

## A Hybridization of Eurocentric and Afro Centric Resources of Communication on Radio by the Youth as Positive Deviants and Peer Educators

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### Abstract

*This paper sought to ascertain the use and sustenance of the indigenous forms of communication through a hybridisation of both the Eurocentric and Afro centric resources of communication on Radio Peace 88.9 MHz, by the youth as positive deviants and peer educators. Grounded in the participatory communication theory and the AMARC global assessment tools, data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires from seventy-six regular listeners who had access to the Internet and the Social Media. One significant finding from the study, among others, was that the influence of colonialism and the advent of technology have exacerbated the cultural identity derived from the use of the Afro centric modes of communication. These modes are being eroded by existential exogenous systems, and endangering aspects of the African culture. The paper thus, concludes, the youth are savvy with the Internet culture and as positive deviants, they could be encouraged and guided to act as peer educators on issues on sanitation, health, risk communication, gender, and empowerment drives. This could be achieved through the use of a hybridized format of Afro centric and Eurocentric resources of communication on the radio and Internet, in an era of mass media overflow. The study recommends the use of both the Afro centric and Eurocentric modes of communication are as complementary, for development initiatives with the view to sustaining, especially, the indigenous forms of communication.*

**Keywords:** Hybridisation, positive deviants, peer educators, empowerment, Afro centric and Eurocentric resources

### 1. Introduction

The use of effective communication processes is often linked to most development programmes as the vehicle for the provision of skills and other empowering opportunities. Since the processes of communication are embedded with elements of a people's culture, they represent the social dynamics of any particular speech community. Culture is dynamic and communication is evolving. Consequently, to ensure the sustenance of vibrant and more engaging processes of communication, it is paramount for social actors to consciously modify their existing culturally embedded norms of communication to allow their sustenance, and also to meet the communication needs of all communicators in an era of mass media overflow.

Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari (1998), intimate that post independent Ghana has experienced the influx of the mass media including the Internet, print, and the broadcast media. They claim the influx is due to a liberalised broadcasting sector that supports a timely provision of the communication needs of its people. They continue that prior to the advent of technology; the dissemination of information was primarily done by skilful raconteurs who moved from one location to the other, sometimes, distorting the final delivery of the intended information. Audiences of such messages were also active participants of the narration processes who were mandated to make information widespread through a re-telling of the messages. A number of reasons have been cited for the minimal studies in indigenous communication including that of Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005) which states that the tendency to marginalise researches in the traditional forms of communication may partly be due to the fact that by the time the study gained its legitimacy as a disciplinary activity, the world was already in "the age of modernity" and was witnessing "the passing of traditional societies." His study defines indigenous communication systems as a genre of communication in the African context and outlines three approaches to the application of the system. These are the *sankofa* or retrieval approach; the adaptation approach; and the synchronisation or hybridization approach. Some studies have been undertaken in Ghana by Panford, Nyaney, Amoah, and Aidoo, (2011); Riley (1990); Bame (1990) and Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005), among others.

However, most of these studies had limited their focus to the use of a type of the folkmedia (i.e.; dance, drama, songs, story-telling etc.) as an intervention strategy in serving the communication needs of some specific communities within particular geographical locations. Articulating the trend further, Bame (1990) found a relationship between living in a rural community and relying more on the community radio for information but bemoans the general lack of interest in mainstream researches in this area of researches. His study concludes that the linkage between indigenous systems and 'rurality' is the impetus for marginalisation by governments in national development efforts. Wilson (2008) reiterates this assertion and argues that "if the modernised urban centres have access to a wealth of information from newspapers, magazines, better broadcasting and computer mediated information, little of this 'wealth' of information is of reach to the grassroots or are actually brought into the rhythm of the lives of the masses". Further, a case study conducted by Hammond and Yeboah (2014) on the sustenance of folkmedia use in Ghana showed that more than 85% of the youth in the Effutu Municipality had no access to regular empowerment and social intervention programmes on the mass media and relied mostly on alternative Afrocentric resources such as the testimonies from opinion leaders, dance, drama, masquerade and fancy dress performances. Their study proposed further empirical studies to examine the hybridisation of the two systems of communication in an era of mass media overflow. In spite of some research efforts thus far, Amoakohene, Tietaah and Ansu-Kyeremeh (2016) critique the undue extraneous positivist influences of dominantly Eurocentric and largely exclusionary researches into what is consequentially and contemporarily African. They propose an indigenous and inclusive approach to the use of communication resources which will not necessarily reject the 'universal' but promote an Afrocentric philosophy to underpin communication researches for developments in Africa.

