 8:15pm – Sign On

- 8:15pm – 8:45pm – Music
- 8:45pm – 9:00pm – Public Engagement
- 9:00pm – 9:50pm – Music
- 9:50pm – 9:55pm – Sign Off

CROSS CURRENT (THURSDAY)

1. Title: CROSS CURRENT
2. Target: LSM 5 – 10
3. Time: 8:10pm – 10pm
4. Duration: 1 hour, 50 minutes
5. Language: English
6. Content: Purely Partisan Political Discussions
7. Format: Live, Public Engagement by phone-in and social media

SHOW RUN

- 8:10pm – 8:20 – Sign On and Introduction of Topics
- 8:20pm – 9:00pm – Panel Discussion
- 9:00pm – 9:10pm – introduction of second round discussion and reading of messages
- 9:10pm – 9:45pm – Panel Discussion
- 9:45pm – 9:55pm – Call In, Messages
- 9:55pm – 9:58pm – Sign Off

SHOW RUN

- 12:35pm – 12:45pm – Sign on
- 12:24pm – 1:10pm – Topical Discussions
- 1:10pm -1:20pm- Public engagement
- 1:20pm -1:25pm – Sign off

ADOM ARA KWA (FRIDAY)

1. Title: ADOM ARA KWA
2. Target: LSM 1-10
3. Time: 1:30pm – 3:30pm
4. Duration 2hours
5. Language: Akan
6. Content: Praise and Thanksgiving
7. Format – Live

Public engagement through social media and phone in

SHOW RUN

- 1:30pm – 1:35pm – Sign on
- 1;35pm – 2:30pm – Worship
- 2:30pm – 3:30pm –Praises
- 3:30pm- 3:50pm – Public engagement through social media and phone in
- 3:25pm – 3:30pm – sign off

NB: Live worship every last Friday of the month

TALENT & CREATIVITY SHOW (FRIDAY)

Title: T&C SHOW

Target: students

Time: 7:15pm -9:15pm

Duration: 2 hours

Content: magazine show (news in entertainment, sports, French, business and general news. interviews, trending issues, top trending songs, talent hunt, chat, etc.

Language: English

Format: Live

Public engagement through social media

SHOW RUN

- 7:15pm – 7:20pm – Sign on
- 7:20pm- 7:40pm – news
- 7:50pm – 8:10pm – Entrepreneur segment
- 8:10pm – 8:30pm – T&C Chat
- 8:30pm - 8:45 pm – lets speak French
- 8:45pm-9;00pm-talent hunt
- 9;00pm-9;10pm-top trending songs
- 9:10pm-9;15pm-sign off

CALL TO ISLAM (FRIDAY)

1. Title: CALL TO ISLAM
2. Target: Muslims
3. Time:9:15m – 9:45pm
4. Duration: 30 minutes
5. Content: Islamic Teachings
6. Format: Live/Recorded Public engagement through social media

SHOW RUN:

- 9:15pm – 9:20pm – Sign on , Introduction of topics and Panelist
- 9:20pm – 9:40pm – Discussions and public engagement
- 9:40pm – 9:45pm – Sign off



WEEKEND MIX (SATURDAY)

Title: WEEKEND CLUB MIX

Target: Easy going / LSM 5-10

Time: 10:05pm – 12 midnight

Duration: 1 hour 55minutes

Content: Mixed grilled hit danceable songs

Language: English

Format: Live /Record

BIRIBISORKO

Title: BIRIBISORONKO

Target: LSM 5-10

Time: 7:05am – 9:00am

Duration : I hour 55 minutes

Language: Akan

Content: Magazine show with music and current affairs

Format: Live

Public engagement through social media and phone in

SHOW RUN

- 7:05am – 7:10am – Sign on
- 7:10am – 8:15am – Interviews on topical issues /Sound bits
- 8:15am – 8:20am – Jingle play
- 8:15am – 8:45am – Discussions /Interviews
- 8:45am – 8:55am – Public engagement through social media and phone in
- 8:55am – 9:00am – sign off



