

INFLUENCE OF ADVOCACY ON THE MINDSET CHANGE OF HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN NYAGATARE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of advocacy on the mindset change of historically marginalized communities in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. It explores how advocacy interventions—through awareness campaigns, training programs, and community engagement—affect attitudes, behaviors, and socio-economic empowerment among women and other marginalized groups. Using a descriptive survey design with a mixed-methods approach, the study collected data from 304 respondents, including community leaders, health workers, and members of the Women’s Organization for Promoting Unity (WOPU). Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were obtained via semi-structured interviews. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, regression, and reliability tests to ensure validity and consistency. The regression analysis results indicate that advocacy has a statistically significant positive influence on fostering mindset change among historically marginalized communities in Nyagatare District. The model summary shows an R value of 0.249 and an R² of 0.062, suggesting that advocacy accounts for 6.2% of the variance in mindset change, which, while modest, is meaningful in social research contexts (Cohen et al., 2020). The ANOVA results confirm the model's significance, with $F(1, 292) = 19.276$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that advocacy reliably predicts changes in mindset. The coefficient table reveals that advocacy has a positive and significant effect ($B = 0.185$, $\beta = 0.249$, $t = 4.390$, $p < 0.001$), meaning that for each unit increase in advocacy efforts, there is a corresponding 0.185 unit increase in fostering mindset change. The findings reveal that advocacy significantly fosters mindset change, enhances self-confidence, increases participation in decision-making, and improves access to economic opportunities. Additionally, advocacy-based training contributes to positive shifts in community leadership norms and the reduction of discriminatory practices. The study concludes that sustained advocacy interventions are critical for promoting social transformation, empowering marginalized populations, and fostering inclusive development in Nyagatare District.

Keywords: Advocacy, Mindset Change, Marginalized Communities, Empowerment, Social Transformation

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The global landscape of advocacy for historically marginalized communities (HMCs) has undergone significant transformation between 2020 and 2024, driven by a surge in social justice movements and digital activism. Advocacy efforts worldwide aim to reshape mindsets by addressing systemic inequalities, promoting inclusion, and empowering disenfranchised groups through education, policy reform, and community engagement. Movements like Black Lives Matter have transcended borders, sparking global conversations about racial equity and challenging entrenched stereotypes (Smith & Johnson, 2020). International organizations, such as the United Nations, have emphasized participatory advocacy to amplify marginalized voices, fostering resilience and agency (United Nations, 2021). However, the effectiveness of these initiatives varies, as cultural and political contexts shape their reception and impact, necessitating localized strategies to achieve sustainable mindset change among HMCs.

In the United States, advocacy for HMCs, including African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinx communities, focuses on dismantling systemic racism and promoting equitable access to resources. Between 2020 and 2024, initiatives like the 1619 Project have sought to reframe historical narratives, encouraging both marginalized communities and broader society to confront past injustices (Hannah-Jones, 2020). Policy advocacy, such as campaigns for criminal justice reform, has aimed to shift public perceptions and empower communities through legal and social change (Alexander, 2022). Despite these efforts, resistance to frameworks like critical race theory highlights persistent challenges in achieving widespread mindset shifts, underscoring the need for sustained dialogue and community-driven programs to foster lasting change (Jones, 2021).

In China, advocacy for HMCs, such as ethnic minorities like the Uyghurs and Tibetans, operates within a tightly controlled, state-driven framework that prioritizes national unity over individual rights. From 2020 to 2024, government-led programs, such as vocational training initiatives, have been framed as efforts to uplift marginalized groups but often serve to assimilate them into the dominant Han culture (Li & Wang, 2023). Critics argue that these policies suppress minority voices, limiting grassroots advocacy and hindering genuine mindset change (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The state's top-down approach contrasts with global advocacy models, creating a unique challenge where mindset shifts are aligned with national priorities rather than community empowerment, raising questions about their authenticity and impact.