The Winneba Township lies on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, some forty miles west of the capital city of Ghana, Accra. A combined report in 2015 by the Health and Development International (HDI) - a non-governmental organisation dedicated to creating awareness about the health implications of poor sanitation and the Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compound based at Akosua Village and Eyipe (both fishing communities in Winneba in the Central region of Ghana) revealed that more than 65% of the diagnosed diseases in the Effutu Municipality are sanitation related. Further checks from the Effutu Municipality Health Directorate to ascertain these findings indicated that as of May 2016, the two communities (Akosua Village and Eyipe) alone had recorded an alarming rate of 38% of the total cases of malaria, cholera, dysentery, typhoid, diarrhoea and other sanitation related ailments. Additionally, a research conducted by the Effutu Municipality in 2014 on the assessment of sanitation in Winneba revealed that most of the communities along the beach lacked waste disposal units hence, the frequent reported cases of cholera outbreaks and other communicable disease. In view of this, the Municipal Assembly in collaboration with the Zoomlion Ghana Limited provided some garbage bins to be placed at vantage locations in the municipality, more especially along the beaches. However, a follow-up assessment of the intervention initiatives revealed that majority of the distributed garbage bins had either been taken away or stolen. Consequently, the indiscriminate dumping of refuse as well as defecation along the beaches had continued in earnest. The situation is frightening and more worrisome because the Winneba Health Directorate Report in December 2015 had intimated that more than 35% of the sanitation related cases reported at the clinics and hospitals in the municipality are preventable.

In furtherance, findings from a small survey in June 2016 conducted by the Centre for Community Development (CCD); an NGO with the capacity to develop, sustain, implement, and improve the lives of people in rural communities through advocacy and capacity building initiatives, showed that more than 78% of the offenders of indiscriminate dumping of refuse, and defecating along the beaches in the Effutu Municipality was perpetuated by the youth between the age brackets of 12-25 years. From the on-going statistics, there exists a critical relationship between a hygienic environment and a measureable amount of improvement in health. This goes to emphasise that if the youth are empowered as peer educators and are equipped with the needed statistical data on the environment and its health implications, they could be engaged as facilitators on sensitization and awareness campaigns in the municipality to bring about a positive change in behaviour and developments in no uncertain terms.

### **1.1 Present study**

Literature suggests that fewer studies have been conducted on the sustenance of the traditional forms of communication in the contemporary era as compared to the alternative media.

Researches on the mass media have increasingly gained prominence because more than 85% of the world's population had access to the radio or television for the promotion of social, economic and political development agendas in most developing countries (World Bank Report on Broadcasting and Development, 2011). Although some research efforts had been made in this direction, it is relatively minimal. Therefore, it is imperative at this point to consider some propositions for an intellectual paradigm shift for more scientific researches into ways of hybridizing the indigenous resources of communication with the modern mass media tools for the sustenance of the traditional forms of communication. Some authors (Mefalopulous & Tufte, 2009; Bandeli, 2012) have emphasised hybridisation initiatives as guaranteed ways of sustaining aspects of the African culture which are being eroded by exogenous systems of communication.

Consequently, although this paper is not advocating an Afrocentric philosophy in communication, or de-emphasising the use of technology in this age of technological and information age, it advances a blend of the two systems of communication with a focus on sustaining the indigenous systems of communication. Thus, the scope of the paper is limited to the programmes produced through folk media, and with a focus on health, sanitation, and empowerment. The Ghana Health Directorate Report of 2015 had indicated that 9.1% of households dump waste indiscriminately into open fields, gutters and drains which often cause the outbreak of malaria, cholera and other sanitation related diseases in communities.

Indeed, some propositions have been made on the hybridization of the two systems of communication in an era of technological advancements in Ghana (Riley, 1990; Hammond & Yeboah, 2014). However, this call has not been acceded to and given the needed scholarly attention and this is the impetus for this current study. This study therefore, sought to ascertain the use and sustenance of the indigenous forms of communication through a hybridisation of both the Eurocentric and Afrocentric resources of communication on Radio Peace 88.9 MHz that targets the youth as positive deviants and peer educators. Per this main objective, I posed these research questions: 1) What are the programmes targeted at the youth on Radio Peace, 88.9 MHz? 2) How does the youth as positive deviants and peer educators participate in the folkmedia programmes for the sustenance of the Afrocentric resources of communication? 3) What are the perceptions of the youth listener audiences of Radio Peace, 88.9 MHz on the hybridized programmes?