NEWS FILE

Promotes our shows on News file

LOCAL CHART SHOW

Title: LOCAL CHART SHOW

Target: LSM 5-10

Time: 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Duration: 3 hours

Content: Local gospel and circular music countdown, entertainment news *

Sentences*, Interviews and Celebrity corner

Language: English /Akan

Format: Live

Public engagement through social media and phone in

SHOW RUN

- 2:00pm -2:10pm – Jingle play /Sign on
- 2:10pm – 2:55pm – Countdown of Gospel Top 10
- 2:55pm – 4:05pm – Entertainment Zone (News, *Sentences* celebrity corner, acknowledgment of sponsors, interviews and Jingle Play)
- 4:05pm – 4:55pm – Circular Top 10 /acknowledgment of sponsors
- 4:55pm -5:00pm – Sign off

WEEKEND SPLASH (SATURDAY)

Title: WEEKEND SPLASH

Target: Youth , LSM 1-10

Time: 5:00pm 7:30pm

Duration: 2hours,30MINS

Language: English

WEEK ON CAMPUS (SATURDAY)

Title: WEEK ON CAMPUS

Target: Students

Time: 7:30pm – 9:00 pm

Duration: 1hour,30MINS

Language: English

Content: Student Issues, Magazine Programmes with Music, Current Affairs on Student Issues

SHOW RUN

- 7;30pm – 7:35pm – Sign On
- 7:35pm – 8:45pm – Discussion/ Interview
- 8:45pm – 8:50pm – Public Engagement
- 8:50pm – 8:55pm – Sign Off STUDENTS PARLIAMENT

TITLE; STUDENTS PARLIAMENT

TARGET; STUDENTS

TIME; 9-9; 45PM

DURATION; 45MINS

LANGUAGE; ENGLISH

CONTENT; STUDENT POLITICS (PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE)

LOVE REASONS (SATURDAY)

Title : LOVE REASONS

Target : LSM 5-10

Time : 9:45pm- 12:00midnight

Duration : 2HRS,25mins

Content : Romantic Love Songs, Public Engagement through Social Media/

Phone-in

Language : English

Format : Live

SHOW RUN

- 9:45pm- 10:15pm- Sign On/ Music Sessions
- 10:15pm – 11:00pm – Discussions
- 11:00pm – 11: 55pm – Public Engagement/ Music
- 11:55pm – 12midnight – Sign Off

MEWO YESU (SUNDAY)

Title : MEWO YESU

Target: Christians

Time: 7:30am – 10:00 am

Duration : 2 hours, 30 minutes

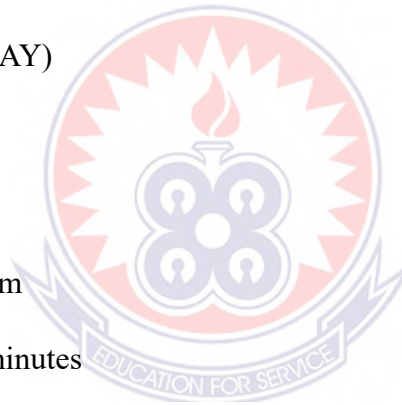
Language: Akan

Content: Contemporary Inspiring Gospel, Music/ Old Time Music, Public

Engagement Via Social Media

SHOW RUN

- 7:30am- 7:35am – Sign On
- 7:35am – 8:00am – Music
- 8:00 am – 9:00am – Public Engagement via Social Media and Phone-Ins
- 9:00am – 9:55am – Old Time Gospel
- 9:55am – Sign Off



SUNDAY AGORO SPECIAL

Title: SUNDAY AGORO SPECIAL

Target: LSM 5- 10

Time: 10:05am – 11:55am

Duration: 1hour 55minutes

Content: Hi-life, Hip-life, Public Engagement via Social Media

Language: English/Akan

Format: Live

SHOW RUN

- 10:05am – 10:10am – Sign On/Jingle
- 10:10am – 11: 50am – Music/Jingle
- 11:50am – 11:55am – Sign Off

GOSPEL AROUND THE WORLD (SUNDAY)

Title: GOSPEL AROUND THE WORLD

Target: LSM 5 – 10

Time: 12:20pm – 1:30pm

Duration: 1 hour, 10 minutes

Content: Contemporary Gospel Music Around the World, Public

Engagement via Social Media

Language: English

SHOW RUN

- 12:20pm – 12:25pm – Sign On
- 12:25pm – 1:00pm – Music
- 1:00pm – 1:20pm – Public Engagement/Music



