UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA

DESIGNING OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR CIVIC EDUCATION DELIVERY: A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

CHARLES YAO MAWUSI

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CHARLES YAO MAWUSI

(7171810008)

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Charles Yao Mawusi**, 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 own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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: **PROF. ANDREWS OFORI BIRIKORANG**

SIGNATURE: ....

DATE: ....

DEDICATION

I am very glad to dedicate this work to my wife, Mrs. Agnes Fiah-Mawusi whose understanding devotion and sacrifice contributed immensely to the successful completion of this programmeme.

Her encouragement and support spur me to carry on when the going gets tough.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS **Page**

LIST OF FIGURES **Page**

ABSTRACT

Communication strategy has become an essential component of the success of organisations. The efficacy of an organisation's communication, on the other hand, is based on the technique it uses to communicate information to its constituents. This study examines the communication strategies employed by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in their civic education delivery and further identifies the issues they consider in designing their communication strategies during their civic education campaigns. Employing the qualitative research approach anchored on the single case study design, the study purposively selected four interviewees from the head office of the NCCE and analysed sixty-five documentary evidence to find answers to the research questions. Analysing the data through the lens of the message design and compliance gaining theories, the study established that the NCCE employs interpersonal community engagements to gain entry and acceptability in rolling out educational campaigns in communities. The findings also revealed that the NCCE consider political, economic and exigency issues in designing their communication strategies for their campaigns. The study recommends that NCCE should increase the level of participation by members of the public in the planning, and developing process of the message design for their civic education campaign.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Between February 1966 and January 1993, Ghana had experienced an unstable political history characterised by two civilian governments and interspersed by numerous coup d'états and military interventions (Boakye, 2018). The author adds that each each military regime began with the suspension of an existing Constitution, a ban on political parties and their activities, and the dissolution of a parliament. The people of Ghana were then ruled by military juntas whose decrees and public pronouncements became the laws of the land (Boakye, 2018; Bevir, 2013; Boateng, 1996).

On 7th January 1993, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana came into effect which resulted in ushering the country into the Fourth Republic. The 1992 Constitution has since become the fundamental law of the land based on the expression of the sovereign will of the people of Ghana. By adopting the 1992 Constitution, the people of Ghana have therefore submitted themselves to the tenets and practice of democratic and/ or constitutional governance. Significantly, embracing the 1992 Constitution is a momentous landmark in the political history of Ghana to the extent that the people of Ghana have ever since returned to the path of democracy and constitutionalism (Boakye, 2018).

However, from the hindsight of the fact that the 1960, 1969 and 1979 Constitutions suffered abuses and violations when they were overthrown or suspended or abrogated by violent military coup d'états, the major concern of the framers of the 1992 Constitution was how to safeguard it so as to ensure first, its inviolability and second, that the sovereign will of the people was insulated against further abuses (National Commission of Civic Education, 2016; Kwashie, 2004; NCD, 1981)). There were also serious thinking about: how the democratic process could be created and nurtured; how to ensure a sustained political stability in Ghana; how to prevent future military coup d'états and regimes and thus ending the culture of impunity with which they were staged; and how to institutionalize constitutional democracy in Ghana in such ways as would make the new constitution immune from any abuses or violations (NCCE, 2016; Kwashie, 2004; NCD, 1981). Out of the many ideas that emerged at the time, the one on which much consensus was reached was the need to reintroduce civic education into the nation's body politics (NCCE, 2016; Kwashie, 2004; NCD, 1981). As a result of this, the framers of the 1992 Constitution devoted Chapter Nineteen to the establishment and functioning of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and made it an entrenched provision. The NCCE was therefore intended to exist and function as one of the entrenched constitutional safeguards for ensuring sustained democratic and/ or constitutional governance in Ghana (NCCE, 2016; Kwashie, 2004; NCD, 1981). Subsequently, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) was created when the First Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana passed the National Commission for Civic Education Act of 1993 (Act 452) pursuant to Chapter 19 of the 1992 Constitution. The Act, in no uncertain terms, provided the legal framework for the establishment and operations of the NCCE.

The Commission has the status of being both an independent and a constitutional body. It is an independent body because, per Article 234 of the 1992 Constitution: *"The Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority in the performance of its functions".* It is only subject to the control and authority of the 1992 Constitution or to any other law, which is consistent with the provisions of the 1992 Constitution. It is a constitutional body to the extent that the Commission derives its power to exist and to operate or function from the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and its consequent Act. The vision of the Commission is to *"exist to be an effective independent governance institution delivering civic education to all Ghanaians and working towards sustaining Ghana's democracy"*. In its mission statement, the Commission undertakes *"to promote and sustain democracy and inculcate in the Ghanaian citizenry, the awareness of their rights and obligations through civic education"*. The Commission pledges to ensure that its actions and the behaviours of staff are governed by the principles of Integrity, Presence and Independence (NCCE, 2016).

Both Act 452 of 1993 and Article 233 of the 1992 Constitution clearly stipulate the functions of the Commission as follows:

a) To create and sustain within the society the awareness of the principles and objectives of the Constitution as the fundamental law of the people of Ghana;

b) To educate and encourage the public to defend the Constitution at all times, against all forms of abuse and violation;

c) To formulate for the consideration of Government, from time to time, programmes at the national, regional and district levels aimed at realising the objectives of the Constitution;

d) To formulate, implement and oversee programmes intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people; and

e) To assess for the information of Government, the limitations to the achievement of true democracy arising from the existing inequalities between different strata of the population and make recommendations for re-dressing these inequalities.

By this mandate, the Commission has become the constitutionally enshrined government institution established with the responsibility for developing and maintaining a democratic culture and responsible citizenship within the context of the principles and objectives set out in the 1992 Constitution, which all must uphold and sundry as the fundamental law of the Republic of Ghana. The core functions of the Commission therefore are to educate, sensitize and conscientise Ghanaians on the provisions in the 1992 Constitution; democratic and constitutional governance; their civic rights and responsibilities, and to empower the citizenry to defend the nation's democracy and constitutional rule all the time.

Act 452 of 1993 and Article 233 of the 1992 Constitution also prescribe the composition of the Commission. Accordingly, NCCE is run by a seven-member team headed by a Chairman, two Deputy Chairmen and four other members. Members are appointed by the President of Ghana upon the advice of the Council of state. As per the establishing laws, a Commission member must be a Ghanaian who is qualified to be elected as a Member of Parliament and must not be an executive in any political party. The Chairman enjoys the same terms and conditions of service as a Justice of the Court of Appeal. A Deputy Chairman has the same terms and conditions of service as a Justice of the High Court. The Chairman and the two Deputy Chairmen cannot, while they hold office on the Commission hold any other public office. The other members shall hold office on such terms and conditions as may be approved by Parliament. The Commission appoints a Secretary in consultation with the Public Services Commission whose responsibility is to, in consultation with the Chairman:

arrange the business as well as manage the records and keep minutes of the meetings of the Commission; perform such other functions as the Commission may assign to him or her; and assist any of the employees in the performance of their functions or as may be directed by the Commission. The Commission again employs other officers and employees who are considered necessary for the effective discharge of its functions in consultation with the Public Services Commission. Other public officers may also be transferred or seconded to the Commission or may otherwise give assistance to it (NCCE, 2016).

At its head office are five departments, namely; Finance and Account, Human Resource and Administration, Programmes, Communications and Corporate Affairs and Research (with a Gender and Equality desk). These departments oversee NCCE's activities and programmes carried out in the all the 16 Regional and 216 Metropolitan, Municipal and District offices nationwide (www.nccegh.org). The Communication and Corporate Affairs Department sees to the public relations aspect and activities of the institution while the Programmes Department sees to the design, mobilization and implementation of all educational campaigns across its offices nationwide (NCCE, 2015 Annual report - www.nccegh.org). These two departments are in charge of the entire communication aspect of the NCCE nationwide. The NCCE as such, ought to apply all the needed communication skills to ensure continuous involvement, dialogue and feedback received from the public on socio-political and economic issues to promote democratic and good governance for accelerated development and social change.

The place of the NCCE in the current political dispensation of Ghana can never be underestimated. This is so because, in a democracy, all citizens have the power to exercise political control through their involvement in the governance process (Bevir, 2013; Kwashie, 2004; Boateng, 1996). Political control entails three key participatory ideals and behavioural patterns. Firstly, all citizens ought to have the ability to make informed decisions about who should lead them at all levels of the political and or authority structure. Secondly, all citizens should be capable of participating effectively in the decision making process especially in matters that affect them as individuals, groups and a society. Thirdly, every citizen should be able to demand accountable, responsive and responsible governance from his or her duty bearers at all levels of society (Bevir, 2013; Kwashie, 2004).

The 1992 Constitution has created many opportunities for citizens of Ghana to participate in the governance and management of their country. Indeed, the Constitution directs all citizens to be active participants in the governance process. It is important for citizens, therefore, to take advantage of these opportunities and to participate actively in government decision-making processes at all societal levels. Citizen involvement in democratic governance, however, does not happen as a matter of course. Instead, it calls for deliberate and sustained efforts to make people to, firstly, recognise the roles they can play and, secondly, know how they can play those roles both efficiently and effectively in the governance process. Thirdly, it requires conscious interventions to empower and inspire citizens to take appropriate steps to become involved in the democratic process (Kwashie, 2004). In these regards, therefore, civic education becomes a critical tool for enhancing citizens' participation in public affairs. Civic education helps to create an informed and responsible citizenry that plays a pivotal role in enhancing democratic governance. This is so because citizens need skills and the confidence to voice their concerns in order to hold public officials accountable, responsible and responsive to their needs. Through civic education people can become responsible citizens who are aware of their rights, responsibilities and obligations and with a preparedness to contribute to a fair and equitable society (Bevir, 2013; Boateng, 1996; Kwashie, 2004).

Civic education in a democracy is all about preparation for sustaining and enhancing self-government (Putnam, 2000). Democratic self-government means citizen participation based on informed, critical reflection (Bennet et al., 2011). In a constitutional democracy, effective civic education is a necessity because "the competence to participate in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act deliberately in a pluralistic world, the empathy that permit us to hear and thus accommodate others, all involve skills that must be acquired" (Barber, 1992:35). Thus, the overall idea behind civic education is to promote the demand for good governance, which is an informed and engaged public, as a necessary complement to efforts to improve the practice of good governance (Fuseini, 2014; Hess, 2009; Rietbergen-McCracken, 2004).

Significantly, the NCCE's mandate enjoins it to promote civic knowledge, skills, and virtues among the citizenry of Ghana. To achieve these goals, the NCCE has to provide, in a deliberate and sustained manner, educational interventions that are directed at increasing the levels of awareness, understanding and knowledge of the 1992 Constitution as a means to improving the participation of the people in the country's democratic process. Similarly, by educating the citizenry on the principles and objectives of the 1992 Constitution, they would be able to appreciate the fact that while the 1992 Constitution provides them with the best guarantee for the exercise of their individual and collective freedom and rights, they equally have to exercise some civic responsibilities towards the state and other citizens of Ghana.

Thus, the ultimate purpose of civic education to be provided by the NCCE is to develop in the people of Ghana a democratic culture that would promote the strengthening of the foundations of democracy in Ghana. Democratic culture represents the totality of ideas, practices, attitudes, values and norms or moral standards that are identified by a given society as desirable and therefore should guide the actions or behaviours of individuals and groups in relation to other people and the state as in a democratic manner (Bevir, 2013; Kwashie, 2004). This means that the NCCE has an obligation to inculcate, entrench and reinforce ideas, practices, attitudes, values and moral standards or rules of the game that are considered to be democratic by the society (Kwashie, 2004). This involves, for example, the processes for arriving at decisions on matters of public concern; choice of voting systems to elect representatives and leaders; and use of reasoning, debates, persuasions, mediation, advocacy and arguments instead of force and violence in taking decisions on issues involving different and sometimes strongly opposed viewpoints (Kwashie, 2004). In pursuing their mandate, the NCCE has since its inception designed and implemented several civic education interventions built around issues of public concern and with specific themes and messages, which it communicated, to various target audiences in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of Problem

A study conducted by Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2015) reveal that education is the principal means of acquiring and teaching essential knowledge and skills. According to them, education provides the ethical cement that helps to hold together the very civilisation of nations. It is therefore very essential to pay attention to citizen education. This is because, the absence of education whether formal or informal would put at stake the very survival of a nation (Ninsin, 2016).

Several studies have been conducted on civic education; however, the focus have been on civic awareness and management, and how democracies across the globe have been as a result of constitutional and political education using more of quantitative surveys and mixed method approaches (Browne, 2017; Campbell, 2016; Dahal, 2016; Finkel, 2015; Fuseini, 2014). For instance, Campbell (2016) adopted quantitative research approach to examine the relationships between higher education and civic behaviours and concluded that a significant positive correlation exists between higher education and different measure of positive civic behaviours. Browne (2017) conducted a similar study on the role of civic education on the quality of civic participation in the United States, which, among other things, established that education is effective at promoting the measure, and quality of civic participation. Dahal (2016) used quantitative survey to study civic awareness and engagement focusing on students in central Europe and America, the study highlighted the role citizenship education plays in reversing decline in citizens' civic awareness and engagement. Subsequently, countries in central Europe and America have embark on reviewing the curriculum to make citizenship education a core subject, particularly at the basic education level (Browne, 2017). It must be pointed out that although there have been studies, from the above discussion; it appears these studies are mostly western centered.

In the Ghanaian context, Fuseini (2014) also conducted a study using mixed method approach in examining the implications of civic awareness and engagement. It specifically focused on civic activities, the level of awareness of civic issues and whether a difference existed between the Participant's general level of awareness and their civic engagement. The study concluded that the difference in the level of civic awareness is due to citizenship education, and that civic awareness increases the likelihood of a person engaging in civic activities.

Evidence from the literature shows limited studies have been conducted on civic education in Ghana. Specifically, it appears no study has concentrated on the communication strategies employed by the NCCE, who are in charge of civic education in Ghana in the course of their work. Consequently, the current study fills this existing gap literature by examining the issues that the NCCE consider in developing a communication strategy, and further analyse the communication strategies employed by the NCCE in their civic education campaigns.

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the foundation established by the statement of the problem, this research sought to:

1. To examine the communications strategies used by the NCCE during educational campaigns
2. Identify the issues that the NCCE consider in designing its communication strategies for civic education delivery.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the communications strategies used by the NCCE during educational campaigns?
2. What issues does the NCCE consider when designing communication strategies for civic education delivery?