## **1.2 The Afrocentric and Eurocentric Resources of Communication**

Asante (2007a) claims that Afrocentrism is a response to the global attitudes about Africans and their historical contributions, and their plethora of cultural dynamics. Afrocentrism, he says, is an affirmation of the African of 'themselves' in a Eurocentric dominated society where elements of the African culture is gradually being eroded with aspects of exogenous systems. Asante suggests the Afrocentric resources of communication sometimes referred to as indigenous resources of communication or folkmedia, accentuate the promotion of the African culture and identity. Unfortunately, the Afrocentric resources of communication are often dismissed as inconsequential and casually mentioned in Eurocentric mainstream researches.

Naskar (2011) the language of folkmedia or indigenous communication is not in itself a model of reality but a sigmatic fixative of a model of reality carried by individuals through their cultural practices. In essence, folkmedia is symbolic of a people's culture and has the power to shape and determine meanings attached to elements and symbols of communication constituting their totality, peculiarity and reverence to values and aspirations.

From an African perspective, Ugboajah (1985) uses the term "oramedia interchangeably with the term traditional communication to refer to the forms of communication which are performed and characterized by attributes and intrinsic qualities of the African. To him, the forms of oramedia include drama, theatrical performances, storytelling, folklore, appellations, proverbs, community durbars, festivals, mask and masquerade carnivals, traditional songs, traditional dances, community debates, poetry recitals, puppet shows, and use of traditional symbols and artefacts for communication purposes. In line with this, Riley (1990) stresses that the core functions of oramedia could be equated to the roles of the mass media to include entertainment, education, dissemination of information, promotion of values and aspirations, and the projection of cultural continuity. Chiovoloni (2004) agrees with this contribution and says the oramedia is the cultural response to the different communication needs for information on education, health, entertainment, empowerment, and social protection. For this paper, the terms Afrocentric resources of communication, folkmedia, oramedia, indigenous communication, and traditional resources of communication were used interchangeably, because they refer to the same thing or phenomena and are different only in terms of nomenclature.

Asante (2007b) sees Eurocentrism as the placing of emphasis on European or Western concerns, culture and values at the expense of all other cultures. He describes Eurocentric resources of communication as the modern media and its associated Internet culture which is prevalent in the information or knowledge age. Levinson (2013) categorises the Eurocentric resources of communication into two: old media and new media. The old media comprises the press (print media) and the broadcast media (television and radio). The new media is basically the Search Engines and Email and other social media applications including, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Amazon, iTunes, Google+, Blogs, Tango, WhatsApp, and Skype among others. He adds that the media, especially the social media (he calls the 'New new media' and uses the term interchangeably with social media) allows consumers to become producers who are undoubtedly social and far more interactive than the old media. Levinson sees these Eurocentric resources as empowerment opportunities that permit people to become producers and disseminators of needed information to change the way people live, work and play (p. 2). In spite of the numerous advantages of the social media in contemporary times, some authors (Daramola, 2003; Horn, 2012) contend that the modern media lacks credibility and it is alien and elitist in its outlook.

Duarte (2009) on social media as Eurocentric resource, asserts that it is probably the most significant form of emerging media in the last decade. Duarte refers to the social media as an "Internet-based application that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allows the creation and exchange of User Generated Contents. Thus, the social media is the translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible for computers. Hence, the contents of social media include graphics, moving images, sounds, shape, space and text which can become computable. Further, the social media has given rise to a plethora of web-based applications which are characterized by interactivity, collaboration and the sharing or dissemination of information. Stumpel (2010) asserts that, the applications enable Internet users to produce and publish user-generated content with great ease by allowing for involvement in participatory cultures to share individual expressions or creations. Some authors argue that the Web has become a site of consumer participation and supports the rising of a participatory culture. Bruns (2008) furthers the argument by stating that Flickr, YouTube, MySpace and Facebook are the environments of "public participation" which give rise to "a produsage-based democratic model." Internet consumers are also producers because they have the ability to produce and partake in the consumption of their own content in the virtual space.