- 1:20pm – 1:25pm – Sign Off

NEWS PAPER REVIEW IN AKAN (SUNDAY)

Title: NEWS PAPER REVIEW IN AKAN

Target: LSM 1- 10

Time: 1:30pm – 2:55pm

Duration: 1 hour 25 minutes

Content: Discussion of Topical News Paper Headlines, Public Engagement via Social

Media/ Phone-Ins

Language: Akan

SHOW RUN

- 1:30pm – 1:40pm – Sign On/ Lead
- 1:40pm – 2:35pm – Discussion
- 2:35pm – 2:50pm – Public Engagement (Phone-In/SMS/Social Media)
- 2:50pm – 2:55pm – Sign Off

YOU AND THE LAW

Title: YOU AND THE LAW (SUNDAY)

Target: STUDENT|GENERAL LISTNERS

Time: 7:15pm – 8:15pm

Duration: ONE HOUR

Content: DISCUSSION OF LEGAL ISSUES), Public Engagement

Language : ENGLISH

Format: Live

SHOW RUN

- 7:15pm – 7:20pm – Sign On

- 7:20pm – 7:45pm Discussion of Issues/ PHONE INS
- 8:05pm – 8:15pm – Sign Off

GOSPEL FOR THE PILLOW (SUNDAY)

Title: GOSPEL FOR THE PILLOW

Target: Christians LSM 5 – 10

Time: 10:00pm -12:00pm

Duration: 2 hours

Content: Inspirational Gospel music for the pillow with Ocean Drive Edited

DRIVE (MON-FRI)

Title: OCEAN DRIVE

Target: LSM 5 – 10

Time: 3:30pm – 8:00pm

Duration: 4 hours 30minutes

Language: English

Content: Music, Information, entertainment, sports, interviews, acknowledgment of sponsors

SHOW RUN:

- 3:30pm – Jingle Play
- 3:40pm – 3:50pm – Sign on/Music
- 4:40pm – Jingle Play
- After Jingle Play – Music
- 5:00pm – VOA
- 5:05pm – Jingle Play
- 5:10pm – Music/LPM
- 5:30pm – 5:45pm – Top Story

- 5:45pm – 6:00pm – Jingle Play/BBC Sports
- 6:00pm – 7:00pm – joy news
- 7:05pm – 7:20pm – Jingle Play/ Announcement
- 7:20pm – 7:50pm – Slow Jam
- 7:50pm – 7:55pm – Sign Off

NB: Information/Entertainment bit shall not exceed 5minutes

EGYANOM AFARIFO (TUESDAY)

Title: Egyanom Afarifo

Target: fisher folks

Time: 2:15-3:00pm

Duration: 45mins

Language: Akan (fantse)

Content issues affecting fisher folks

SHOW RUN

2:15PM-2:20PM-sign on and introduction of the topics

2:20pm-2:45pm-discussions

2; 45pm-2:55pm-public engagement via phones ins

2:55pm-3:00pm-sign off

SUPPLEMENTARY TIMELINES INPUT

LOCAL NEWS TIMELINES

8am-8:10 am English (10mins)

10:00- 10:15 am Akan (15mins)

2:00 pm-2:05pm English (5mins)



PARTNER STATIONS & TUNE IN TIMES

BBC:

10:00pm-10:05pm (5mins)

4 am-5 am daybreak Monday-Saturday (1hr)

3:00pm-3:30pm-(30mins) Monday –Thursday

VOA

12midnight -4:00am Monday-Sunday (4hrs)

7:00am-7:05am (5mins) Monday-Saturday

5:00pm-5:05pm (5mins) Monday-Saturday

JOYFM

6:00am-6:15am (15mins) Monday-Sunday

12:00noon- 12:30pm (30mins) Monday-Sunday

6pm-7pm (1 hr.) Monday-Friday

Saturdays &Sundays (15mins)

News file 9am-12noon (3hrs) Saturdays only

SPORTS

Monday –Friday 7:40-7:55am (15mins)

Monday-Thursday 2:05pm-2:20pm (15mins)

Saturday 12:15pm-2:00pm (1 hr. 45min)

Sunday 3:00pm-5:30pm (2hrs 30mins)