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain how the NCCE plans and executes its civic education activities. Conducting research on this subject is of value to academia and stakeholders in multiple ways. Firstly, this study will be of value to academia, by adding to literature on communication strategies including the design of messages and methodologies for civic education as well as citizens' responses to various forms of civic education communication strategies.

Secondly, this study will serve as a guide for various CSOs and public sector institutions such as the Electoral Commission (EC), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and governance institutions such as the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) that deploy civic education strategies for their public advocacy, behavior change communications as well as information, education and communications activities. This study hopes to contribute to knowledge that will lead to new initiatives for improving the NCCE's civic education activities.

Finally, the results and findings from this study is expected to help the citizenry particularly, communications and social marketing experts and development practitioners to enhance their civic education activities.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on how the NCCE provide civic education to the public. Specifically, it focused on the things the NCCE consider in formulating messages meant for public education and also identified and examined the specific communication strategies employed by the NCCE in embarking on their various civic education campaigns. The study was a qualitative study relying on the case study design. The participants in this study were purposively selected from the NCCE headquarters. Data were also retrieved from the official website of the NCCE to augment as well as corroborate the data gathered through the interviews. The study was conducted within a period of six months, from February 2019 to August 2019. A sample size of four NCCE officers from the NCCE head office in Accra with not less than two years working experience at the NCCE with the requisite experience and knowledge were selected for the study.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter comprises of the background of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, scope of the study and the organisation of the study. The second chapter presents a review of literature on the study and outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The third chapter tackles the methods through which data was collected for analysis. Aspects of this chapter include the research approach, research design, and sample and sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and method of data analysis. The findings and discussions of the data collected were discussed under the fourth chapter of the study. Data gathered from the study were discussed in themes and analyzed using the theories discussed in the second chapter of the study.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter forms the introductory part to the entire study as it sought to give background information on the study. Apart from the background, the main lacunae that the research seeks to fill was clearly stated. It also provided a rationale for the research by stating the aims and objectives, key research questions guide that study, as well as the scope of the entire study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews related and relevant literature mainly on communication, citizenship education and civic education. The chapter further explores the theories that underpin the study and their relevance to the research work.

2.1 Civic Education and Communication

From time immemorial, communication has been the most important activity of human lives (Miller, 2005). Indeed, several scholars have argued that communication is as old as human history and many indicators prove that effective communication is the main factor enhancing civilisation through history (Bogdat, 2011; Miller, 2005; Stepherd et al, 2006). It is therefore not surprising for the likes of Bogdat (2011) to aver that communication is a multi-cultural phenomenon. Communication is fundamental to human survival. It is essential to the development of the individual, to the formation and continued existence of groups and the interrelations among groups (Bogdat, 2011; Miller, 2005).

Numerous books and articles in communication studies have offered and discussed explicit definitions of communication, describing its nature or prescribing its essence (Miller, 2005). Some others have described its uses and prescribing its functions (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2006). On the contrary, some have questioned its essentiality or naturality (Stepherd et al, 2006). Others also have challenged its misuses and malfunctions (Bogdat, 2011). Again, many materials in the field have entailed implicit definitions of communication, employing worldviews, results of research methodologies and sets of values that almost makes it impossible to have one standardised definition for communication (Miller, 2005).

In view of the aforementioned, a standardised definition to the concept of communication has been viewed by many scholars as almost impossible (Croft, 2014; Striphas, 2006; Tourish, 2010). For instance, Lunenburg (2010) emphasizes that communication is something so difficult that we can never put it in simple words, yet we do need a definition to understand the concept. This is because various authors view communication from varying standpoints (Tourish, 2010). A critical approach with regards to defining and understanding the scope of communication is therefore needed (Croft, 2014). Presently, all humans live in a world, which is totally networked by a multiplicity of communication systems (Seibold & Myers, 2006).

According to Peters (1999) as cited in Bogdat (2011:7), the word communication which derives from the Latin word *communicatio* rooted in *communicare* means "to impart, share or make common" as well as in *munus* meaning "gifts or duties offered publicly." He however argues that this definition does not signify the general arts of human connection via symbols, nor did it suggest the hope for some kind of mutual recognition, but generally involved the stylistic devices employed by an orator to assume "the hypothetical voice of the adversary or audience". Similarly, the notion of communication in ancient Rome, as well as the previous notion of rhetoric in ancient Greece, did not refer to transfer, to transmission, to interaction or to dialogue. It rather pointed to acknowledging and performing specific social functions and group memberships, or to knowing and utilizing concrete technical devices for conveying specific social functions and group memberships (Miller, 2005).

There appears to be several paradoxes derived from the disconnection between the understandings of communication in Greek-Roman antiquity, usually considered to be the foundation of Western thought, and in the modern Western world (Ahn, 2012; Borden, 2006). Ahn (2012) suggested that, a fundamental transformation should occur in the way communication takes place between citizens and the government in changing information environment, geared to more active reaching-out and advertising of policies. This is evident in the fact that although some communication scholars affirm that communication is an old occurrence, beginning in prehistoric cave paintings (Borden, 2006). Others state that, communication is a modern invention, rooted in nineteenth-century ideologies and technologies (Ahn, 2012). Again, whereas some communication theorists and researchers view communication as a pervasive phenomenon, identifiable in humans as well as animals, in all times and all places (Croft, 2014), others maintain that communication is the basis of individual and social formation and transformation which is at the core of anthropological and social studies (Ahn, 2012). And as confirmed by Borden (2006), where several lighten up program executive directors and other high-ranking individuals in charge of the programs were interviewed in-depth to answer questions regards to target audiences and communication channels. He finalised that, programs did not segment their target audiences and that, more programs depended on interpersonal and group communication than mass communication.

From the viewpoint of etymological depth, however, communication refers to sharing of something. Something means information or knowledge or meaning. Therefore, in the context of this study, communication is considered as the process of sharing information, knowledge or meaning (Peters, 1999 as cited in Bogdat, 2011). This is akin to the definition suggested by Larson (2011) in his book, *The Evolution of*

Human Language. According to him, communication is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/ or organizations so that an understandable response results. Matthews and Crow (2010) defines communication as an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, or emotions by two or more persons. Obviously, 'information' is the key word in all these definition. Nonetheless, they do not indicate the objects about which information is to be transmitted. Communication transmits information not only about tangible facts and determinable ideas and opinions but also about emotions (Newman & Smith, 2014). When a communicator passes on or transmits some information, they may also, either intentionally or unconsciously, be communicating his attitude or the frame of his mind. In addition, sometimes the latter may be more relevant to the reality that is being communicated (Matthews & Crow, 2010; Shaw, 2011).

The following definition offered by Shaw (2011:23) in his book '*The Wit and Wisdom of George Bernard Shaw*' appear comprehensive and especially satisfying since it touches all aspects of the communication process: "Communication is a process which involves the transmission and accurate replication of ideas ensured by feedback for the purpose of eliciting actions which will accomplish organizational or intended goals". This definition by Shaw (2011) emphasizes four important points. First, that the process of communication involves the communication of ideas. Second, ideas should be accurately replicated (reproduced) in the receiver's mind implying that the receiver should get exactly the same ideas as were transmitted. If the process of communication is perfect, there will be no dilution, exaggeration or distortion of the ideas. Third, the transmitter is assured of the accurate replication of the ideas by feedback, that is, the receiver's response which is communicated back to the transmitter. Here, it is suggested that communication is a two-way process including transmission of feedback. Finally, the purpose of all communication is to elicit action.

According to Keyton (2011), there are two common elements in every communication exchange; the sender and the receiver. The sender initiates the communication. The sender is also a person who has a need or desire to convey an idea or concept to others (Keyton, 2011; Yate, 2009). The receiver, on the other hand, is the individual to whom the message is sent. The sender encodes the idea by selecting words, symbols, or gestures with which to compose a message (Antos, 2011; Keyton, 2011). The message is the outcome of the encoding, which takes the form of verbal, nonverbal, or written language (Keyton, 2011). The message is sent through a medium or channel, which is the carrier of the communication (Antos, 2011). The medium can be a face-to-face conversation, telephone call, e-mail, or written report (Antos, 2011; Keyton, 2011). The receiver decodes the received message into meaningful information (Antos, 2011; Keyton, 2011). Noise is anything that distorts the message. Different perceptions of the message, language barriers, interruptions, emotions, and attitudes are examples of noise (Antos, 2011; Keyton, 2011). Finally, feedback occurs when the receiver responds to the sender's message and returns the message to the sender. Feedback allows the sender to determine whether the message has been received and understood (Antos, 2011; Keyton, 2011). The elements in the communication process determine the quality of communication. A problem in any one of these elements can reduce communication effectiveness (Keyton, 2011). Authors like Akomeah (2015), in his quest in investigating how utility companies communicate with their public, established that, if the management of a water utility company is able to communicate effectively with its customers, there would be minimal misunderstandings. He further expressed the need for continuous dialogue and feedback (shared experience) between the sender and receiver in order to accelerate social exchange. According to a Project

Management Institute White Paper (2013:23), "when the sender and receiver dialogue on a message, they build a relationship and the impact is effective" and so the communication process and its elements are not thoroughly considered, communication can fail.

Communication is a key medium in public institutions (Boampong, 2017). In the context of this research, public institution or sector is defined as "the part of economy that serves the public and can consist of governmental entities at different levels of the state. Their main source of income is taxes and other similar public funds belonging to central and local government" (Bogdat, 2011:8). Tench and Yeomans (2006) similarly explain that within the context of national democracy exists a central government, ministries, departments, local authorities, hospitals, schools, and other agencies that are legally and morally mandated to communicate with the population and the media on policy decisions and issues affecting the entire society through provision of public programmes, goods, or services. Using examples in the Ghanaian context, issues such as the Ebola epidemic, cholera, HIV-AIDS, breast cancer, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, anti-speeding and road accidents, child labor and trafficking, child marriages, human abuse, waste management, fire disasters and safety measures, flooding, illegal mining (galamsey) and felling of trees, voter apathy, election violence, corruption are wide range of social problems that can mainly be tackled, translated into actions and policies through effective communication campaigns and dialogue (Tench & Yeomans, 2006). There are other policies in Ghana such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Value Added Tax (VAT), national identity card, subsidized education, school-feeding programme, paperless port system, among others that affect society one way or the other and ought to be communicated or dialogued on with the public for understanding and implementation.

Bodgat (2011) outlines some functions of government communication as informing, advocating or persuading for policies, reforms, engaging citizens, and other stakeholders into processes regarding implementation of a policy. Akomeah (2015) observed that communicators in public institutions whose work often involve the entire citizenry must employ appropriate skills in communicating to their target audience and apply these skills expeditiously. Indeed, communicators of various public institutions that oversee or handle different sectors of society ought to apply the requisite communication knowledge and skills in addressing these issues as well as accounting to the public on successes achieved. As mentioned by Tench and Yeoman (2006), public institutions apart from mass media channels ought to execute these functions using effective two-way communication tools and approaches such as debates, public hearing, community gatherings, and stakeholder consultations that will generate the necessary public involvement. Communicators in public institutions ought to consider whom their audiences are in relation to specific campaigns in order to know the appropriate channel to use which will engender feedback and the needed understanding and involvement of receivers in relation to any policy (Ahn, 2012). Effective communication and citizen participation remain key to development (Ahn, 2012). Therefore, if institutions do not reach their publics or target audiences with their messages, then communication loses its essence. Therefore, understanding the communication process and its application is critical (Borden, 2006). It is important to note that understanding the concept of communication and its relevance from the above discussions provide a justification for the purpose of this study. Communication is central in any form of education; hence, it afforded the researcher to examine the thoughts processes that go into the National Commission of Civic Education in putting together any form of communication strategy to implement their civic education campaigns.

However, Lunenburg (2010) in his study revealed that, every activity and administrative function involves some form of direct and indirect communication. He adds that the one constant thing in our daily life of interactions is many interruptions. Thus, the ability to package your message and communicate it effectively on daily bases is dependent on your ability to identify and overcome the obstacles that are likely to impede the communication. As such, it is expedient to discuss the possible barriers to communication identified in the literature. The next section in this chapter provides a detailed discussion on the barriers of communication.

According to Lunenburg (2010), interactions happen daily, with a number of conversations in the course of the day. Pauley (2010) explored Listening and speaking with emphasis on speaking as being the most important elements in valuing communication. He discovered that many students have the fear of presenting standing in front of their class. Subconsciously, he confirmed that the students responded positively to the skills and activities towards building their confidence in speaking. Furthermore, he explains why there are always cases of communication breakdown and avers that noise or interactions can exist in any of the elements of communication being the sender, the encoding, the message, the medium, the decoding, the receiver, and the feedback. If noise exists in these elements in any way, complete clarity of meaning and understanding does not occur (Pauley, 2010). The author, Shaw (2011:123) wrote, "The greatest problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished".

Kapur (2018) in his study indicated that communication is a very common concept in everyday life and takes place in every setting, organization, area, or place to the extent that no work, operation, or function is carried out without any means of communication. He accepted that within the process of communication, it is apparent that barriers and obstacles do occur, some of which can be avoidable and others cannot be avoidable. Therefore, individuals or originations should inculcate all the required skills, attitudes, and traits amongst themselves so that they can effectively overcome all the barriers to communication.

Barriers to communication can be defined as the aspects or conditions that interfere with effective exchange of ideas or thoughts (Eisenberg, 2010). Barriers to communication are also referred to by various scholars as noises or interactions in communication. (Eisenberg, 2010). Barriers to communication are of different kinds and possess various kinds of characteristics (Eisenberg, 2010). Studies on barriers to communication have hinted on five types of barriers: environmental and physical barriers; semantic barriers; cultural barriers; psychosocial barriers; and perception of reality (Eisenberg, 2010; Kapur, 2018; Lunenburg, 2010).