### **1.3 The Youth as Positive Deviants and Peer Educators**

Enu-Kwesi and Tuffour (2010) argue that Ghana like most African countries is multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural. Its current population which is estimated at about 25 million is a vast mosaic of small and large ethnic groups each with several aspects of a cultural heritage. The major ethnic groups are the Akan, the Mole-Dagbani, the Ewe, the Ga-Dangme, the Guan, the Grusi, and the Mande-Busanga (Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2010). The youth population from the Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2010 is categorised into two: those within the age bracket of 19 - 25 years and those from 26 - 45 years respectively. The category of the youth within the 19 – 25 years constitutes 19% of the total population of Ghana. Some studies (Wilson, 2014) have also shown that this bracket of the youth is social media compliant and savvy with the use of the information and communication technology (ICT), especially, with the Internet.

Positive Deviance or positive deviation (PD) is an approach for social change that enables communicators to discover the wisdom they already have and then act on it (Sternin & Choo, 2002). The approach turns the classical diffusion of innovation paradigm espoused by Rogers (2003) on its head but cannot be regarded as a substitute to the paradigm. The diffusion paradigm had been extensively criticised for its over reliance on expert-driven interventions as against the value and use of local knowledge or expertise. One recalls how the mid-1970s was a period when critical theory was emerging to question the long standing assumptions of the functionalist-diffusionist modernization theories which prescribed technology-based media as the only channels for 'diffusion' (Ansu-Kyeremeh 2005, p. 5). The positive deviance approach therefore questions the relevance of the role of technological experts in a community and suggests that practices and interventions that originate from the local community are more receptive to the community members and should be encouraged for developmental projects. Consequentially, their use creates a sense of community ownership and the adopters of the practices are ever willing to see to the success and sustainability of the practices or the intervention strategies. Dura and Singhal (2009) for instance, intimate that the positive deviance approach is relevant in the contemporary era because it examines what is being done right in a local community and amplifies it for all others to adopt.

Granted, the exposures from the derived benefits allow other best practices in a community to also become attractive to other non-adopters. Some research (Papa, Singhal & Papa, 2006) has shown that when PD practices are identifiable and accessible in a community, they are embraced and are often actionable because their derived benefits are also visible. In spite of the significance of the Eurocentric resources of communication or technology, researchers such as Pascale and Sternin, (2005) have criticised its over indulgence by the youth for negative purposes as extremely unfortunate. Their study suggested that since the youth are savvy with the use of technology, they should be encouraged to access technological resources for its derived benefits and to initiate developments in their communities. Therefore, every programme enacted on the radio as technological tool has its target audience and must be beneficial to its listener audiences. In view of this, some programmes on Radio Peace, 88.9 MHz FM are enacted through Afrocentric resources and are targeted at the youth. The youth are therefore part of the production team and more often, are the hosts. Such programmes sought to use the youth as peer educators for development initiatives in the community and to re-emphasise the existential notion that the youth are better tutored by their peers. In view of this, the indigenous wisdom of the youth, thus, their knowledge on their Afrocentric resources of communication is shared to their peers through a preferred technological means of radio format they can easily identify with.

#### **1.4 Radio Peace as a Community Radio**

Radio Peace 88.9 MHz FM is an on-air community based radio station in the Effutu Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana which was mandated to operate in August, 1996. It is one of the foundational members of the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN) with a broadcast signal received by 10 administrative district catchment areas of a radius of about 70km which comprise a population of nearly 80,000 people (NCA, 2014). An interview with the management of the radio station showed that the station serves 3 keen ethnic groups: Fantes, Awutus and Effutus. The station has devoted 75% of its broadcast time to these indigenous languages: Mfantse, Awutu, and the remaining 25% to programmes in the English language. Radio Peace is a member of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) and it is owned, run and sustained by the community. It is the only community based radio station in the Municipality besides Radio Windy Bay; a campus radio station owned by the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.

#### **1.5 The Hybridization of Communication Systems for Development**

Combining the technologically mediated forms of communication with the traditional resources has been the centrepiece of the indigenization framework proposed by many scholars. These scholars have emphasised that one sure way of keeping in touch with our contemporary world is through the mass media. The mass media is therefore often referred to in liberal theory as the “Fourth Estate” and the “watchdog of the society”. Meaning, it exists as an organ of information dissemination, the promotion of education, surveillance, social enlightenment and mobilization. These functions set it apart as an important link in the relationship between the ‘government’ and the ‘governed’ and thereby make both entities a sine qua non to the growth and development of the society.