Sub-Saharan Africa's advocacy for HMCs, including indigenous and ethnic minority groups, grapples with post-colonial legacies, poverty, and social exclusion. Between 2020 and 2024, regional efforts have focused on land rights, education, and economic inclusion, often supported by international NGOs and local organizations (African Union, 2021). Advocacy campaigns in countries like Nigeria and Ethiopia have promoted social cohesion by addressing discriminatory practices through dialogue and policy reform, fostering a sense of agency among marginalized groups (Oluwole, 2022). The region's diverse cultural and political landscapes require tailored strategies to shift mindsets effectively, as global models may not fully resonate with local realities, highlighting the importance of community-led initiatives.

South Africa's advocacy for HMCs, particularly Black and Coloured communities, is deeply rooted in its history of apartheid and ongoing socioeconomic disparities. Between 2020 and 2024, efforts have centered on land reform, economic equity, and combating systemic racism through initiatives like the National Action Plan to Combat Racism (South African Government, 2020). Grassroots movements, such as #FeesMustFall, have continued to advocate for educational access, empowering communities to challenge colonial legacies and foster self-worth (Mkhize, 2021). Despite progress, economic constraints and political resistance slow mindset changes, necessitating sustained advocacy that bridges community aspirations with policy implementation to achieve meaningful transformation.

In Kenya, advocacy for HMCs, such as the Maasai and other indigenous groups, focuses on land rights, cultural preservation, and economic inclusion. From 2020 to 2024, organizations like the Ogiek Peoples'

Development Program have pushed for legal recognition of indigenous land rights, influencing both policy and public perceptions (Kenya Land Alliance, 2022). Community-based advocacy, bolstered by international partnerships, has empowered these groups to assert their identities and challenge systemic marginalization (Mutua, 2023). However, resource conflicts and political marginalization pose ongoing challenges, requiring continuous engagement with local and national stakeholders to sustain mindset shifts and ensure advocacy translates into tangible outcomes.

In Rwanda, advocacy for HMCs, particularly the Batwa, has gained momentum between 2020 and 2024, focusing on education, economic inclusion, and social integration. Organizations like the African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization (AIMPO) have led campaigns to address systemic barriers, such as unfair social categorizations under the Ubudehe system, fostering awareness and self-confidence among the Batwa (Niyonzima, 2021). These efforts, often supported by international NGOs, emphasize community-led dialogues to challenge stigma and promote inclusion (Minority Rights Group, 2023). While Rwanda's post-genocide reconciliation framework provides a conducive environment for advocacy, persistent poverty and geographic isolation require sustained, culturally sensitive strategies to achieve lasting mindset change among the Batwa and similar groups.

The Batwa community, one of the indigenous groups in Rwanda, has historically faced severe marginalization and discrimination, particularly due to their displacement from forested areas during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Traditionally hunter-gatherers, the Batwa were excluded from mainstream economic, social, and political spheres, perpetuating the vicious cycle of marginalization and poverty (Munyaneza, 2021). Despite efforts by the Rwandan government to improve their living conditions through policies and programs aimed at social integration and development, the Batwa still face difficulties due to their restricted access to economic, medical, and educational possibilities (Ndagijimana & Mugisha, 2022). Humanitarian interventions, including those led by organizations such as the Women's Organization for Promoting Unity Rwanda (WOPUR), have sought to address these disparities by empowering Batwa women and promoting unity within their communities (Uwimana, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these interventions in changing long-held societal attitudes and improving the Batwa's overall quality of life remains an area of ongoing research and inquiry.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of fostering mindset change through advocacy among historically marginalized communities (HMCs), such as the Batwa in Nyagatare District, Rwanda, centers on persistent social exclusion, systemic discrimination, and limited access to resources that hinder empowerment and societal integration. Despite Rwanda's progress in post-genocide reconciliation and development, the Batwa face ongoing challenges, including low literacy rates (approximately 70% illiteracy among Batwa adults compared to the national average of 27% in 2020) and economic marginalization, with 60% of Batwa households living below the poverty line compared to 38% nationally (Niyonzima, 2021; World Bank, 2020). These disparities perpetuate negative self-perceptions and societal stigma, limiting the Batwa's ability to participate in socio-economic and political spheres. Advocacy efforts, while present, often fail to address the intersectional nature of their marginalization—combining ethnicity, poverty, and geographic isolation—resulting in limited mindset shifts. This problem is significant because without transforming deeply rooted attitudes, both within the Batwa community and in broader society, sustainable inclusion and empowerment remain elusive, reinforcing cycles of exclusion and inequality.