Lunenburg (2010) classified environmental and physical barriers as follows: time, space, place and medium. Time as a barrier relates to developing quicker and speedy channels of communication. For example, when communicating with somebody, if the process is time consuming such as mailing letters then it is a barrier, any kind of communication whether, it is done in a formal or an informal manner, if it is highly time consuming then it proves to be a barrier. Thus, for efficient working, individuals need to develop a faster means of communication such as electronic mail instead of sending letters by post. Space, according to him, is vital to eliminating the unwanted distance within the communication system, which can occur, for example, in telephonic communication. If two persons need to discuss an important matter and one of them is in India, whereas other one is in the United States of America, then telephonic conversation may not prove to be very effective, then they can send each other details through the system of email. Place that is the area or the environment where the communication is taking place should be clear and not over-crowded. Noise pollution can be a barrier to effective communication, this is obvious, where there is noise and a person cannot efficiently communicate. Therefore, places and areas with lesser people, proper ventilation is required for effective communication. Then, the medium via which the process of communication is taking place should be effective and appropriate. Communication takes place in various forms; it is oral, written, audio, video, formal, informal, the medium used for the purpose of communicating should be accurate, precise and understandable (Lunenburg, 2010).

Eisenberg (2010) and Kapur (2018) discuss the semantic barriers of effective communication in their respective studies. Under the semantic barriers, they argued that when communicating with the other persons, no matter what kind of communication means is utilized, whether it is formal or informal, it is vital to make use of appropriate words, vocabulary and language; all kinds of communication should reflect decency. Language and vocabulary that is used in communication should be understandable to the persons. For instance, if a person speaks only English and a word in Spanish is used then they may or may not understand the word. If do understand, then it could be a possibility that they might have studied other languages such as Spanish or French. Two or more persons when they are communicating with each other should use a common language, so that everyone can understand it well (Eisenberg, 2010; Kapur, 2018).

Communication also takes place between people belonging to different nationalities, religions, castes, creeds, races and ethnicities. In other words, when two persons are communicating with each other, there may be differences in their cultural backgrounds. This may result in cultural barriers to their communicating effectively with each other (Kapur, 2018). It is therefore vital to overcome all the barriers that might occur within the course of communication. It is crucial for people to be aware of their own culture and that of those with whom they are communicating. In the form of communication, it is vital to form an understanding and acceptance of another person's culture (Kapur, 2018).

Additionally, Kapur (2018) indicates that in the process of communication, it is vital to understand each other's mindset and mental capacity; this applies in every case whether it is a professor giving a lecture or a conversation between the employer and an employee. If someone is communicating with the other individual or a group of individuals with an attitude of disinterest or unwillingness then the process of communication will not be effective. In this case, the attitude of the communicators will be considered inappropriate for making the process of communication effective. It is therefore considered crucial to overcome the psychological barriers to communication as well.

Similarly, Lunenburg (2010) denotes in his study that, perception of reality creates a mental impression of the state of things, as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them. Thus, when communicating, it is important to understand various perceptions of a situation or of an issue or a problem (Lunenburg, 2010). There are different levels of perceptions that are involved when communicating about a particular topic, condition, problem, issue, situation, dilemma, stress or a concept. Lacking understanding about different levels of perceptions may prove to be a barrier. In order to implement effective communication, it is vital to gain the 'perception of reality' which means information about facts, knowledge, figures, actuality and what is true. While communicating, it is important to be open, flexible and transparent (Kapur, 2018; Lunenburg, 2010).

Communication within the organizational structures is known to be the key factor for the success of any organization. This is so because, within any kind of organizational structure, individuals have to work in collaboration: they need to conduct meetings and have to discuss with each other various issues regarding their functions and activities. On the other hand, if they develop amongst themselves strained relations and hard terms then they will not be able to work effectively and incur profitability, productivity and goodwill within the organization (Zaineb, 2010). There are some barriers to communication that every organization deals with. Individuals may have the viewpoint that the process of communication is very simple and straightforward. This may be true to some extent but as pointed out by Pauley (2010) what makes the process complicated, difficult and tedious are the inherent barriers to communication.

A study conducted by Zaineb (2010) revealed that the common barriers to communication within organizations are perceptual barriers, emotional barriers, language barriers, cultural barriers and physical barriers. He argues that perceptual barriers within an organization are the barriers, which arise due to differences of opinion between two or more people or employees. Differences of the viewpoints and any kind of disagreements between two or more persons is not healthy for the functioning of the organization. Emotional barriers within an organization occur when people do not develop interest in communicating with their fellow employees due to the feelings of fear, mistrust, anger or annoyance that may arise within their minds.

Language barriers hinge primarily on language, which is the most effective means of communication with others since it provides understanding of the content that an individual is willing to express or communicate with the others (Lunenburg, 2010). When two persons or groups of people are involved in communicating with each other and if a common language is used that is understandable to all individuals then their objectives will be fulfilled and the process of communication will be made effective (Zaineb, 2010). According to him, within an organization, it is vital to develop a common language in order to communicate appropriately. He explains that, when international students come to study in India, they are not familiar with the national language, hence English is considered to be the common language that is understood by all and utilized for the purpose of communication.

Zaineb (2010) also discusses cultural barriers within an organization. He avers that individuals belonging to different nationalities, regions, cultures, religions, castes, creed and different status groups are often employed together. These people at times do familiarize themselves with other people's cultures and backgrounds, whereas other times they are even unaware. He posits that a cultural barrier occurs when people of different cultures are unable to communicate with each other efficiently and this inability may be due diverse factors such as different backgrounds, languages, customs, viewpoints, ideas, notions and so forth.

Removing physical barriers within an organizational structure is vital for building team spirit since individuals ought to work in coordination with each other and be cooperative towards each other, (Zaineb, 2010). Formal and informal means of communication occurs within an organization. One of the crucial factors is proximity within an organizational structure. There is a system of hierarchy and those individuals who are placed at the higher levels of the hierarchy work in closed doors and offices as well as cabins are physically placed at the distance; their subordinates are in this way unable to communicate with them and this is a physical barrier to effective communications (Pauley, 2010; Zaineb, 2010).

In overcoming barriers in communication, Kapur (2018) in his study advocates that there is the need to eliminate the differences in perception. Furthermore, he states that within the organization, when individuals are recruited, their performance, qualifications, skills, abilities, knowledge, attitude should be taken into consideration; there should be proper training and development programs, employee selection procedures and individuals should possess effective communication skills especially regarding the English language, they should be fluent in English, in speaking as well as in writing. Also, it is important to place emphasis on the use of simple language while communicating no matter what language, the use of words should be understandable, clear and simple; usage of complicated words might make an individual perplexed and such words should be avoided (Kapur, 2018).

Noise is the most common barrier, which occurs everywhere. For instance, when family members are communicating at home, constant noise comes from busy neighborhoods and at the workplace too while working on the computers, people may be engaged in informal conversations and all these lead to the emergence of various noise levels. It is necessary to identify the sources of noise and then formulating measures in order to eliminate those sources (Pauley, 2010; Kapur, 2018). The receiver should listen to the speaker with awareness and in a considerate manner; he/she should respond by asking questions, the speaker should always find out if the listener understands everything that he/she is saying to overcome the barrier to effective communication (Kapur, 2018). Additionally, during communication, the speaker or sender is required to make effective use of body language and not depict ones emotional state. For example, if the speaker is upset due to some reasons, he should not portray his distress in his speech because the listeners might misinterpret the information if it is delivered by a speaker in a distressed mood (Kapur, 2018). That notwithstanding, the hierarchical levels within the organisationshould be optimum in number; the operations and functions implemented within the organization, the leadership skills, span of control, authority, rules, policies should be organized appropriately and put into operation in an effective manner (Kapur, 2018).

2.1.1 Civic Education

Civic education is currently a field of vibrant research and practice that is producing significant pedagogical innovation (Barrett, 2007; Campbell, 2008; Erdman, 2007). It is also a contested field with intense discussions about its goals and what teaching and learning processes should be given more attention (Campbell, 2008; Erdman, 2007). These discussions reflect a transition from 'traditional' models of civic education to 'new civics' that considerably extend the definitions of civic participation and the purposes of civic education (Fuseini, 2014; Erdman, 2007). Some scholars in the field point to what they consider as a seemingly parallel relationship between the civic education which involves the increase in knowledge primarily about the nation's political institutions and history, and the purpose of the education which is geared towards developing the understanding, skills, agency and motivation through hands-on experiences with civic issues and actions (Barrett, 2007; Berti & Andriolo, 2001). Nevertheless, to reconcile this disconnection, Barrett (2007) suggests that a critical approach is needed to examine citizenship education and its effects on civic participation and engagement.

Barrett (2007) explains civic education as an important component of education that encourages citizens to participate in democracy and governance by discharging their rights and responsibilities expeditiously with the necessary knowledge and skills. In quoting Alexis de Toqueville, Barrett (2007:2) states, “each new generation is a new people that must acquire the knowledge, learn the skills, and develop the dispositions or traits of private and public character that undergird a constitutional democracy. Those dispositions must be fostered and nurtured by word and study and by the power of example. Democracy is not a machine that would go off itself," but must be consciously reproduced, one generation after another.

Rietbergen-McCracken (2008) also defines civic education as the provision of information and learning experiences to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes which can take varied forms including; classroom-based learning, informal training, experiential learning and mass media campaigns. Barrett (2007) adds that civic education is essential in sustaining constitutional democracy. In other words, democracies are sustained by informed, effective, and responsible citizenry who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Barrett, 2007). A careful study of the definitions provided so far show that they all emphasize the need or essence of civic education for the advancement of true democracy, since well-informed citizens know what to do when necessary and how to do to it in fulfilling their civic responsibilities.

Rietbergen-McCracken (2008) highlights three requisite elements of civic education, namely; civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition. He explains that civic knowledge refers to citizens’ understanding of the workings of the political system and of their own political and civic rights and responsibilities. The rights to freedom of expression, right to vote and run for public office, and the responsibilities to respect the rule of law and the rights and interests of others are typical examples of civic knowledge. In his view, civic skills refer to citizens' ability to analyze, evaluate, take and defend positions on public issues, and to use their knowledge to participate in civic and political processes. Monitoring government performance, or mobilize other citizens around particular issues are classic examples of civic skills. To him, civic dispositions are citizens' traits necessary for a democracy to thrive for example, tolerance, public spiritedness, civility, critical mindedness and willingness to listen, negotiate, and compromise.

Levinson (2010) recommends a strong citizenship education, which would equip both leaders and citizens with the moral and intellectual capabilities to enable them, steer the affairs of state in the right direction. As pointed out by Selman and Kwok (2010), a very important fiber in democratic theory is the hypothesis that education is a correlate, if not a requisite of the democratic order. In addition, Antwi (1992) as cited in Gyamfi and Yartey (2015) opinionates that education has the political function of engendering consensus on certain fundamental issues among the members of a political system so that they may be true to the assumptions that undergird that political system. It is important to note that this is so irrespective of the political system under consideration; be it authoritarian, totalitarian or democratic. Civic education, therefore, is an essential element for the preparation and involvement of citizens to sustain constitutional democracy (Youniss, 2011). In a democratic dispensation, civic education means a complete education on self-government where citizens are actively involved in their own governance and they are not mere spectators who simply just accept the dictums of others (Youniss, 2011).

It is therefore imperative for civic education institutions to employ the necessary communication skills and knowledge in applying appropriate channels to educate citizens on their civic rights and responsibilities to aid the fulfillment of the above-mentioned roles. Researchers such as Barrett (2007), Rietbergen-McCracken (2008) and Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2012) mention that civic education apart from using the mass media and other new communication technologies such as blogs and social media must be combined with other dialogue approaches such as capacity-building, seminars, workshops, focus group discussions, theatre or drama, durbars, simulations, role plays, among others to strengthen the ability of citizens to organize themselves, interrelate, interact and make their voices heard by those in authority.

A study conducted by Youniss (2011) indicates that by far the most widespread application of civic education is in formal school education. Civic education is being taught as part of the regular curriculum in primary and secondary schools around the world, and there are extensive pedagogic resources available from the many civil society organisations in the field (Youniss, 2011). Civic education is frequently used in conjunction with other capacity-building and dialogue approaches to strengthen the ability of citizens and civil society groups to organize themselves, interact with others and make their voices heard by those in power. Thus, for example, a civic education initiative may reveal the need for targeted training of community leaders on communications, or may be followed up by the facilitation of citizen forums and advocacy campaigns (Youniss, 2011). Some of the tools most commonly used in civic education activities include seminars, workshops, focus group discussions, drama, simulations, role plays, radio and television programmes, information technologies such as blogs and internet forums (Selman & Kwok, 2010; Youniss, 2011).

Further studies on civic education have outlined two main areas where civic education programmes have shown consistently positive impacts (Barrett, 2007; Berti & Andriolo, 2001). Firstly, civic education increases participation in political processes. It has been established that citizens who undergo civic education programmes are more likely to become involved in activities such as voting, taking part in community problem-solving initiatives, attending local government meetings, participating in protests, contributing to election campaigns, and contacting elected officials. Secondly, civic education increases greater political knowledge (Barrett, 2007; Berti & Andriolo, 2001). Participants of civic education programmes have been shown to have better knowledge about the basic features of the political system of their country, including the structure and function of democratic institutions, their basic political and civil rights, and the timing of elections (Barrett, 2007; Berti & Andriolo, 2001). More generally, civic education can contribute important benefits in promoting good governance and civic engagement (Berti & Andriolo, 2001).

In Ghana, a study conducted by Fuseini (2014) on the civic awareness and engagement in Ghana focused among other things on the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). He reiterates that since the NCCE came into being, it has had a nationwide presence through its regional and district offices, which provides a platform that enables it to reach out to every community. His study concluded that though the NCCE was to help in ensuring civic awareness in Ghana, it has not been on top of its responsibilities because the District Level Elections (DLE) over the years have shown a low turnout rate. The evidence points to a dwindling interest as the first DLE of 1988/89 recorded a voter turnout of 59.3%, the second in 1994 recorded 29.3%, the third (1998), fourth (2002) and fifth (2006) recorded voter turnout of 41.6%, 31.1% and 39.3% respectively (NCCE, 2010). Similarly, people were not willing to take part in community service as they stood aloof waiting for the central or local government to fix all their community problems. This makes it important to find out the degree of understanding the people have on civic issues and whether the level of awareness the beneficiaries of the NCCE programmes have will influence their engagement in civic issues.