The Chapter 12 and Article 162 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana stipulate the freedom and independence of the media. This mandates the media as a pivotal medium through which the citizens could establish and sustain the democratic culture of the country. As regard, every community radio station is obligated to be well-positioned to help pursue the national agenda of the country irrespective of its location (Community Radio Manual, 1999). Ansu-Kyeremeh describes the radio in Ghana as a key Eurocentric resource with the ability to appeal to diverse populations separated by race, sex, location, as well as other social, political and economic factors. To him, the radio serves as the channel through which information necessary for human existence, social interaction and national development could be shared for its intended desirable benefits. The community radio is widely recognised as the most dominant of the mass media tools with the widest reach, particularly, among the rural folks and the less literate in Africa. Cognizant of this, in recent times, its roles have increasingly been commended as core to providing opportunities for the marginalised to express their voice. This advocacy role has allowed voluntary organisations, civic groups, NGOs, women organisations, youth activists, and pressure groups, to use the radio as a vehicle for expressing views or sentiments on several issues.

##### **1.5.1 The Community Radio and Empowerment Programmes**

The concept of empowerment according to Asiedu (2012) has become a hegemonic concept in communication researches because it has been used in a variety of ways for different aspects of the discipline. Asiedu sees empowerment as the ability to make choices that affect a person’s life.

The United Nation's Population Information Network (1995) describes empowerment on the bases of five components, namely, (1) a sense of self-worth, (2) a right to have and to determine informed choices, (3) the right to have access to opportunities and resources, (4) right to have power to control their own lives, and (5) the ability to influence the direction of social change nationally and internationally. Sterling, O'Brien and Bennet (2007) also note that one key characteristic of the community radio is for empowerment. In line with this, some studies have stressed the correlation between programme contents on the community radio and empowerment, especially, in the area of education, sanitation, health, and the marginalised like women, children, and the disabled.

Dahal (2013) reiterates this assertion and contends that the community radio could be regarded as the "voice" for the marginalised or underserved in the society and the opportunity given could be translated into empowerment drives. Nevertheless, Mefalopulous and Tufte (2009) argued that any form of participation that leads to empowerment is attainable when appropriate stakeholders participate in the cycle of development initiatives, and have equal influence on decision making processes. He indicates that this form of participation heightens the self-esteem of the stakeholders to champion their own development agenda. Allah-Mensah (2005) for instance, underscored the significant role of the community radio in empowering women against customary practices that subjugate them to men and undermine their self-esteem in some parts of Ghana. In effect, when people are empowered to take care of their sanitation issues and also of themselves, irrespective of their gender, their efforts would certainly culminate into developments in their lives and their communities in general.

## 1.6 Methodology

The population of the study comprised seventy-six regular listeners of Radio Peace, 88.9 MHz FM between age brackets of 12-25 years who also have access to the Internet. These groups were purposively selected from two fishing communities in the Effutu Municipality (i.e: Akosua Village and Eyipe). The scope of the study covered selected on-air programmes that were either aired weekly or bi-weekly for 8 months spanning from February to June, 2015 and also February to June 2016. These periods were specifically selected because prior informal investigations had revealed that majority of the programmes enacted through oramedia were prevalent before and during the annual *Aboakyer* Festival (Deer Hunting Festival) of the people of Winneba. A preliminary explorative study had shown that the people of Winneba often took advantage of the *Aboakyer* festival to showcase their rich cultural heritage, especially, through some selected programmes on the community radio. This period therefore allowed me to gather data on two separate *Aboakyer* festivals (i.e.; 2015 and 2016).

Using the interactionist approach, this study was essentially qualitative but a descriptive survey in design. Out of the target population of seventy-six (76) selected respondents for the study, a sample frame of 16 key informants made up of 12 youth leaders and 4 Producers of the Folkmedia programmes on Radio Peace 88.9 were engaged in different face-to-face semi-structured and unstructured interview sessions. Each interview lasted between 10-15 minutes and was conducted in any of the three local languages spoken in the area. This was done with the help of five Research Assistants recruited from the community. The data from the interviews was recorded, translated, and transcribed by Language experts from the College of Ghanaian Languages Education- University of Education, Winneba- Ghana. The interviews with the 4 producers of the radio programmes were however conducted in the English Language, transcribed, categorised and thematically, subjected to interpretations and thick descriptions.