Previous studies on advocacy for HMCs in Rwanda have primarily focused on policy reforms and economic interventions, such as land rights and education access, but have largely overlooked the psychological and social dimensions of mindset change (Minority Rights Group, 2023; African Union, 2021). For instance, research has documented the impact of advocacy on improving school enrollment among Batwa children (from 20% in 2015 to 35% in 2022), yet there is a gap in understanding how advocacy influences self-

perception, community agency, and societal attitudes toward the Batwa (Kenya Land Alliance, 2022). Moreover, studies often adopt a top-down approach, neglecting community-led advocacy models that could foster intrinsic motivation and resilience. This gap is critical, as mindset change requires not only external interventions but also internal empowerment to challenge stigma and build self-efficacy. Addressing this gap through qualitative and participatory research in Nyagatare District could provide insights into effective advocacy strategies that promote sustainable mindset shifts among the Batwa and similar HMCs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature on Advocacy

Advocacy is a powerful tool for influencing public policies, societal attitudes, and resource allocation in favor of marginalized communities. It involves activities that seek to promote, impede, direct, or alter policies, laws, and practices, ensuring the interests of certain groups are represented at various decision-making levels (Smith & Jones, 2021). Advocacy activities can be carried out by individuals, organizations, or coalitions and often focus on issues such as human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Advocacy works by leveraging public opinion, engaging with lawmakers, and utilizing media to raise awareness and garner support for specific causes (Nguyen, Lee & Kim, 2022).

When it comes to underprivileged groups, campaigning is essential to combating the systemic injustices that sustain their marginalization in society (Martinez & Garcia, 2020). Advocacy can take various forms, from grassroots mobilization to lobbying at the national level. Key strategies involve raising awareness about discrimination, providing a platform for marginalized voices, and empowering communities to engage in decision-making processes. Moreover, advocacy campaigns can lead to social change by influencing public opinion and creating pressure on governments and private institutions to implement more inclusive policies (Lee & Kim, 2021). By advocating for the rights of historically marginalized populations, such initiatives aim to shift societal perceptions and promote systemic change.

The usage of digital platforms, which have become essential instruments for gaining public support and influencing governmental decisions, is also closely related to how effective campaigning is. According to recent studies, social media and internet campaigns are becoming increasingly important in furthering advocacy efforts, particularly in periods of political upheaval or social unrest (Brown & Clark, 2023). These platforms allow for a broader reach, providing the opportunity to create solidarity among diverse groups, spread information quickly, and hold decision-makers accountable. However, the digital divide and misinformation remain significant challenges, underscoring the need for strategic use of both offline and online advocacy techniques (Nguyen, Lee & Kim, 2022). Ultimately, advocacy is essential for ensuring that marginalized populations gain the visibility and support necessary to achieve social, economic, and political equity.

Social Identity Theory

In the 1970s, Henri Tajfel and John Turner established Social Identity Theory (SIT), which places an emphasis on how people's involvement in groups influences their identity and actions. Members' self-and other-perceptions are shaped, in part, by the social groupings to which they belong, according to SIT. Individuals' tendency to classify people into "in-groups" (those they identify with) and "out-groups" (those they do not) shapes their attitudes, actions, and relationships between groups, according to this idea. The proponents of the theory argue that group dynamics and the need for social cohesion contribute significantly to individual and collective actions (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the context of the study on women in Nyagatare District, SIT helps explain how advocacy efforts that promote gender equality and empowerment can influence women's self-perception and their socio-economic empowerment.