2.2 Communication Strategy Development

According to Hargie (2016), in a quantitave study titled *the importance of communication for organizational effectiveness* posited that organisations that develop effective communication strategies are more likely to both have a positive work environment and be more effective in achieving their objectives. Leigh (2013), in her paper on communication strategies in an effective organisation using a qualitative approach articulated that developing an effective communication strategy is more important than ever in this contemporary world. The author advocates that the organizational communicator, on the other hand, must develop abilities that will enable them effectively convey the organization's desired aims to the public. As a result, effective organisational communicators ensure that their efforts will pay off in the form of a stronger relationship, which will further boost the company's chances of success. Leigh (2013) in her paper proposed some considerations the communicator should make to ensure the development of good communication strategies; to start with, the author posits that person in charge of communication must accept full responsibility for any information coming into or leaving the organization. When communication breaks down, it is simple to blame each other in the organisation. Accepting responsibility for communication issues, on the other hand, is critical and can help to guarantee healthy workplace communications. Secondly, Leigh (2013) articulates that setting aside time to make crucial relationships on a regular basis is an excellent approach to prevent the doggedly attitude. Establishing solid connections and forming relationships with clients and co - workers is just as crucial as becoming productive. Setting up regular moments to contact with all stakeholders of the organisationis the best technique for staying connected and ensuring efficient business communications. This can be done once a day, possibly at the start or end of the day, or once a week, and can take the form of a phone call, a videoconference, an email, or face-to-face meetings. You might not have been aware of it.

Leigh (2013) further suggested that in developing an effective communication strategy it is important to consider professionalism and accuracy. The focus here is on today's digital communication platform, which has shown to be a simple means of communication. The communicator might quickly forget some of the conventions of communication that characterize the conventional means of informing the public, such as face-to-face. As a communicator, it is critical to realize that you are not judged solely on the basis of your interactions with others. Before sharing or publishing material, be professional and check your messages twice to ensure that your purpose is clear.

The last thing Leigh (2013) suggest should be considered in developing a communication strategy is the establishment of boundaries in formulating communication strategies. Thus, the communicator's ability to develop a strong relationship in the workplace is necessary and useful. The communicator, on the other hand, does not have to let this impair his communication function in the organization. To prevent being sucked into too many social engagements at the expense of work, it is critical to set suitable limits. A realistic communication plan will assist the communicator to work within his or her means and manage expectations. Organizations often have high assumptions about the influence they can have. The communicator may also be under pressure to generate results that look great but that may not have meaningful influence on the interests of people who matter.

From the above suggestions made by Leigh (2013), it is important to note that these suggestions can be situated within the organisational context. Thus, organisations with specific consumers of products and services with the aim of maximizing profits. In this current study, the organization in question, the NCCE is a government-subverted organisation tasked to render civic education to the general. However, these considerations from Leigh give the current study an idea of the things different organisations consider in designing their communication strategies.

Hallaham et al (2007) in a study that sought to define strategic communication by examining the nature of strategic communication posited that a rising number of organizations have realized that diverse communications disciplines have comparable goals and objectives, as well as similar techniques for accomplishing those goals. However, the difference is mostly seen in their techniques and are driven to adapt to a changing environment by their organisations' desires to coordinate messages via the convergence of media. It is therefore no surprising that they view communication strategy as a method of communication used by communicators from various disciplines. In affirmation of the assertion made by Hallaham et al (2007), some scholars have attempted to make sense of what communication strategy means in different disciplines. For instance, Jamshidnejad (2011) defines communication strategies as a collection of ways that professionals (communicators and language learners) try to employ to communicate in order to achieve their goals in terms of language items or structures, when he made reference to the concept in his study that looked at how language learners communicate in foreign language. Communication strategies originate from overarching management strategies, according to Steyn (2004), and the two must be in harmony. As a result, a communication strategy can be viewed as the result of senior communicators and top managers making a strategic decision about the identification and management of communication with strategic stakeholders. From this approach, communication strategy serves as a framework for achieving organizational goals. Consequently, effective management necessitates the implementation of a communication plan.

Haneef and Shaheen (2014), sought to examine the use of social media among the agriculturally based non-governmental organisations in Kenya, employing the qualitative research design through the lens of the uses and gratification theory, the study found that social media usage is a communication strategy employed by the selected organization. The author defined communication strategy as a concept or set of actions intended to direct an organization's external communications operations. Thus, communication strategies assist organisations in focusing their communication and outreach efforts on a certain set of goals – both an organization’s mission and objectives or a specific project (Shaheen & Haneef, 2014). Communication strategy, according to Bentele and Nothhaft (2007), is a manner of combining all of the tactics used to convey an organization's policies, operations, and outputs to the public.

From the above definitions, it can be argued that the goal of communications strategies is to communicate effectively with external stakeholders. This is meant to help organisations to achieve their strategic goals and objective. The current study sought to establish the communication strategies employed by a government agency

(National Commission for Civic Education) who are mandated by law to provide civic education delivery services to Ghanaians on government programmes and policies. In the context of this study, the external stakeholders are the publics are the receivers of the civic education campaigns employed by the NCCE. Empirical studies like Azcarate and Balfors (2013) have identified some communication strategies employed by some organisations. Azcarate and Balfors (2013) examined communication strategies employed by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The study found that the synergistic employment of three strategic components is essential for effective communication. The three strategic components include advocacy, social mobilization, and behavior change communication. The authors defined advocacy as the active promotion of a cause or idea through methods and tactics to sway people and organizations' opinions and decisions. The advocacy component of an NGO communication strategy informs and inspires stakeholders and partners in order to create a supportive environment for programme objectives and development goals to be met. Azcarate and Balfors (2013) add that another important component of communication strategies is its role in enhancing human and institutional resource development at the local level. Thus, participatory approaches to community development and poverty reduction are built on the foundation of social mobilization. This component involves and promotes the participation of institutions, community groups/networks, and other identifiable groups (social, civic, and religious) in order to increase demand for or maintain progress toward certain development goals.

With behavior change, Azcarate and Balfors (2013) postulates that as much as possible, behavior change communication necessitates face-to-face interaction with stakeholders. In NGOs' communication strategies, behavioral change is engaging in dialogue with individuals or groups to inform, encourage, plan, or solve problems with the goal of fostering and maintaining behavior change (UNICEF, 2008). Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) is a communication-based strategy that encourages people to acquire and maintain healthier behaviors and lifestyles. Maintaining improved behavior generally necessitates a long-term commitment to BCC as part of a larger intervention or programme (Shaheen & Haneef, 2014). Zkjadoon (2015) also classifies communication strategies into Visual, Verbal, and Nonverbal. According to him communication strategies, help organisations to address employee demands and enhance workplace knowledge, which will eventually affect the organisation's public relations. Zkjadoon (2015) notes that written and oral communication techniques are the two types of verbal communication strategies. Emails, faxes, and chat are examples of written strategy, whereas phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are examples of oral strategy.

On the other hand, the nature of nonverbal communication strategy is visual. It could be a person's face expression, body language, or tone of speech. Even though this method is not always accounted for, it is nevertheless included because the communicator cannot grab his audience's attention without it. Web pages and pictorial interpretations make up the visual approach. This method is utilized in the workplace to offer documentation (Zkjadoon, 2015). Experts in corporate organizations have made the following attempts to clarify the concept of communication strategies, for instance, Zkjadoon (2015) claims that the conventional manner of conveying information between two people through writing and meetings has altered dramatically as a result of sophisticated technology. The author goes on to say that, communicators must make an effort to grasp how to strategically deliver information with their audiences in clearly defined ways. Zkjadoon (2015) on the other hand, asserts that communication strategies in modern discourse are plans for sharing knowledge with the most useful communication objectives that influence change.

2.3 Civic Education and Civic Engagement

The construct civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens take part in the life of a community to improve conditions for themselves or to help shape the community's future (Adler & Goggin, 2005). The findings on the link between civic education and civic engagement have produced contradictory findings. While others have discovered that citizenship education contributes to increased civic engagement, some other studies have produced contrary results. In terms of citizenship education enhancing civic engagement, the findings of Delli, Carpini and Keeter (2007), Finkel (2000), Putnam (2000), Patrick (2002), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2002), Kurtz et al. (2003), Levine and Lopez (2004), Campbell (2006) and Browne (2013) support the assertion that civic education has a positive impact on civic engagement. For instance, Campbell (2006) memorably phrased his description of the tight link between civic education and engagement as; whether one is dealing with cognitive matters such as level of factual information about politics or conceptual sophistication in its assessment; or such motivational matters as degree of attention paid to politics and emotional involvement in political affairs; or questions of actual behavior, such as engagement in any of a variety of political activities from party work to vote turnout itself: education is everywhere the universal solvent, and the relationship is always in the same direction. The higher the education, the greater the 'good' values of the variable. The educated citizen is attentive, knowledgeable, and participatory and the uneducated citizen is not.

Similarly, Putnam's (2000) study also found a strong nexus between education and civic engagement and claims that; education is one of the most important predictors – usually, in fact, the most important predictor – of many forms of social participation – from voting to associational membership, to chairing a local committee to hosting a dinner party to giving blood. The same basic pattern applies to both men and women and to all races and generations. Education, in short, is an extremely powerful predictor of civic engagement.

For Patrick (2002), knowledgeable citizens are better citizens of a democracy about their possession and use of civic skills since political knowledge induces greater levels of political engagement. In the case of Levine and Lopez (2004), they claim that in a range of civic engagement measures, the people who chose to take civics, politics, or social studies classes were much more engaged in community affairs and politics than other young people were to the extent that they were more able to help solve a community problem; make a difference in their community; volunteer; trust other people and the government, made consumer decisions for ethical or political reasons; believe in the importance of voting; and registered to vote. This also signifies that there is a positive correlation between citizenship education and political participation. Similarly, Browne (2013) discovered that in Project Citizen; a citizenship education programme that was implemented in Thailand, increased young people's likelihood of engaging politically and in other aspects of society.

In spite of some studies finding positive relationships between citizenship education and civic engagement, others have made contradictory discoveries (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 1999; Galston, 2001; O'Toole, Marsh & Jones, 2003; Phelps, 2006; Brody, 1978 as cited in Campbell, 2006; Campbell, 2006; De Brito, 2010). For example, Brody (1978) as cited in Campbell (2006:123) has labelled the phenomenon of falling political engagement in the face of rising education, the "paradox of participation". In the view of Campbell (2006:27), "more puzzling is the fact that the decline in voter turnout, and other civic indicators, is concentrated among the youngest age cohort of the population – who generally also have the highest average level of education". For Galston (2001), despite the huge increases in the formal educational attainment of the United States of America's population during the past 50 years, levels of political knowledge have barely budged. The author claims that today's college graduates know no more about politics than did high school graduates in the 1950s. De Brito (2010), citing the elections of Mozambique (2004 and 2009), the Lesotho (2007) and the Zambian (2008), established that in recent years in Southern Africa elections have been marked by an extremely low voter turnout of less than 50%.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Researchers are generally guided by some theoretical construct in conducting their studies. These theories are expected to help scholars draw research findings and analysis within certain theoretical frameworks. Another aim is to help researchers to confirm or challenge the theory in existing phenomenon. Consequently, this study is underpinned by two theories; the Message-Design model and the Compliance Gaining theory.

2.4.1 The Message-Design Model

The message-design model was developed by Begger (1997) and it states that certain actions are necessary to set things up so that other actions will work. Dye (1997) described a message as a discrete unit of data transmitted through various sensory abilities: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. When data is received accurately, it becomes information. The transaction is called communication. Messages are sent for a variety of purposes: to inform, to entertain, to persuade, to anger, to soothe and every decision about the messages we send, whether conscious or unconscious, deliberate or haphazard, contributes either positively or negatively to the quality of communication (Dye, 1997 as cited in Nelson et al., 2013).

A definition of the term message as summarised by Petterson (2012) indicates that it is information content conveyed from a sender to a receiver in a single context on one occasion. For example, a newspaper generally uses both the printed word and different kinds of pictures. A television programme employs words, images and sounds, such as music. The main components in message design, according to him, are words, visuals and forms. These main components may be used in many different ways to design, produce, transmit and interpret messages.

Nelson et al., (2013) posit that message design is the systematic and purposeful process of making decisions about communication. This involves decisions about both the content (what) and the delivery (how) of a message. Furthermore, they explain that most people make message design decisions unconsciously or from habit: either whether it is a phone call or a note, whether they sit with their legs crossed or not, whether they speak loudly or softly. Petterson (2012:11), also refers to the term message design as a deliberate and systematic process of analysis and synthesis that: (1) begins with the identifying of a problem; (2) comprises the intellectual creative effort of an originator; and (3) concludes with a concrete plan or blueprint for a solution. The product, he notes, may be drawings, plans, schemes and specifications. He indicated that, depending on different objectives of messages, one can see different "message designs in general" which can be grouped into graphic design; information design; instruction design; mass design; and persuasion design.

According to Cezzar (2017), graphic design, also known as communication design, is the art and practice of planning and projecting ideas and experiences with visual and textual content. The form it takes can be physical or virtual and can include images, words, or graphics. The experience can take place in an instant or over a long period. The work can happen at any scale, from the design of a single postage stamp to a national postal signage system. It can be intended for a small number of people, such as a one-off or limited edition book or exhibition design, or can be seen by millions, as with the interlinked digital and physical content of an international news organization. It can also be for any purpose, whether commercial, educational, cultural, or political (Bennett, 2002). In graphic design, the main objective is to provide functional, aesthetic, and organized structure to groups of diverse graphical elements (Triggs, 2011). Within a given area, such as a computer screen, a label, a page in a book, a poster, a projected image or a screen, the designer may alter the design of headings, margins, ornaments, pictures, space, symbols, text and words. Deliberate typographic variation is used to present the content in the text in a clear way (Buchanan et al., 2013).

Information design on the other hand, comprises analysis, planning, presentation and understanding of a message – its content, form and language to satisfy the information needs of the intended receivers (Karal, Karal, Şılbır & Altun, 2016). Regardless of the selected medium, a well-designed information material, with its message, will satisfy aesthetic, economic, ergonomic, as well as subject matter requirements (Tyler, 2014). Information design is complementary to information technology in the same way as architectural design is complementary to building technology (Dhillon, 2012). In information design, the main goal is clarity of communication and to fulfill the main goal all messages must be accurately designed, produced and distributed, and later correctly interpreted and understood by most of the members of the intended audience (Karal et al., 2016). The main objective is to provide information materials needed by the interpreter in order to perform specific tasks. The information interpreters might be seen as doers. They may develop experience, new skills and understanding (Karal et al., 2016:32).