The descriptive survey involved the systematic use of standardised questionnaire comprising a set of open-ended questions. The design was used to gather information on the prevailing conditions or situations for the purposes of description and interpretation. The semi-literates among the participants who could not easily understand the complete the questionnaire were guided to do so in the local languages of their choice. Their responses were translated, transcribed and then coded with the assistance of some language experts from the College of Languages Education, University of Education, Winneba. In addition to the interviews and use of questionnaire, the programme grid of the radio station was also analysed for its contents and schedules in relation to their target audiences. The triangulation of the instruments (interviews, questionnaire and document analysis) was to enable my team and I to ascertain the validity and reliability of the data gathered.

## 1.7 Discussion of Findings

All the gathered data was thematically analysed using the 3-stage analysis approach (concurrent flows of activities) suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) and the McCracken 5-step method of data analysis.

**Research Question 1:** What are the programmes targeted at the youth on Radio Peace, 88.9 MHz?

It was evident from the data gathered from the audience tracker during the various programmes that 80% of the indigenes of the municipality are avid listeners of Radio Peace 88.9 MHz. More especially, programmes on healthcare, education, youth empowerment, capacity building, reproduction and nutrition, and religion recorded the highest listenership. In line with this, the study sought to investigate the reasons behind this trend and it was affirmed the interest was necessitated by the format of the programme which was the local languages spoken in the municipality and its environs. The content as well as the level of interactivity accorded the listeners, especially, during the phone-in segments and discussion sessions was cited as another reason for the interest in the programmes. The programmes for the youth and their corresponding percentage listenership are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Programmes Targeted at the Youth on Radio Peace 88.9 MHz and Listenership**

Name of Programme	Percentage of Active Listeners
Aware Mu Nsem (Issues In Marriages)	8%
Efie Nsiesie (How To Keep A Home)	7%
Agordzi Na'nigye (Sports and Entertainment)	14%
Mmbaa Na Ekuaye (Women In Agriculture)	4%
MmaaYensor (Women Arise)	6%
Wo'akyedze Na Wo Daakye (Your Talent-Your Future)	9%
Awo na Wo'pow Mu Dzin (You And Your Health)	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52%</b>

From Table 1, it could be seen that the programme that attracted the majority of the youth (14%) was *Agordzi Na'nigye (Sports and Entertainment)*. A further probing from the respondents established that this programme often presented the listeners with the opportunity to share their knowledge on some indigenous sports and forms of entertainment such as the canoe regatta, oware (Draft), drum language interpretation, masquerade performances, mock festivals and proverb completion competitions. These programmes allowed the youth to know more about their culture as they interact with panel members or resource persons. Majority of these programmes were either streamed Online or uploaded on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube by the youth participants and made viral for others to watch, and comment as a way of sharing knowledge.

From the table, the programmes that received the least listenership were *Mmbaa Na Ekuaye (Women in Agriculture)* and *Awo Na Wo'pow Mu Dzin (You and Your Health)*. The lack of interest was attributed to the general lack of interest in agriculture as gathered from responses such as; agriculture is none profiting; farming involve excessive use of energy and more suitable for men; farming is stereotyped as being the preserve of illiterates and school drop-outs; people make a mockery of young people who intend to go into farming in contemporary times. Interestingly, these were indicative of some gender dynamics because most of the negative responses on the disinterest in the programme on farming came from the female respondents. As a result, the females who were the target of the programme *Mmbaa na Ekuaye (Women in Agriculture)* did not actively listen to the programme. Also, the youth who were not interested in the *Awo Na Wo'pow Mu Dzin (You and your Health)* said they were not motivated to listen to contents like eating right, exercising, avoiding stress, sex education, and precautionary measures against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), avoidance of alcohol and drugs; dental care; and personal hygiene. They had access to information on all these on the Internet. With the use of serial dramas as alternatives to regular formats of the radio, some key informants intimated that although they are interested in topics such as effects of STDs, alcoholism and drug abuse used as the themes for the storyline or plot, they only listen for entertainment and not for the intended core message. An excerpt is as shown:

*I regularly enjoy the drama series on STDs, alcoholism, drug abuse and personal hygiene but I have never listened to the discussions by either the peer educators or the resource persons. Well, I am not interested in the message but I love the entertainment aspect, especially, the humour in the stories. I think there is too much exaggeration. We are no longer kids. Are we?*

From the data, the programmes aired on Radio Peace 88.9 MHz targeted at the youth were consistent with the demands of the AMARC global assessment tools for operating a community radio.