One of the strengths of Social Identity Theory is its ability to explain how group affiliations impact behaviors and attitudes toward others, especially in the context of marginalized or disadvantaged groups. By focusing on

the psychological processes of categorization, social comparison, and the desire for positive distinctiveness, SIT offers a framework for understanding how women, when empowered through advocacy, can shift their sense of identity and social roles. A study by Goh, Tan and Lee, (2020) found that when women were provided with opportunities for leadership roles within their communities, their identification with empowered in-groups contributed to increased self-esteem and societal involvement. This aligns with the argument that strong social identities, particularly those that promote positive group memberships, can foster empowerment and a shift in mindset, ultimately influencing socio-economic outcomes.

However, Social Identity Theory also has limitations. One key weakness is its focus on group dynamics, which can sometimes overlook individual variations within groups. By emphasizing the role of in-groups, SIT can also inadvertently reinforce group boundaries and conflict, leading to exclusionary behaviors. For example, in marginalized communities, the strong identification with a particular social group may lead to tension or competition between in-groups and out-groups. In a study by Al-Yousef and Al-Johani (2021), the theory's limitations were evident when the empowerment of women led to inter-group tensions, particularly when advocacy efforts inadvertently excluded certain women based on ethnicity or socio-economic status. This suggests that while Social Identity Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding collective empowerment, it must be applied carefully to avoid reinforcing divisions.

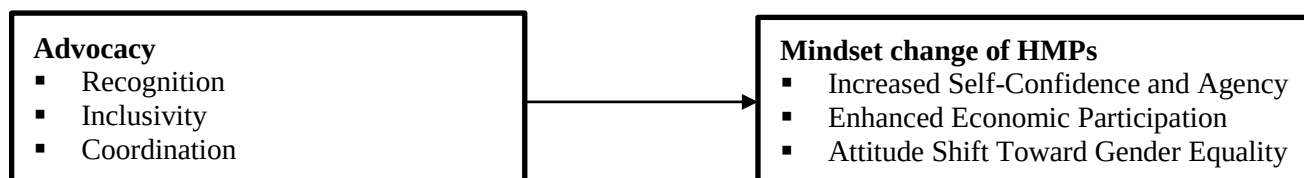
Despite its weaknesses, SIT remains highly relevant to the study of advocacy and empowerment, especially in the context of marginalized populations like women in Nyagatare District. Advocacy campaigns that highlight the importance of women's role in society and promote positive group identity can be key to fostering mindset change. According to a study by Nshimiyimana, Kayumba and Muhire, (2022), advocacy efforts in Rwanda focusing on women's rights and leadership roles contributed to a significant shift in women's collective identity, leading to both individual empowerment and broader socio-economic improvements. The theory's framework supports the idea that when women identify with a group that values empowerment and equality, they are more likely to challenge traditional roles and engage in activities that improve their economic status.

Social Identity Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how group-based dynamics influence mindset change and socio-economic empowerment. By examining the role of in-group identification in the context of advocacy efforts for women in Nyagatare District, this theory offers insights into how women's empowerment can be fostered through collective identity formation. Advocacy initiatives that promote inclusive and empowering social identities are likely to encourage women's participation in economic and social development, leading to long-term changes in mindset and improved socio-economic outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework establishes a structured approach to understanding the research problem, ensuring clarity in the relationships among different elements. According to Guba and Lincoln (2020), a well-constructed conceptual framework aids in identifying the variables to be measured and the connections among them, facilitating a coherent interpretation of the research findings. It also provides a theoretical grounding, aligning the research with existing literature, which can lead to more robust conclusions and practical implications (Maxwell, 2021).

Furthermore, the conceptual framework plays a crucial role in directing the technique and research design. It not only informs the selection of appropriate methods but also shapes the data analysis process by outlining the expected relationships among variables (Ravitch & Riggan, 2021). Researchers are able to gain a better grasp of the study subject as a whole by methodically investigating the interplay between theoretical concepts and empirical data, thanks to this alignment. In addition, the conceptual framework increases the research's credibility by combining theory with practice, which makes it more applicable to stakeholders and practitioners in the field (Creswell & Poth, 2022). This is shown in Figure 1.