The term instruction design (InD) is an umbrella term bringing related instruction areas together (Winter, 2016). Instruction design includes parts of audio-visual instruction, educational technology, instructional technology, visual literacy, technology of instruction, instructional design, instructional message design, and design of instructional materials (winter, 2016). In instruction design the receiver is (normally) supposed to learn from the message. The main intention is to provide courses, lessons and materials intended for learning. The interpreter/s may develop comprehension, experience, understanding, knowledge, insight, and wisdom. There is currently a paradigm shift from the old and traditional focus on teaching to a focus on learning (Filipova, 2011; Winter, 2016).

Mass Design is by definition attributed an umbrella term bringing related mass design areas together (Giles & Maldonado, 2011). Mass design includes aspects from communication studies, mass-communication, media studies, photography, and journalism (Giles & Maldonado, 2011). Main intention with the "messages" is to provide entertainment, news and views to large audiences for movies, newspapers, radio and television and the individual information interpreters might be seen as "relaxers" (Pretorius, 2016:25). In mass design, it may be an advantage to use verbs like feel, laugh, look, read, and relax. These verbs all denote observable behavior. An example of a performance objective for entertainment on television may be: "80% of the viewers should have fun and laugh at the jokes" (Pretorius, 2016:33).

Another cardinal component of message design is persuasion design (Petterson, 2012). The term persuasion design covers all related persuasive areas together such as advertising, persuasive communication, planned communication, and propaganda (Guo & Main, 2012). Persuasion design comprises studies on carefully planned information activities, where the goals are related to some kind of change in the behavior of the receivers. Receivers are typically asked to do something. Advertisements may ask people to go to church, stop smoking or to vote in an election (Guo & Main, 2012). Often the intention is to persuade them to buy an attitude, a product or a specific service. Persuasion is used so frequently and is so pervasive in our daily lives that we often fail to recognise when we are using persuasive communication, as well as when we are exposed to it (Petterson, 2012).

As a minimal condition, to be labeled as "persuasive," a communication situation must involve a conscious attempt by one individual to change the attitudes, behaviours or beliefs of another individual or group of individuals through the transmission of messages and the information interpreter might be seen as a "possible buyer" or a "prospect" (Kamenica & Gentzkow, 2011:65). In the writing of performance design objectives, it may be an advantage to use verbs like appreciate, believe, buy, change (behavior), desire, dread, fear, feel (relaxed), hate, and have (fun). An example of a performance objective in persuasion design may be, 50% of the readers should buy the new consumer product within two weeks (Kamenica & Gentzkow, 2011). Frascara (2004) posits that persuasive communications intend to affect the behavior of the public. Although educational materials have the same intention, the purpose is different. It is different because in education one always intends to persuade individuals to think on their own, to judge, and to make decisions on the basis of personal reflection. In sum, the intent of the persuasive message is normally to convince, while the educational message intends to contribute to personal development (Frascara, 2004).

2.4.2 Compliance Gaining Theory

Compliance gaining has been described by a number of scholars as communication for behavioural change (Peacocke, 2006; Wilson & Morgan, 2004; Villar, 2008). Compliance gaining is a persuasive process, which is specifically concerned with behaviour change (Wilson & Morgan, 2004). In contrast to other kinds of persuasion aimed only at influencing beliefs and attitudes, compliance gaining appeals are messages that target specific changes in behaviour that may or may not be accompanied by changes in attitude (Peacocke, 2006). Like all persuasive messages, they are based on the use of arguments to support the recommended change in behaviour. These are typically arguments about the merits of the behaviour or the likely outcomes of the behaviour. They tend to focus either on logic, such as emphasizing the expected effects of the behaviour, or on emotion, such as the target's desires, moral beliefs or sense of duty (Peacocke, 2006; Wilson & Morgan, 2004).

Compliance and persuasion are related; however, they are not one and the same. Changes in attitudes and beliefs are often the goal in persuasion; compliance gaining seeks to change the behaviour of a target. It is not necessary to change a person's attitude or beliefs to gain compliance. For instance, an automobile driver might have positive attitudes towards driving fast. The threat of a speeding ticket from a police officer positioned in a speed trap may gain compliance from the driver. Conversely, persuading someone to change his or her attitude or belief will not necessarily gain compliance. A doctor might tell a patient that tobacco use poses a serious threat to a smoker's health. The patient may accept this as a fact and view smoking negatively, but might also continue to use tobacco (Awasthy & Gupta, 2014). The key assumption of the compliance gaining theory is about how to get people to respond to a message by doing what one expects them to do or does not want them to do. In other words, it is about how to gain the compliance from other people by getting them to do what you want them to do or stop doing something you do not like them doing (Marwell & Schmitt, 2005). Compliance gaining messages are selected by the persuader based on assumptions of what makes the target or persuadee comply with a request or recommendation for action. People have different reasons to comply (Checkel, 2001). One possibility is rational choice, based on cost/benefit calculations. In other words, people will comply if they perceive the benefit of complying to be worth the effort. Another reason to comply is based on socialization, and each person's perceptions of the right thing to do, based on social learning, socialization, and social norms (Checkel, 2001).

Compliance gaining research has largely relied on pre-determined categories of strategies and tactics used to obtain compliance from a target (Villar, 2008). There are numerous taxonomies used to classify compliance gaining strategies and tactics. Perhaps the best-known taxonomy was established by Marwell & Schmitt (2005), and has since been repeatedly elaborated, expanded, condensed and critiqued (Seibold, Cantrill & Meyers, 2006; Wheeless, Barraclough & Stewart, 2010). The Marwell and Schmitt (2005) taxonomy was selected to classify the appeals in this study because it is based on the concept of power in social influence, which is the underlying rationale for this study. While French and Raven's (2001) conception of power considered only the power of the speaker over the target, Marwell and Schmitt (2005) extended that concept to broader sources of influence, that are not necessarily between the speaker and the target. Marwell and Schmitt (2005) developed a framework that, though imperfect, may be applied to virtually any compliance-gaining situation regardless of the relationship between the speaker and the compliance-gaining target. Because the strategies are based on French and Raven's (2001) work, each strategy type is conceptually related to a source of power or influence that motivates people to comply with a suggested behaviour. The source of influence or power is of particular interest in behaviours linked to violence. Violence prevention practitioners use a wide variety of arguments to discourage aggressive and controlling behaviour, based on assumption about their audiences' values, goals and motivations. Applying the Marwell and Schmitt (2005) framework to analyse violence prevention messages will identify the source of power motivating behaviour change, whether the goal is to promote protective strategies or reduce risk-inducing behaviours.

Marwell and Schmitt's (2005) list of 16 compliance gaining techniques has been widely used by communication researchers to understand the compliance gaining process (e.g., Burgoon et al, 2006; Jackson & Backus, 2008; Lustig & King, 2009). These techniques include: reward, punishment, positive expertise, negative expertise, liking, gifting/pre-giving, debt, aversive stimulation, moral appeal, positive self-feeling, negative self-feeling, positive altercating, negative altercating, altruism, positive esteem of others, and negative esteem of others. All of these strategies appeal to certain aspects of human nature that are expected to motivate people to act on someone's request or recommendation.

What motivates people to change takes on special dimension in a parenting context. Conceptions of what is beneficial to the self are likely to be interrelated with what is beneficial for the family unit or for individual family members (Marwell & Schmitt, 2005). Similarly, appeals that target people's need to fulfil other's expectations have to balance the expectations of society in general with the expectations of their family members. Therefore, Marwell and Schmitt's (2005) taxonomy may be somewhat limited in its applicability to messages aimed at parenting behaviour change.

2.5 Relevance of the Theories to the Study

From the above literature reviewed, civic education increases participation in political processes and greater political knowledge. Therefore, citizens who undergo civic education programmes are more likely to become involved in activities such as voting, taking part in community problem-solving initiatives, attending local government meetings, participating in protests, contributing to election campaigns, and contacting elected officials. The Theory of Compliance Gaining is relevant because it helped the researcher in examining the communication strategies employed by the NCCE in their civic education campaigns. Thus, the theory explains how to get people to respond to a message by doing what one expects them to do or does not want them to do. Consequently, the theory would provide an explanation to the rationale for the selection of specific communication strategies by the NCCE.

Again, the Message-Design Model on the other hand, provided the basis for analysing and answering the research question on factors that are considered by NCCE in the design of civic education strategies. Thus, this theory helped the researcher to understand how the identified issues under RQ1 are able to influence the designing of specific communication strategies for civic education campaigns.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In reviewing of the literature, it was evident that communication is fundamental to human survival. It is essential to the development of the individual, to the formation and continued existence of groups and the interrelations among groups. Communication remains central to the overall goal of civic education, which is to promote civic engagement and support democratic and participatory governance. The idea behind NCCE’s role in promoting civic awareness and engagement in Ghana is hinged on the demand for an informed and engaged public as a necessary complement to efforts to improve the practice of good governance. The study also discussed the Message-Design Model and the Compliance Gaining Theory to highlight the factors that are considered in the design of civic education strategies by the NCCE and how effective the NCCE communication activities end up in getting citizens to do what is expected from the communication activities respectively.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodological procedures that were applied in gathering and analysing data for this study. It focuses on the research approach, the research design, sampling techniques, and the data analysis techniques employed by this study.

3.1 Research Approach

This study is premised on the qualitative research approach. Creswell (2014) opines that to understand the meanings a group of people attach to particular practices or phenomena within a definite context, the qualitative research approach provides the methods. Similarly, Lindlof and Taylor (2012) submit that qualitative research approach is concerned with analysing the situated form, content and lived experiences of social actors in words without subjecting them to mathematical or formal transformations. As such, this study seeks to identify the issues that NCCE consider when designing its civic education communication strategies. This was done through the collection of the views of social actors from the NCCE in their own words without subjecting them to any mathematical transformation. Again, this study yields itself to the qualitative approach to the extent that it seeks to explore experiences of actors in the civic education arena with regards to the communication strategies they employ within a situated context as well as understanding the meaning they make of them. This is also in line with, Creswell (2014) assertion that qualitative research is an appropriate approach for exploring and interpreting the meanings individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. Creswell (2014) again notes that qualitative research also involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in participants' natural setting. In this study the data were collected form the Participants in their natural setting. In addition, the qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to analyse data inductively from particulars to general themes and also helped the researcher to make the interpretations of the data collected (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the research approach was utilized because of its exploratory nature, and its ability to produce in-depth data to make inferences about the communication strategies of the NCCE (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The study aims at interpreting and making meaning of the participants' perspectives and experiences expressed in the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.2 Research Design

Yin (2017) establishes that research design is the rationale that links the data to be collected and the conclusion to be drawn to the research questions of the study. Thus, the research design guides the researcher from the beginning of the study to the conclusion. The research design is, therefore, significant as it serves as a guide to the researcher. Creswell (2014) adds that the researcher's selection of a research design is mostly dependent on the nature of the phenomenon under study, the researcher's personal experiences, and the participants for the study. The research designs available to qualitative researchers are case study, grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology, narrative design (Creswell, 2014). Considering the purpose and nature of the research problem, the research design for this study is a case study.

3.2.1 Case Study

According to Yin (2017), a case study is an in-depth empirical probe that examines a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context. That means that the case study will help the researcher to make sense of situations that take place around us especially at the NCCE. Furthermore, employing case study for this research was helpful in exploring real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time through detailed, in-depth data collection which involves multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013). In the sense that the phenomenon Civic Education is a real-life occurrence, which take, place every day. Yin (2009) adds that a case study design is used primarily when a researcher wants to probe deeper into a phenomenon. In line with these scholarly definitions, this study adopted the case study design for two main reasons. First, the study sought to thoroughly probe and identify the factors that are considered by the NCCE in designing civic education strategies. Secondly, this study sought to interrogate the views of the NCCE officers on the messages and methodologies. Aligning these reasons to Yin (2009) and Creswell's (2014) definitions, the NCCE can be described as a bounded system or case for investigation. In these regards, the case study research design thus became apropos for this study. According to Yin (2017), a case study is an in-depth empirical probe that examines a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context. That means that the case study will help the researcher to make sense of situations that take place around us especially when it comes to the work of the NCCE. Furthermore, employing case study for this research was helpful in exploring real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time through detailed, in-depth data collection, which involves multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013). In the sense that the phenomenon civic education delivery is a real-life occurrence, which take, place frequently. This phenomenon has occurred over time as specified by Yin (2017), a case study intends to assess or delve into cases in a real-life setting of which the provision of civic education by the NCCE is a real-life phenomenon which is on-going and being experienced by the general public periodically.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

Daymon and Holloway (2011) posit that qualitative approaches demand different sampling techniques from the randomly selected and probabilistic sampling, which quantitative researchers generally use. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also note that no qualitative researcher can capture every event as it unfolds, thus the purposeful selection of data sites for a particular study. They further acknowledge that the right choice of a sampling strategy enables researchers to make a systematic contact with communicative phenomena with minimum effort.

This study adopted purposive sampling design as the sampling technique. This is in line with Daymon and Holloway's (2011) description of purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based on a variety of criteria, which may include participants' knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Again, Berg (2014) points out that participants for a purposive study ought to be chosen based on their experiences, perspectives and knowledge of the issue under investigation. In relation to these descriptions and as per the objectives of this study, the NCCE was purposively sampled for the study. In addition, the participants were purposively sampled to include individuals who understood the phenomena under study and were ready to help with the research.

3.4 Sample Size

Qualitative sampling is primarily made up of small sampling units studied in-depth (Bryman, 2012). Thus, small samples are the norm in qualitative studies (Lindlof & Taylor, 2012). Creswell (2014) states that as a rule for qualitative sample involving individual interviews usually lie at under 50 people. In line with the aforementioned assertions, a sample size of four participants from the NCCE head office in Accra with not less than two years working experience were purposively sampled for the study. This includes the director of communications and corporate affairs, the director of research, and the head of programmes at the NCCE head office, and the head of civic education. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to make subjective judgements, which will be used in interpreting the perspective of the selected group (Lynn, 2002). In addition, because this research is case specific, it was convenient to sample only Participants who are directly in charge of the sectors involved in this study. This study agrees with Patton's (2002) assertion that in order to gather greater depth of information from a smaller number of carefully selected cases it is better to adopt this technique. With regard to the documentary review, the researcher purposively sampled 65 civic educational material from the NCCE office and their official website and the official social media handles (specifically, *Facebook and Twitter*) of the NCCE within the period of study. These included galleries from their educational campaigns, posters, banners and other message designs. These documentary reviews were meant to corroborate or otherwise the interviews conducted with the Participants.