**Research Question 2:** *How does the youth as positive deviants and peer educators participate in the folkmedia programmes for the sustenance of the Afrocentric resources of communication?*

As mandated by the demands of operating a community radio, the data revealed that the youth were the positive deviants and peer educators for most of the out-door programmes organised by the radio station. They participated in the following programmes to bring about behavioural and attitudinal change in the lives of the youth and the entire community members:

- They are the cast in some of the serial dramas on health and sanitation which are streamed Online
- Assist in ranking and scoring of the free-on-air oramedia programmes
- Engaged in free-on-air discussions that were streamed or uploaded on YouTube
- The youth are the resource persons and positive deviants on talk shows on selected programmes that are targeted as encouraging the youth to go into Agriculture
- They are the peer educators engaged in rap competitions on issues pertaining to their welfare
- Showcase their cultural heritage during the annual Festival by taking part in live sing-on-air performances by the Asafo, Adziwa or Adenkum musical and cultural troupes
- Educate listeners on the meaning of the appellations and totems of some chiefs in the community
- Participate in transect walks on the relevance of their culture in the programming of the radio station

For instance, the data from the semi-structured interviews confirmed that most of the members in the community had taken to farming after they had been exposed to empowerment drives particularly on the 'Mmbaa na Kuaye' (Women in Agriculture) programme. The resource persons who were mostly invited to share their knowledge on core issues of agriculture such as access to small-scale loans, use of pesticides, fertilizers, mechanical farming, retirement benefits, and post-harvest opportunities were young farmers. This was a positive deviation because although the president had initiated the Youth-In-Agriculture-Programme to attract the youth to go into farming, the impact of the programme had not been felt to cause a change until the opportunity was given to the youth as peer educators to motivate their peers.

It was also confirmed from one of the key informants that Radio Peace had organised clean-up exercises at the Winneba beach and the Winneba hospital on several occasions. These clean-up exercises were interspersed with a transect walk, a carnival, puppetry show and masquerade performances which were streamed Online or uploaded by some of the youth participants. The transect walk allowed the listeners to contribute to the programme content of the radio thereby giving them a voice in decision making processes. Some selected respondents were put into groups according to their gender, age, and economic or educational background to engage in 'ranking and scoring' activities for the radio station. The aim was for the producers of the programmes to gather data on their programmes from the perspective of the listeners to necessitate modifications and set priorities for contents of the programmes. Consequently, the modifications made to the programme contents as a result of the ranking and scoring exercises developed in the community members a sense of ownership. This was consistent with Naskar (2011) who had stated that a programme targeting the needs of the society often creates a feeling of partnership. Thus, the findings also confirmed the need for a sense of partnership as directed by the AMARC assessment tools. For instance, the live discussions on women empowerment skills on the 'Mmbaa Yensor' (Women Arise) made it possible for the producers to decide on which resource persons to invite in line with suggestions from previous discussions. For instance, the dialogic nature of the participatory communication theory enabled symmetrical discussions on community-based initiatives and stakeholder engagements. The data also showed that the youth were often invited to the radio station as cast for serial dramas, and comic skits on issues that bothered on effective healthcare delivery methods (i.e. traditional and orthodox), improvement in sanitation, skill training, and capacity building workshops.

Another way by which the youth participated in the programmes of the radio station was the phone-in segments of the programmes. The producers hinted that the listeners were highly interactive during the phone-in segments and that allowed collaborative participations on discussions on issues relevant to the development of the community. This was also in consistent with the level of interactivity typology of the AMARC assessment tools which suggests the inculcation of modern technological tools such as the mobile phone and the Internet in radio broadcasting enhances listener participation and makes it engaging for effective discussions. The youth also participated in some traditional dance performed during outdoor programmes of the radio station. For instance, members of the two Asafo companies took center stage in performances to show the rich culture of the people in Winneba, these performances were recorded and made viral for people in the virtual space.