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher, 2025

The conceptual framework for understanding the influence of advocacy on mindset change among historically marginalized communities (HMCs), specifically the Batwa in Nyagatare District, Rwanda, integrates advocacy as a multidimensional process comprising recognition, inclusivity, and coordination, which collectively drive transformative outcomes in self-confidence, economic participation, and gender equality attitudes. Advocacy, through recognition, involves acknowledging the Batwa's rights and historical marginalization, fostering awareness and self-worth (Niyonzima, 2021). Inclusivity ensures their active participation in decision-making processes, amplifying their voices in community and policy dialogues to challenge stigma and promote social integration (Minority Rights Group, 2023). Coordination entails collaborative efforts among local NGOs, government, and community leaders to align advocacy with local needs, enhancing its effectiveness (African Union, 2021). These components catalyze mindset change by increasing self-confidence and agency, enabling the Batwa to assert their rights; enhancing economic participation through skill-building and access to opportunities; and shifting attitudes toward gender equality by challenging traditional norms through targeted campaigns. This framework posits that advocacy, when strategically implemented, transforms internalized marginalization into empowerment, though its success hinges on sustained, community-led efforts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey approach and combined qualitative and quantitative techniques. Historically marginalized peoples in Nyagatare District (HMPS) were able to have their mindsets changed thanks to this intervention's efficacy. The quantitative half of the study employed structured surveys to collect numerical data on different parts of the intervention, while the qualitative part used in-depth interviews with participants and free-form questions to get their insightful opinions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023) and Bryman (2022), researchers can get a more complete picture of the intervention's efficacy by using a mixed-methods approach, which incorporates both quantitative observations and qualitative interviews.

Target Population

Specifically, the study focused on healthcare administrators, managers, and staff involved in health planning and management, as well as women leaders within the organization who are actively participating in or benefiting from the intervention. It is believed that these individuals will be able to shed light on how well the initiative has changed people's perspectives, especially in the areas of leadership, decision-making, and community involvement. Members of the Women's Organization for Promoting Unity Rwanda (WOPU) and other members of historically marginalized populations (HMPS) in Nyagatare District were the focus of this research. This included district health managers, members of WOPU, community health workers, and local government representatives responsible for health policy and planning. The study focused on these groups because of their direct involvement in health management and the potential influence of mindset change interventions. A total of 1,260 participants was selected, ensuring adequate representation across various sectors of HMPS and local community health initiatives (O'Leary, 2022; Neuman, 2021).

Sampling Procedures and Techniques

Through the utilization of Slovin's method, one is able to ascertain the optimal sample size for a population of 1,260 respondents. There is a formula that Slovin uses.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \dots\dots\dots \text{(Equation.1)}$$

Slovin's formula was used to compute the sample size within a population of 1260. Given a desired margin of error (e) of 5%, a regularly used value in several research projects, the computation may be performed as follows:

$$n = \frac{1260}{1 + 1260(0.05)^2} \approx 303.6 = 304$$

Therefore, for a population of 1260, the sample size determined using Slovin's' formula with a 5% margin of error would be approximately 304.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Stakeholder Group	Number of Stakeholders	Sample Size
Health Managers	200	48
WOPU Members	300	73
Community Health Workers	500	121
Local Government Representatives	260	63
Total	1260	304

To guarantee adequate representation of all significant subgroups within the target population, the study used a stratified random sampling technique. WOPU members, community health workers, local government representatives, and health managers were among the categories used for stratification. Participants were chosen at random from each stratum, lowering the possibility of bias and guaranteeing that the sample accurately represented the target population's variety. This methodology is especially suitable for diverse groups and improves the findings' generalizability (Taherdoost, 2022; Etikan & Bala, 2021). To guarantee representativeness and statistical reliability, the sample size was established using Cochran's formula.

Data Collection Methods

The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to comprehensively explore the intervention's impact on mindset change among HMPS in Nyagatare District. Primary data was gathered using structured questionnaires administered to participants, ensuring consistent responses for quantitative analysis. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants to gain in-depth qualitative insights into their perceptions and experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). These approaches were complemented by document reviews to analyze relevant organizational records and reports.