3.5 Data Collection Method

Spencer and Snape (2013) outline observational methods, in-depth interviewing, group discussions, narratives, and the analysis of documentary evidence as one of the cardinal data collection methods of qualitative research. In this study, the researcher adopted in-depth interviewing and analysis of documentary evidence as data collection methods.

3.5.1 Interviews

Creswell (2014) explains qualitative interviews as a means through which the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, on the Internet, or engages in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewees in each group. Braun and Clarke (2013) add that interviewing is a professional conversation with the goal of getting a participant to talk about their experiences and perspectives and to capture their language and concepts, in relation to a topic that you have determined. There are three types of qualitative interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Braun & Clarke, 2013). For this study, the researcher employed the semi-structured interview. According to Braun and Clarke (2011), this approach to interviews is tailored in such a way that the researcher prepares an interview guide before the interview but does not rigidly adhere to it, either in terms of precise wording of the questions or the order in which the questions are asked. Daymon and Holloway (2011) stress that in a semi-structured interview the sequencing of questions is not the same for every participant as it depends on the process of each interview and the responses of each individual. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. In line with the above explications, the researcher interviewed all the participants for this study using a semi-structured interview guide. All the interviews lasted between thirty to thirty-five minutes. The researcher also wrote down notes in the notepad as the discussion and interviews were ongoing. Overall, the interviews and discussions were conducted in a cordial and relaxing setting. Therefore, participants had the opportunity to express themselves fully.

3.5.2 Document Analysis

Daymon and Holloway (2011) assert that documents consist of words and images that have been recorded without the intervention of the researcher. They are in written, printed, sound, visual and digital forms. As a research method, Daymon and Holloway (2011) emphasizes that document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies aiming to produce a detailed description through a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents.

In the case of this research work, the NCCE head office made available all documentary evidence, both printed and electronic materials produced to the researcher within the period of this study – from February, 2019 to August, 2021. Creswell (2014) asserts that documents are effective means of collecting data and can be accessed at any time convenient to the researcher while helping save time and resources at the expense of transcribing.

On conducting an analysis of documentary evidence, Daymon and Holloway (2011) hold that document analysis is an analytical research method that allows the researcher to carefully examine data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge. For them, the analytical procedure in document analysis entails finding, selecting, appraising and synthesizing the data contained in the document into themes or categories. Analysing documents is a useful method because of its unobtrusive, non-reactive nature of documents. This makes the documents naturalistic and possesses a built-in level of authenticity (Leavy, 2014).

This study therefore adopted document analysis as the analytical procedure because it assisted the researcher to make sense of and produce rich descriptions from the meanings obtained from the data collected as espoused by Daymon and Holloway (2011). In addition, in line with the observation by Leavy (2014), concerning the unobtrusive, non-reactive nature of the documentary materials made available for this study by NCCE, it makes the documents under study possess a naturally built-in level of authenticity. Mogalakwe (2006) asserts that documentary sources become necessary when the researcher wants to make references to past behaviour that has been documented. They also become significant when observed behaviour has been documented and can be used to triangulate and validate other methods.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

3.6.1 In-depth Interviews

To begin with, as part of the process of gaining entry to the research field, I first secured an introductory letter from the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Education, Winneba where I pursue my graduate studies. The letter was addressed to the Chairperson of NCCE. The content of the letter captured the topic under study and the specific objectives of the study. The synopsis of the interview was also attached with the aim of aiding the interviewees to prepare for the interview ahead of time. After several phone calls from the office of the Director of Public Affairs, the researcher was directed to speak to the head of programmes. The interview date and time with the Head of Programmes was agreed. On the day of the interview, I arrived at the premises of the NCCE headquarters in

Ridge, Accra about 1 hour before the agreed start time. This was to allow me ample time to settle for the interview and acclimatize myself with the environment. I was directed to the Head of Programmes 'office to conduct the first interview. My interview with the first Participant lasted for 1 hour. Due to the busy schedule of the other Participants, I was told to go and come back the next day. I went back to the office the following day and I got the chance to interview other two Participants for 10 minutes each. They explained that the head of programmes have given most of the needed information to me so there was no need for them to repeat what have been said already.

During the interview period, I had the privilege to introduce myself to the Participants and get them to introduce themselves as well. This was meant to serve as an icebreaker so as to set a positive mood for the interview as suggested by Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2015) that building rapport with your interviewees is an important factor to attaining a successful interview. I also explained key terms to the participants as and where necessary. For the purposes of record keeping, the question and answer session with all the Participants was recorded using a Samsung phone. Aside the recording, I also took key notes of other important elements that might not be captured by the recording device. All of these aided in smooth transcription and onward analysis.

3.6.2 Document Analysis

I wanted to verify the findings from my interviews with the selected Participants by conducting documentary reviews. During the interviews, I asked the Participants to provide me with posters, brochures, pictures and other documents that will be useful for my study. The head of programmes made available documentary evidence to support the answers provided during the interview session. He also directed me to go to the NCCE's website for more documents to aid my study. The researcher visited the organisation's website (www.nccegh.org) to gather information to corroborate my findings. I first looked at their gallery section to download pictures of their various campaigns from the field within the period of study. I also took shots of the documentary evidence found on website, *Facebook* and *Twitter* pages, stored them in a folder on my Toshiba laptop for review purposes. In all 65 materials were collected and stored of analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of labelling and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them into themes (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). The data analysis process that draws out themes from a cluster of data is referred to as thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2013). This study also employed thematic analysis in order to draw themes from the data collected as posited by Lindlof and Taylor (2010), Braun, and Clark (2013). Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clark (2013), is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. Thematic analysis minimally organizes and describes a data set in rich detail (O'Leary, 2014).

In this study, the data collected were analysed with the aim of identifying and reporting the trends and patterns that run through the data, as indicated by Braun and Clark (2013). To begin the analysis process, the researcher severally went through the data corpus which comprised of all those collected through the in-depth one-on-one interviews and the analysis of documentary evidence to familiarize himself with the data and to gain an appreciation of the messages embedded in them.

To answer RQ that sought to identify the issues considered by the NCCE in designing civic education communication strategies, the analysis commenced with assembling all the data from the in-depth one-on-one interviews, and the documentary evidence. The data was then synthesized and analysed inductively; building upon themes obtained from each scene to themes that traverse across all the scenes. It involved coding and category construction (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2014; O'Leary, 2014). The researcher also ensured that excerpts from the data were used to support the detailed descriptions of the research question. The descriptive part of the first research question was however grouped into the following themes: *interpersonal community engagements, mass media engagements, dawn and dusk mobile van broadcast.* This is in conformity with the work of O'Leary (2014) which asserts that in analysing data, the researcher needs to minimally organize the data gathered. The data collected for RQ2 were also grouped into the following themes respectively*: economic factors, political factors, socio-cultural factors and exigency factors.*

3.8 Ethical Issues

There are standard research ethical codes that are prescribed by the University of Education, Winneba for its faculty and students to strictly adhere to when conducting any form of research that involves both human and non-human subjects as research participants. The researcher immersed himself in the ethical dictates to be able to apply them to the full scale. Top amongst them is that researchers must seek the consent of their research participants, bearing in mind that they have the right to agree or decline to participate in any research (Bowen, 2009).

The researcher in adhering to this clause sought the permission of the participants through a written letter that detailed the nuances of the research. The letter subsequently received a response granting the participants' consent. These were in line with the ethical postulations of Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2015) who proposed that for researchers to be ethical in their research process, they ought to adhere to three basic principles – informed consent, participants' privacy, and debriefing. Aside the fact that the interviewees were duly briefed on all facets of the research so that they had full information to decide on whether they wanted to participate or not, they were also assured of maximum anonymity.

The researcher ensured the good, not harm and protected the autonomy, well-being, safety and dignity of all research participants. Only participants who agreed to the study were interviewed. The researcher informed participants about the study and they were given maximum respect throughout the study. Participants chose freely to engage in the research but were informed to withdraw anytime they felt uncomfortable in the interviewing process. Consent of the participants was sought before all recordings were made. Again, the researcher was objective as possible and did not in any way knowingly misrepresent or attempt to alter participant's responses. For confidentiality, all private issues that were discussed were kept highly confidential except those that were relevant to the study and needed to be in the known. On the part of anonymity, the names of the participants were not in any way disclosed. Rather they were represented with alphanumeric codes such as Participant 1 (R1) to Participant 4 (R4).

Vanclay, Baines & Taylor (2013) also notes that a research study must fully disclose all the methods and analytical procedures used for the study to enable replication of the research by another researcher; enable peer review of the adequacy and ethicality of the methodology; and to encourage critical self-reflection on the limitations of the methodology and any implications for the results and conclusions. In view of these ethical principles, this research work fully outlined all the various procedures through which the data collection was done and applied. It chronicled, in full, the methods and procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data for the study. Similarly, the study discussed the principles and assumptions that underpin the methods and procedures and most notably, the rationale behind their selection.

3.9 Trustworthiness and Credibility

Anney (2014) in his research paper found that most students at the University of Dar As Salaam, Tanzania in their dissertation employed the quantitative trustworthiness criteria such as reliability and validity to assess the accuracy of qualitative inquiry. Creswell (2014) is however of the view that the meaning that validity and reliability carry in qualitative research is different from what they connote in quantitative research. Thus, validity in qualitative research is geared towards determining the accuracy and truthfulness in research findings.

Hence, Anney (2014) suggests that researchers should rather consider dependability (in preference to reliability), credibility (in preference to internal validity), transferability (in preference to external validity) and confirmability (in preference to objectivity) as trustworthiness criteria for qualitative investigation as propounded by Lincoln and Guba (2000).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness in a research work. Creswell (2014) provides eight validation strategies in testing for the validity in a qualitative research. These processes include triangulation, using member-checking to determine accuracy on the part of participants, using rich and thick descriptions, presenting negative case analysis, spending prolonged time at the research field, using peer debriefing, using external auditors and bracketing of biases. He further states that qualitative researchers should adopt at least two of these strategies in their studies. This research work applied three of these strategies in order not to affect the objectivity of the analysis as well as the interpretation of the data. The researcher bracketed his biases by distancing himself from previously held assumptions or prejudices and basing interpretations solely on immediate insight into the phenomena themselves as recommended by Bertelsen (2005). In addition, in answering the research questions, he adopted rich and thick descriptions to describe his findings in order to paint a vivid and thorough picture of the design of civic education strategies by the NCCE.

Finally, this research work equally adopted triangulation as a validation strategy. Triangulation according to Creswell (2013) is the use of different or multiple sources of information, or theories or even methodologies in the research process for purposes of corroboration or augmentation to solidify a finding or a perspective. This research employed in-depth interviewing and documentary evidence as data collection methods. The researcher used the two data collection methods as a validation strategy for each data collection method.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the process of the research and the method of data analysis. Firstly, it highlighted the approach to research used and the design suitable for the study. It also shed light on the sampling method and size and at every stage rationalised to suit the study. Finally, it discussed the method of data collection and analysis in detail and wrapped up with the ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The study set out to identify the issues considered by the NCCE in designing their civic education campaigns and to examine how the communication strategies are employed during such campaigns. This chapter, therefore, presents the findings, and analysis of the data collected from the in-depth interviews and documents analysed in this study. The data gathered were simplified into several themes to ensure easy analysis and interpretations. Existing works and theories aided the analysis. To ensure the interviewees' anonymity, the researcher labelled Participants with alphanumeric codes such as (Participant 1). Below are the research questions that underpinned the data collection.

1. What are the communication strategies used by the NCCE during educational campaigns?
2. What issues does the NCCE consider when designing communication strategies for civic education delivery?

4.1 RQ1: What are the communication strategies used by the NCCE during educational campaigns?

Bentele and Nothhaft (2007) define communication strategy as a way of employing all the tactics that are used to communicate organisation's policies, activities, and outputs to the public. In pursuing its mandate, the NCCE has since its inception designed and implemented several civic education interventions built around issues of public concern and with specific themes and messages, which it communicated, to various target audiences in Ghana.

The NCCE has both the constitutional and legal mandate to spearhead voter education activities in the country during national elections. The purpose of this research question is to identify and examine the various communication strategies employed by the NCCE in implementing its civic education campaigns. To help answer this particular research question, primary data were gathered from interviews and supplemented with documentary reviews. After the rigorous analysis of the gathered data, four themes emerged. These are *interpersonal community engagements, mass media engagements, dawn and dusk mobile van broadcast.* The analysis of the data revealed that, the NCCE do not have a rigid communication strategy that is applied in all their campaigns; however, Participants indicated that the communication strategy for each campaign is selected based on the demographics of the targeted audience as well as the purpose of the educational campaign. For example, a Participant explained:

> *You need to know your audience before you settle on what strategy to use and we look at what you are seeking to achieve. These give us a fair idea of the appropriate communication strategy to use to communicate effectively with the people. Therefore, our strategies vary from campaign to campaign (Participant 2).*

This affirms Akomeah (2015) observation that communicators in public institutions whose work often involves the entire citizenry must employ appropriate skills in communicating to their target audience and apply these skills expeditiously. Thus, communicators of various public institutions that oversee or handle different sectors of society ought to apply the requisite communication knowledge and skills in addressing these issues as well as accounting to the public for successes achieved Another Participant added that:

> *We have this multi-faceted approach to communicating because we deal with a different spectrum of the population. We have people - the youth, we have people with disability; we have various demographic groups which require that we do not have to use a single communication strategy to handle them (Participant 3).*

Similarly, Ahn (2012) articulates that communicators in public institutions ought to consider who their audiences are in relation to specific campaigns in order to know the appropriate channel to use which will engender feedback and the needed understanding and involvement of receivers in relation to any policy. This is so because Ahn (2012) adds that communicating effectively to enhance citizen engagement promotes development.

4.1.1 Interpersonal community engagement

In answering RQ1, which sought to find out the communication strategies employed by the NCCE in rolling out their civic education campaigns, the theme of interpersonal community engagement emerged from the gathered data. This theme highlights the NCCE's approach of having a face-to-face or direct dialogue with stakeholders and beneficiaries of a particular civic education campaign.