The members of the Asafo companies are warriors and the force behind the biggest and the most important annual festival, known as the *Aboakyer* (Deer Hunting). Many of the songs of the Asafo companies are described as “teasing”, and are specifically designed to mock, provoke or annoy an ‘enemy’, particularly from another dance group. The members are complemented by a women’s group called the *Adziwa* or *Adenkum* group and the youth in these groups are sometimes sponsored by the radio station to project their culture through dance performances and choreographies which are streamed Online by courtesy of the radio station.

**Research Question 3:** *What are the perceptions of the youth audiences of Radio Peace, 88.9 MHz on the hybridized programmes?*

The responses gathered were categorised, thematised and ranked according to their significance in the lives of the listeners. About 31% of the respondents indicated that but for the cultural display and choreography performances during the *Aboakyer* festival on health, they would not have taken part in the poliomyelitis immunisation and Measles Prevention Campaigns by the Ministry of Health and DANIDA. Additionally, some of the respondents stressed they had earlier been misinformed about the potency of the vaccination and had believed some myth surrounding its administration. For instance, some key informants intimated they had believed in some myth that female children who received vaccination for the childhood killer diseases in their infancy became barren later in life. However, this socially constructed myth was demystified after they had been privy to a video by a medical practitioner who had been invited to one of the outdoor programmes of Radio Peace 88.9 MHz which had been shared via the medium of Whatsapp platform. Consequently, there had been some form of behavioural and attitude change from this videos on simulations, and recorded songs with themes on teenage pregnancy, teenage parenting and formal mainstream education, symptoms and preventions of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) which were also viral and made possible by the philanthropic acts of the radio station. Below is an excerpt from a teenage mother who was a key informant in the interview:

*“I decided to go back to school as a teenage mother after I had watched a Rap competition by another teenage mother on “You Too Matter” which was streamed Online during one of the outdoor programmes on empowerment by Radio Peace”*

The excerpt is an affirmation of the influence of the hybridized programmes conducted by the community radio as well as the efforts of the youth as peer educators and positive deviants. Additionally, twenty-seven percent of the participants had intimated an improvement in their after active participation on programmes on the community radio. 27% of the respondents had revealed that there had been a decrease in Cholera cases and deaths in the municipality. This was also confirmed by the Municipal Health Directorate that collaborative programmes between the Municipal Hospital and other stakeholders partly sponsored by the radio station had helped in the educational campaigns on the ‘Drive Malaria Out’ initiatives.

Some key informants also mentioned a pilot programme by the Country Director, UNESCO - Ghana on the ‘Let’s Talk Shit Campaign’ aimed at checking sanitation at the beaches whose campaign strategies included free-on-air drama series on the avoidance of open defecation and dumping of refuse along the beaches. Below are some excerpts from the data:

*“We ignored all the warnings and continued to defecate at the beach until the ‘Lets-Talk-Shit’ programme opened our eyes to the number of people who had died through cholera and other sanitation related ailments in Ghana”*

*“I think the masquerade performances and their stories of the out-door programmes have helped me to broadcast live on Radio Peace has helped me a lot to know that not all the herbal medicines advertised on Radio and TV are potent. I thought the people in the adverts had actually used the drugs and were endorsing or giving testimonials until I saw a drama with cast doing same”*

These excerpts were a confirmation of the 42% listeners found to have been empowered on issues of health, sanitation, parenting, and employable skills. These perspectives were indicative that the youth were interested in the hybridized programmes on the radio.

### **1.8 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Per the objectives and the research questions, the study concluded that with the advent of technology the Afrocentric modes of communication are gradually being eroded by exogenous systems and endangering some aspects of the African culture. Thus, influence of colonialism and the advent of technology have further exacerbated the cultural identity of the indigenous systems of communication.

The study also established that the majority of the youth are savvy with the new media, social media and are abreast with the Internet culture. This goes to buttress the need for a hybridization of the systems of information dissemination because they are vibrant and engaging and they enable communicators to be attuned with the rapid mass media overflow as they preserve their cultural identity through communication and its products. The study thus recommends that efforts in development agendas in Ghana to target the youth who are savvy with technology, social media, and the Internet to be trained as positive deviants who could use these facilities to their benefit and the nation as a whole. Further, the youth should be used as advocates for peer education in utilising a blend or hybridization of both the Afrocentric and Eurocentric resources of communication for community development.

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