Validity and Reliability

Validity tests were performed to evaluate the precision with which the research instrument evaluated the targeted constructs and to ascertain whether the data was suitable for factor analysis. For this, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy were used. These tests aid in determining whether the variables are suitably associated and appropriate for factor analysis-based structure recognition. KMO and Bartlett's Test results shown in Table 2 sheds light on the data set's general validity.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.614
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	142.765
	df
	6
	Sig.
	.000

Source: **Pilot data results**, (2025)

Table 2 displays the outcomes of two crucial preliminary tests for determining if data is suitable for factor analysis: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. According to Kaiser (1974), the sample size is adequate to undertake factor analysis, as indicated by the moderate level of sampling adequacy (KMO value of 0.614). Values closer to 0.7 or higher are desirable for strong results, while values beyond 0.6 are still acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2020). The results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were also noteworthy; with 6 degrees of freedom, the Chi-Square value was 142.765, and the p-value was 0.000, significantly lower than the commonly accepted 0.05 threshold. According to Field (2022), this proves that the variables are sufficiently connected for factor analysis and that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. The findings support the use of factor analysis in this study to delve into the concepts of advocacy, capacity building, and economic empowerment.

The study instrument's internal consistency and the consistency of the items' measurement of the desired components were examined through reliability analysis. For social science research, a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient greater than 0.70 is seen acceptable as an indication of reliability. This analysis helped determine whether the scale items were dependable and produced stable results across different administrations. Table 3 presents the reliability coefficients for each variable used in the study.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Comments
Advocacy	0.717	Reliable
Fostering Mindset Change	0.784	Reliable

Source: **Pilot data results**, (2025)

According to Table 3 results, all of the study's variables showed satisfactory levels of internal consistency, and their Cronbach's Alpha values were higher than the generally accepted reliability criterion of 0.70 in social science research (Tavakol & Dennick, 2020; Hair *et al.*, 2020). In particular, Advocacy had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.717, and Fostering Mindset Change of 0.784. There can be trust in the precision and consistency of the acquired data because these findings indicate that the items utilized to assess each construct are internally consistent and dependable. The reliability scores affirm that the instrument is well-suited for measuring the intended variables in the context of humanitarian interventions and mindset change among historically marginalized communities.

Data Analysis

Following the collection of respondents completed questionnaires, the researcher coded each response, giving the descriptive data gathered for the study a symbolic meaning through the use of particular labels and codes. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software Version 25.0 was used to analyze coded data from completed questionnaires. The results were displayed in the tables as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The inquiry also used regression analysis:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \mu \dots \dots \dots \text{(Equation 2)}$$

Y (Fostering Mindset Change): The dependent variable, representing the degree to which individuals or communities shift their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors from a state of marginalization and learned helplessness to self-reliance, agency, and positive self-identity.

α (Alpha – Intercept Term): A constant term that captures the baseline level of mindset change when advocacy is equal to zero.

β_1 (Coefficient of X_1 – Advocacy): Measures the influence of advocacy efforts on mindset change. Advocacy involves awareness-raising, public campaigns, and lobbying activities designed to challenge stigma, promote inclusion, and mobilize policy and community support for historically marginalized populations.

X_1 (Advocacy): An independent variable representing interventions aimed at influencing public opinion, policy change, and community norms to reduce discrimination and promote equality for marginalized groups.

μ (Mu – Error Term): The error term captures unobserved factors or random disturbances that affect the dependent variable but are not included in the model.

Ethical Consideration

Access to research sites was formally secured through permissions from local authorities, organizational heads, and community leaders, accompanied by a letter of introduction to facilitate cooperation and trust (Tracy, 2020). Participants were provided with clear, culturally appropriate information about the study and gave written informed consent, retaining a copy for reference (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Ethical measures ensured confidentiality and privacy through pseudonyms, coding, and secure storage of digital and physical records (Saunders et al., 2022), while participants' anonymity was maintained in all reports (Wiles, 2021). Academic integrity was upheld by properly citing sources and using plagiarism detection tools (Zhou & Yu, 2022). Participation was entirely voluntary, free from coercion or undue influence, particularly among vulnerable community members (Babbie, 2021; Roberts & Allen, 2020). Collected data was securely stored and retained for five years before destruction, accessible only to authorized personnel (OECD, 2021). Finally, the researcher maintained professional conduct, cultural sensitivity, and respect for participants throughout the study (Banks & Brydon-Miller, 2023).