From the data gathered via the interviews, it was found that interpersonal community engagement communication strategy is employed during the community-based assessment stage where members of the NCCE visit communities to negotiate access for them to gain entry to have a dialogue with the key stakeholders in that particular community. A Participant asserted that:

> *In the preparation of such campaigns, right? Let us say you want to go into a community. You do not just go and see the king. You go and see, maybe the one that everyone in the town respects, right? Yes. Like maybe, a respected grandma somewhere or a respected person and then they go to the person that, "this is the education they want to do, but we want to seek permission from the King or the chief or whoever is in charge of that town. From there then you can actually go to the person with the necessary things; if it's a Schnapp or if you want to go dry you can just go direct, but usually, it's best if you go with you know, some token (Participant 1).*

This corroborates Tench and Yeoman's (2006) position that public institutions apart from mass media channels ought to execute other functions using effective two-way communication tools and approaches such as community gatherings and stakeholder consultations that will generate the necessary public involvement.

Again, the findings reveal that at the implementation stage for campaigns that are for specific communities, activities such as community durbars, town hall meetings, lectures, symposia, stakeholder meetings, focused group discussions, film shows, quizzes, and debates are employed to engage the audience during such campaigns. A Participant asserted that:

> *So, for example, when it comes to school-based civic education, some of the tools we use are quizzes and debates as strategies. You know, in terms of the quizzes, we have a game – the constitution game. Children will like to learn through entertainment. When it comes to the young persons out of school, we use workshops-they are not schooling so we cannot use quizzes and debates for them- we use workshops and we use town hall meetings and among very adult populations, we use stakeholder meetings and community gatherings (Participant 1).*

Figure 4.1.1.1 NCCE engaging students

Source: www.nccegh.org

It was realised from the data that school-based activities such as quiz and debate contests are used to instil a sense of civic awareness and patriotism among in-school youth. The strategy further helps to sharpen the cognitive and communication skills of pupils and students. The picture below is an example of such activities with winners holding their prices.

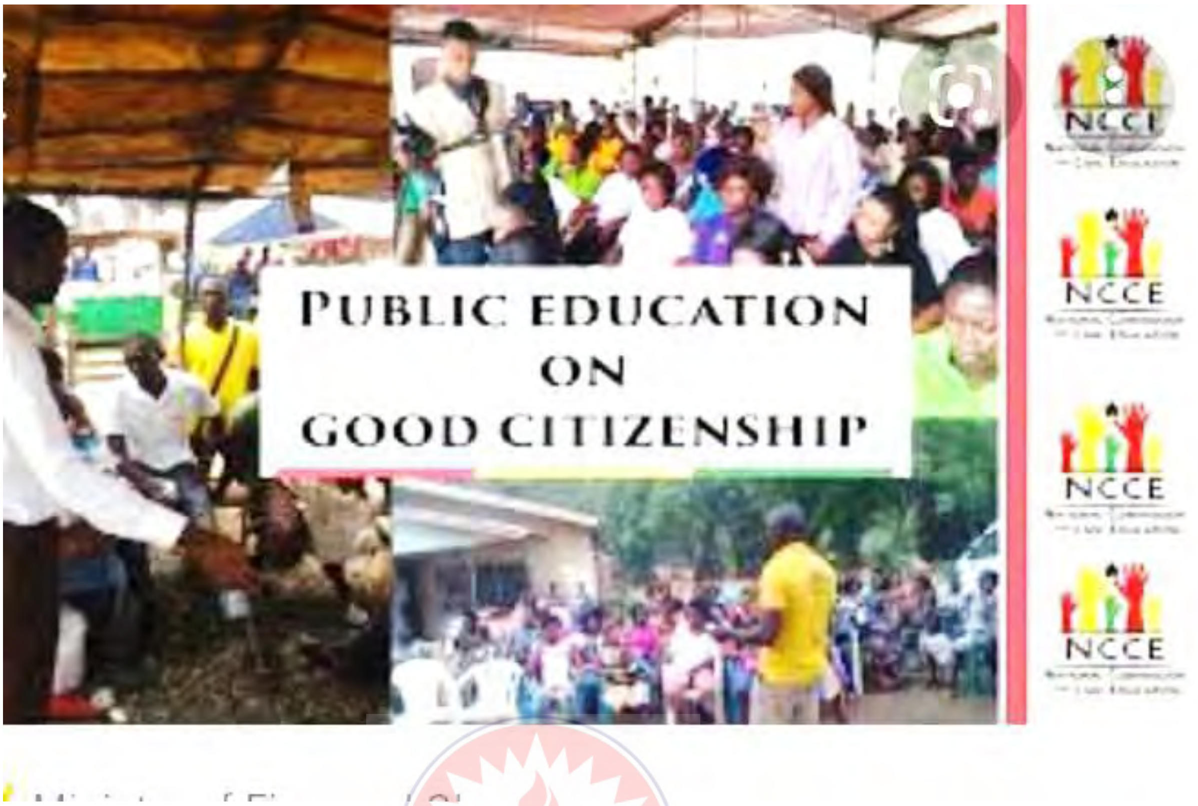
Figure 4.1.1.2 Winners of an NCCE quiz

Source: www.nccegh.org

Participants also articulated why the face-to-face interaction with community members is important. One responded said:

> *The strength of the face -to -face interaction or what we call the direct community approach is that, you get the opportunity to meet the people and socialize; and that has been our major strength. It is irreplaceable at this stage but that one too has the disadvantage because, how many people can you meet at a time? (Participants 3)*

Figure 4.1.1.3 community engagements by the NCCE



Source: www.ncce.gh.org

The findings supports authors like Akomeah (2015), who have expressed the need for continuous dialogue and feedback (shared experience) between the sender (in this case the NCCE) and receiver (that is, the citizens or community members) in order to accelerate social exchange. More, so the finding of the current study is in line with the Project Management Institute White Paper (2013) which suggests that when the sender and receiver dialogue on a message, they build a relationship and the impact is effective. However, when the communication process and its elements are not thoroughly considered, communication can fail.

4.1.2 Mass media engagements

Another theme that emerged from the data in answering the RQI that has to do with the communication strategies employed by the NCCE in their civic education campaigns is the mass media engagement approach. Mass media in this study includes radio, television, newspapers, websites and social media platforms. The data revealed that the Commission engages the public through the mass media. Specifically, the Commission use their website to communicate with the public. The Participants also stated the use of billboards with educational messages to disseminate information. The commission further makes appearances on radio and television to grant interviews, panel discussions to educate the public on specific educational campaigns; it was also establish that the Commission use jingles, and advertisement to do campaigns in the form of audios and videos on TV and Radio to reach out to the public.

Figure 4.1.2.1 picture of a panel discussion streamed live on TV

Source: www.nccegh.org

For example, a Participant corroborated this by articulating that:

> *In this era of the media, it is difficult to use this direct approach – the face-to-face interaction- so the other alternative we use in the face of increasing population is radio and television, so we use the mass media a lot and the print media (Participant 4).*

Figure 4.1.2.2 NCCE educating the public on TV

Source: [*www.ncce.gh.org*](http://www.ncce.gh.org)

Figure 4.1.2.3 picture of a panel discussion streamed live on TV

Source: [*www.nccegh.org*](http://www.nccegh.org)

Another Participant added that:

> *The difficulty in meeting people because you have to pay them money for transportation, they have to spend their coins- we meet them at the point of our needs and also their needs through the mass media (Participant 1)*

A Participant also explained why now more than ever the use of social media has become expedient and as such, the Commission has taken advantage of that. It affords the commission the chance to post posters of the various campaigns.

> *In this era of social media, we are very prominent on almost all social media handles so that even spreads our message beyond the borders of this country. The virtual world is everywhere so we now have many people following our social media handles Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp (Participant 4).*

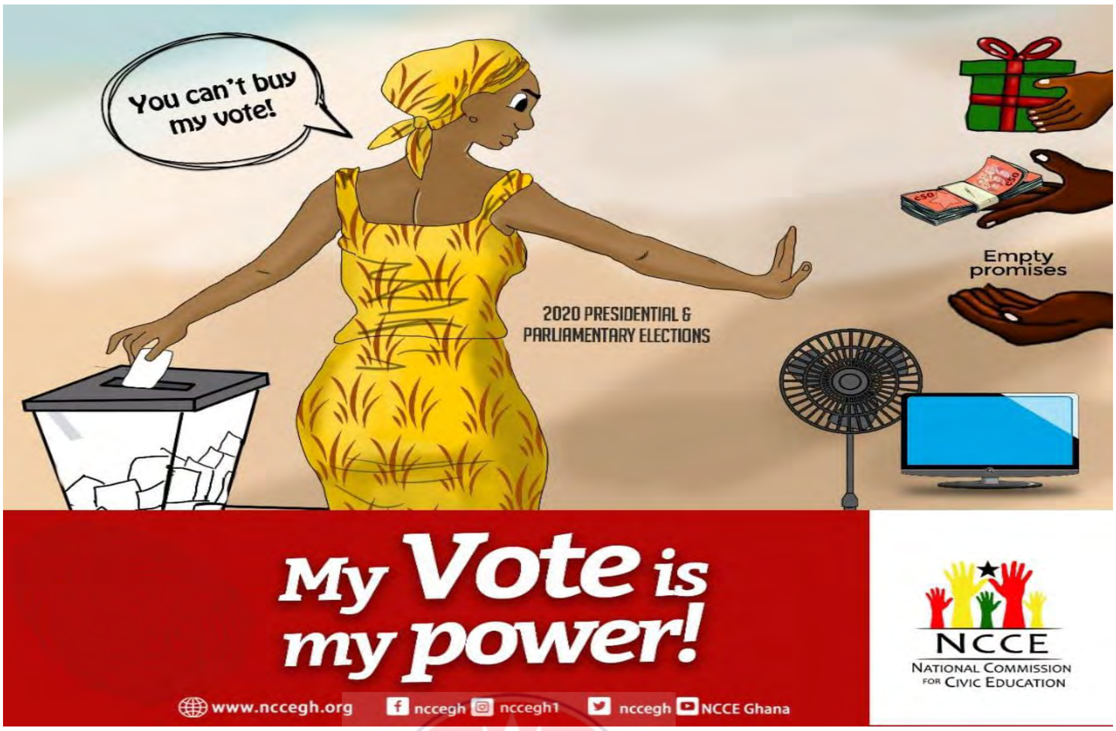
In affirmation, Zkjadoon (2015) contends that the traditional mode of exchanging information between two parties through writing and meeting has changed significantly as a result of the emergence of sophisticated technology. The writer further suggests that communicators have to make efforts to understand how to share information strategically with their publics in clear defined terms. The author however posits that communication strategies in modern discourse are schemes that are geared into planning how to share information with the most useful objectives of communication which affect change.

Figure 4.1.2.4 Screenshot of social media posts

Figure 4.1.2.6. Poster on the wearing of mask

Source: www.nccegh.org

Figure 4.1.2.7 Poster of NCCE's education on responsible voting



Source: *www.nccegh.org*

The findings revealed that the use of the mass media approach through radio, television and social media comes to complement the direct or face-to-face approach because through that, the advantage is that you have limitless number of people you can reach with a single message.

These community and mass media engagements are crucial to the work of the NCCE in the sense that, according to Kwashie (2004), the processes for arriving at decisions on matters of public concern such as the choice of voting systems to elect representatives and leaders and use of reasoning, debates, persuasions, mediation, advocacy and arguments instead of force and violence in taking decisions on issues involving different and sometimes strongly opposed viewpoints.

According to Cezzar (2017), communication design, is the art and practice of planning and projecting ideas and experiences with visual and textual content. The form it takes can be physical or virtual and can include images, words, or graphics.

4.1.3 Dawn and dusk mobile van broadcast.

Another theme that emerged from the data is the use of dawn and dusk mobile van broadcast by the Commission to disseminate information to community members. This approach according to the data is done through the broadcasting of recorded messages by vans with horns and by the information service departments in the various communities early in the morning and in the evenings. The data also revealed this approach is an information dissemination approach applied to situations that require citizens to be abreast with some timelines or processes involved in national activity. A Participant posited:

> *We make use of the information centres in the various communities where a campaign is ongoing. We use that to make announcements and play jingles for the people to hear about the particular campaign. Every campaign has a takeaway message and this takeaway message is put in a short jingle that is played repeatedly to drum home the intended message (Participant 3).*

Another Participant added that:

> *In places where they lack an information centre, we use some of our vans with horns on it to move in and around the communities to intensify the education (Participant 2).*

These findings tilt toward Zkjadoon's (2015) classification communication strategies. He classifies communication strategies into Visual, Verbal and Non- Verbal. According to the author, communication strategies allow a business to meet employee needs and increase workplace knowledge, which will eventually affect the organisation's relationship with the publics. In this study, interpersonal community engagements, media engagements, and dawn and dusk broadcasting have elements of visual, verbal and non-verbal communication.

In addition, according to the message-design model (Nelson et al., 2013) message design is the systematic and purposeful process of making decisions about communication. This involves decisions about both the content (what) and the delivery (how) of a message. In consonance, the NCCE based on the findings above consciously select how messages should be disseminated to the target audience, hence the use of community engagements, mass media approach and the use of dawn and dusk broadcast.

Similarly, Petterson (2012) also refers to the term message design as a deliberate and systematic process of analysis and synthesis that: (1) begins with the identifying of a problem; (2) comprises the intellectual creative effort of an originator; and (3) concludes with a concrete plan or blueprint for a solution. The product, he notes, may be drawings, plans, schemes and specifications. He indicated that, depending on different objectives of messages, one can see different "message designs in general" which can be grouped into graphic design; information design; instruction design; mass design: and persuasion design. It could be argued that the selection of these communication strategies by the NCCE is to aid compliance gaining. This is in line with the key assumption of the compliance gaining theory, which explains how to get people to respond to a message by doing what one expects them to do or does not want them to do. In other words, it is about how to gain the compliance from other people by getting them to do what you want them to do or stop doing something you do not like them doing (Marwell & Schmitt, 2005). Compliance gaining messages are selected by the persuader based on assumptions of what makes the target or persuadee comply with a request or recommendation for action. People have different reasons to comply (Checkel, 2001).

4.2 RQ2: What issues does the NCCE consider when designing communication strategies for civic education delivery?

Research question two (2) sought to identify the issues taken into consideration by the NCCE in embarking on any form of civic education campaign. They analyzed data from the interviews and gave birth to four themes to answer this research question. These themes are *economic factors, political factors, socio-cultural factors, and exigency factors.*

4.2.1 Economic factors

The data revealed that the NCCE consider economic factors in designing their communication strategies for their civic education delivery. The 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana mandates the NCCE to among others educate, sensitize and conscientise Ghanaians on the provisions in the 1992 Constitution; democratic and constitutional governance; their civic rights and responsibilities; and to empower the citizenry to defend the nation's democracy and constitutional rule all the time. However, the data gathered indicate that certain factors have a bearing on the realization of the mandate of the NCCE. One of the themes that emerged from the data is economic factors. For the purpose of this study, economic factors imply factors that can affect and influence an organizations' financial status. The key indicator for this theme was available funds to embark on a particular campaign. Participants indicated that one major issue they consider in doing their civic education campaigns is the available funds for the campaign. Thus, the available funds will determine the budget that will be allocated for a particular campaign. This according to the Participants affects the scope of the campaign. For instance, a Participant stated that:

> *Well, the thing is that we are dependent on government subvention. The constitution says we are independent. Therefore, government does not control us, but government is the institution that gives us money. Normally, you will not like to put too much money in an area that you do not have control (Participant 1).*

What this means is that the NCCE rely on government to be able to fund their campaigns. Budgets for specific campaigns are supposed to be drawn out of the available funds from the government. The NCCE therefore will consider how much can be drawn out of the available funds for the Commission and based on draw out specific budgets for specific campaign. The findings also revealed that sometimes budget delays affect their operations. A Participant articulated:

> *Our budget is delayed sometimes. It has a negative effect on our work, but we try to leverage on the commitment of our staff to continue. Basically, if you look at the money that comes, it is not enough but we have committed staff at the grassroots level, who are ready to go the extra mile and as to how long they will continue to go the extra mile (Participant 2)*

4.2.2 Political factors

Another theme that emerged from the data analysis in identifying the issues the NCCE consider in designing a communication campaign on a civic education is political factors. Studies have examined democracy and political stability as political factors (Turedi & Altiner, 2016). The researcher defines political factors as any government, laws and regulatory and political parties influence on the work of an independent government agency. The findings revealed that the NCCE although is non-partisan institution, they regard the various political parties as stakeholders in the civic education process. Hence, they involve them in the process when it comes to campaigns on elections. A Participant averted this.

> *You know, the country is polarized along political margins. NCCE is a non-partisan institution. By non-partisan, I mean-probably you are talking about NPP, NDC- we do not have affiliation with any political party (Participant 2).*
>
> *They are our stakeholders for civic education so we deal with them, we invite them to our programmes, they also invite us to their programmes but it calls for probably some capacity building from their officers to be able to facilitate that from them; but beyond that, we are non- partisan. (Participant 2).*

The non-partisan nature of the NCCE means that in designing any campaign that has to do with elections, they make sure that the content of their messages do no favour one party over the other. It was established that the aim is to educate the public on elections and not to campaign for a particular party. The picture below is a picture from one consultative meeting by the NCCE and representatives of political parties ahead of the 2020 general elections.

Figure 4.2.1 NCCE in a consultative meeting with political parties

Source: www.nccegh.org

The data also revealed that NCCE officials are not allowed to declare their political affiliations. This is because the institution is required to be independent and a declaring of any political affiliations by any of its members might question the neutral nature of their operations. This point is evident in the response of one Participant. He explained that:

> *By our code of conduct, no staff of NCCE is allowed to be an executive of a political party. You cannot come out and say I belong to this political party. Therefore, we are totally non- partisan and independent and we guard that with visible jealousy to the extent that those who have flouted that value have been dismissed out rightly (Participant 4).*

This posture by the NCCE is influenced by a provision in the 1992 constitution of Ghana. It is an independent body because; per Article 234 of the 1992 Constitution the Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority in the performance of its functions". It is only subject to the control and authority of the 1992 Constitution or to any other law, which is consistent with the provisions of the 1992 Constitution. It is a constitutional body to the extent that the Commission derives its power to exist and to operate or function from the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and its consequent Act.

Again, this is affirmed by the vision of the Commission. The vision of the NCCE is to exist to be an effective independent governance institution delivering civic education to all Ghanaians and working towards sustaining Ghana's democracy. The Commission is to ensure that its actions and the behaviours of staff are governed by the principles of Integrity, Presence and Independence (NCCE, 2016). These explain why the Commission makes conscious effort to maintain the independence by been aware of the political factors they are dealing with to position themselves well.

4.2.3 Socio-cultural factors

In this instance, the study found that the NCCE considers these factors in their operations. Specifically, these factors are considered in their message design, channel of communication and stakeholder engagements. Social cultural factors are the larger scale forces within cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Apsalone & Sumilo, 2015). In this instance, the study found that the NCCE consider these factors in their operations. Specifically, these factors are considered in their message design, channel of communication and stakeholder engagements. It was realised from the responses from the Participants that the culture of the people a particular campaign is meant for is considered in the message design and the negotiation of access to a particular community. For example, one Participant espoused that:

> *In as much as some aspects of some principles of democracy go hand in hand with some of the cultural values that we uphold, we don't lose sight of the fact that, when you go to educate a community, there are chiefs and elders that you have to pay homage to. You follow traditional protocols when you go to meet them (Participant 2).*

On the other hand, the findings revealed that the Commission do not always adhere to the cultural norms of every society. The NCCE identify cultural norms that inhibit development and roll out educational campaigns to bring behavioral change. For instance, one Participant posited that:

> *...in as much as we do that, factors that also inhibit, or are an affront to human rights, we educate them on that. Things like female genital mutilation as a cultural rite, early child marriage as a cultural right; female genital subordination too is a cultural thing, so we do education to change their mindset because they are against fundamental human rights (Participant 2).*

That notwithstanding, the consensus from the Participants was that the culture of their audience for educational campaigns affects the manner in which the communication strategies are implemented. A Participant reiterated:

> *We value and cherish our cultural practices; when you go into a community, you should go through the traditional protocols. You have to visit the chief; you have to visit the priest or the Imam and seek their consent before you can enter into the community and carry out your education (Participant 3).*

The data revealed that considering socio cultural factors is important because it prepares the grounds for the Commission to gain the trust and collaboration from the receivers of a particular civic education campaign. This according to the Participants makes persuasion possible to achieve the objective of the campaign. According to the compliance gaining theory, compliance gaining is a persuasive process, which is specifically concerned with behavior change (Wilson & Morgan, 2004). Persuasion design comprises studies on carefully planned information activities, where the goals are related to some kind of change in the behavior of the receivers. Receivers are asked typically to do something (Guo & Main, 2012). This explains why the NCCE carefully plan their communication strategies around socio-cultural factors in order to persuade the receivers to behave in a particular way. According to Petterson (2012), often the intention is to persuade them to buy an attitude, a product or a specific service.

4.2.4 Exigency factors

Another issue that emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts from the four Participant in answering the RQ1 is exigency factors. Exigency factors highlight urgent needs or demand. Thus, the NCCE consider the issue of needs and demand before rolling out a campaign.

The findings of the study showed that before the NCCE decide to embark on any campaign, they identify the needs of the people. For instance, a Participant stated that:

> *We look at the demands of the people before approaching or going for an education. You can't just get up and go to the people without knowing the demands of the people and how urgent they need what you are about to educate them on (Participant 4)*

The study realized that this factor helps the NCCE to make sufficient use of the limited resources available to them. A Participant indicated that the commission rank its programmes based on exigencies. Therefore, the most pressing needs are attended to before the least pressing needs.

> *We are strategic in what we do, I told you earlier that our budget for the year from government sometimes delay, as such the limited resources available to us are used judiciously to meet the needs of the public. That is why we treat urgent needs first (Participant 2).*

The analyzed data showed that the identification of exigency factors as part of the planning of the programmes of the NCCE is expedient. This is so because, it was realized that the people easily buy into the campaign and accept the message because they understand that it is a need for them. A Participant explained:

> *What you are about to tell the people must be of some significance or importance to them. So, we have to make ourselves aware or equip ourselves with knowledge of what the people need before we approach them with whatever education we plan to give them (Participant 3).*

The NCCE as such, ought to apply all the needed communication skills to ensure continuous involvement, dialogue and feedback received from the public on socio-political and economic issues to promote democratic and good governance for accelerated development and social change. Bevir (2013) argues that in the current political dispensation of Ghana the work of the NCCE cannot be underrated. Thus, the exigencies of Ghana's democratic dispensations require a body like the NCCE to provide such services to meet the exigencies. For instance, Kwashie (2004) posits that all citizens ought to have the ability to make informed decisions about who should lead them at all levels of the political and or authority structure. In addition, all citizens should be capable of participating effectively in the decision making process especially in matters that affect them as individuals, groups and a society. In furtherance, every citizen should be able to demand accountable, responsive and responsible governance from his or her duty bearers at all levels of society (Bevir, 2013)

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research findings that were analysed from the set of data collected from the interviews with NCCE officials and document analysis from their website as evidence to corroborate findings from the interviews. The research findings were discussed under the two research questions set out in chapter one to help attain the objectives of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study and specifically pays attention to drawing conclusions based on the major findings of the study. The chapter, also, provides recommendations for both academia and industry based on the observations and research findings that came out of the gathered data. Furthermore, the limitations of the study as well as areas for further research are outlined in this chapter.

5.1 Summary

This study was undertaken to examine how the NCCE design their communication strategies for the delivery of civic education. The study specifically identified the various issues the NCCE consider in designing their communication strategies for civic education delivery, and the specific communication strategies employed by the NCCE.

For the research to realise its objectives, two research questions were asked;

1. What issues does the NCCE consider when designing communication strategies for civic education delivery?

2. What are the communications strategies used by the NCCE during educational campaigns?

In addition, the study employed a broad review of relevant literature on the concepts of communication, citizenship, citizenship and nationality, civic education and civic engagement. The Message-Design Model and the Compliance Gaining Theory were the theories that underpinned this study. These theories were used in analysing the findings to understand how the NCCE design their communication strategies.

The research approach and design for this study were qualitative (Creswell, 2014) and case study (Yin, 2009) respectively. These gave the researcher chance to study the phenomena at the NCCE and allowed the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the meaning ascribed to the phenomena in their natural setting. The NCCE, as well as the participants of the study, were selected using the purposive sampling technique (Bernard, 2002). The methods used in collecting data were interviews and document analysis.

Employing semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, the researcher engaged four participants and reviewed documentary evidences from the NCCE on communication strategies to find answers to the research questions. Finally, to describe the data in a thick rich manner, thematic analysis was employed (Braun & Clark, 2006).

From the thematic analysis of data from the in-depth interviews and document analysis, the researcher came up with seven major themes to answer the two research questions. The themes that answered the first research question one were economic factors, political factors, socio-cultural factors and exigency factors. With regards to the research question two, interpersonal community engagements, mass media engagements, dawn and dusk mobile van broadcast were themes identified in answering the research question.

5.2 Main Findings and Conclusions

After analysing the data gathered, the key findings from the data led to several conclusions. As noted above, the research sought to answer two research questions.

In answering RQ1 that sought to identify the issues considered by the NCCE in designing their communication strategies, it emerged that the NCCE consider various factors that can be categorised under four themes: economic factors, political factors, socio-cultural factors and exigency factors.

Findings for the research question two which sought to know the various communication strategies employed by the NCCE in their civic education campaigns. The findings revealed that the NCCE in selected a particular communication strategy is guided by the audience for a particular campaign and purpose of the campaign. That been said, the study established that the NCCE employs interpersonal community engagements to gain entry and acceptability in rolling out an educational campaigns in communities. Again, mass media campaigns is one major communication strategy employed by the NCCE in reaching out to the public. In furtherance, the study concludes that the use of dawn and dusk mobile van broadcast remain a relevant communication strategy for the NCCE as an information dissemination approach applied on situations that require citizens to be abreast with some timelines or processes involved in a national activity.

5.3 Study Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the fact that due to the limited time allotted for this research the study focused on only a single case study. Again, the time within which this research was conducted did not allow the researcher to increase the number of participants and documents used.

Lastly, the researcher used more efforts than usual in persuading and soliciting information from the interview participants. Even though this had a very minimal impact on the data collection process, it got the researcher a little frustrated at the very beginning of the briefing stage where he was explaining the topic and the purpose of the topic to the interview participants.

However, these limitations did not take away the credibility of the study, as it has implications for further studies.

5.4 Recommendations for future studies

The study recommends that future researchers should take a step further to look at the perceptions of the public on the work of the NCCE in relation to their message design. Future studies should quantitatively measure the effectiveness of the communication strategies employed by the NCCE in civic education campaigns. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that the government should be swift in releasing funds to the NCCE to enable them to discharge their duties above reproach.

The study also recommends that the NCCE should be more transparent with the public by letting the public know of their challenges without any fear or favour.

The study also recommends that the NCCE should find other ways of internally generating funds to augment the efforts of the government.

Civil Society Organisations and citizen movement groups should advocate for legislations to guarantee the financial and economic independence of the NCCE.

Lastly, the study recommends that the NCCE should increase the level of participation by members of the public in the planning, and developing process of the message design for their civic education campaign. This will bring about citizen ownership of the various campaigns, hence, increasing its acceptability.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide

My name is Charles Mawusi, an MPhil Student of the University of Education, Winneba. This interview guide seeks to find out your views on the communication strategies employed by the National Commission for Civic Education in delivering civic education in Ghana. Information provided is purely for academic purposes and absolute confidentiality is assured. Your participation is important but you may withdraw from the study at any time if you chose to do so.

1. Kindly, introduce yourself and your portfolio.

Objective one: to examine the communication strategies used by the NCCE during civic educational campaigns

1. What some of the communication strategies you have been employing within the past two years during your campaigns?
2. Why do you use such strategies?
3. What goes into the preparation of such campaigns?
4. Are the strategies SMART (simple, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound)?
5. Do the strategies achieve their campaign objectives?

Objective two: to identify the issues the NCCE consider in designing its communication strategies

1. What issues do you consider when designing communication campaigns?
2. Specifically,

a) What economic factors do you consider in designing your communication strategies?

b) What political factors do you consider in designing your communication strategies?

c) What socio-cultural factors do you consider in designing your communication strategies?

d) What exigency factors do you consider in designing your communication strategies?