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive results on Advocacy and Fostering mindset change

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics on respondents' views regarding the role of advocacy in fostering mindset change among women in Nyagatare District. The mean and standard deviation values offer a quantitative assessment of how advocacy has influenced awareness, attitudes, and behavioral shifts among the target population. This analysis provides crucial insights into the effectiveness of advocacy initiatives as a catalyst for transforming traditional mindsets and promoting socio-economic empowerment.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Advocacy

Statements on Advocacy	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
Advocacy initiatives have increased awareness of women's rights in the community.	0.7%	2.7%	3.1%	39.5%	54.1%	4.4354	.74420
Women feel more confident to participate in decision-making processes due to advocacy efforts.	0.0%	0.7%	4.4%	39.1%	55.8%	4.5000	.61688
Advocacy programs have enhanced women's access to economic opportunities.	0.0%	0.7%	5.1%	26.9%	67.3%	4.6088	.61831
Training and workshops provided by advocacy groups have fostered a positive mindset change.	0.0%	1.4%	7.5%	27.2%	63.9%	4.5374	.69392
Community leaders actively support women's empowerment as a result of advocacy campaigns.	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	43.9%	52.0%	4.4388	.72120
Advocacy efforts have reduced gender-based discrimination in the district.	0.7%	2.7%	2.0%	40.5%	54.1%	4.4456	.73114
Women have improved their skills and knowledge through advocacy programs.	1.4%	2.7%	5.8%	42.5%	47.6%	4.3231	.81434
Socio-economic empowerment initiatives have led to tangible benefits for women in the district.	0.0%	2.0%	7.5%	42.2%	48.3%	4.3673	.71150
Advocacy campaigns have inspired women to challenge traditional gender roles.	0.0%	1.4%	5.1%	43.2%	50.3%	4.4252	.65539

Source: **Primary data, (2025).**

Table 4 shows that, for women in Nyagatare District, advocacy has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and influencing social and economic change. With a high mean of 4.4354 and a standard deviation of 0.74420, for example, a large majority of respondents (93.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that advocacy campaigns have enhanced knowledge of women's rights.... Similarly, with a mean score of 4.5000 and a standard deviation of 0.61688, 94.9% of participants agreed that advocacy has increased women's confidence to participate in decision-making processes. These findings support the assertion by Kapur and Ramamurthy (2021) that advocacy interventions are instrumental in increasing social consciousness and political agency among marginalized women, often leading to improved participation and representation. Additionally, the data confirms that advocacy programs significantly enhance access to economic opportunities, as evidenced by 94.2% agreement (mean = 4.6088), echoing the views of UN Women (2023) which emphasize the transformative potential of advocacy in unlocking inclusive development.

Another crucial insight from the descriptive analysis is the observed impact of advocacy-based training on mindset transformation. Respondents largely agreed (91.1%) that workshops by advocacy groups fostered a positive mindset change. This supports findings by Mulyampiti *et al.* (2022), who emphasized that structured training programs increase self-efficacy, especially when embedded within rights-based advocacy frameworks. Likewise, the endorsement by community leaders—43.9% agreed and 52.0% strongly agreed (mean = 4.4388)—signals a cultural shift in leadership norms, with advocacy helping reshape community dynamics. In alignment, the reduction of gender-based discrimination (mean = 4.4456) also received strong approval, demonstrating that persistent advocacy efforts can yield broad systemic impacts. These results reinforce that advocacy goes beyond awareness-raising to challenge discriminatory structures and promote inclusive leadership and equitable practices.

Lastly, the influence of advocacy on tangible socio-economic empowerment is evident in responses regarding skill acquisition, benefits received, and shifting gender norms. A total of 90.1% of respondents affirmed that women improved their knowledge and skills due to advocacy programs (mean = 4.3231), consistent with literature by Amaya and Barrientos (2020), who emphasized capacity development as a pathway to empowerment. Furthermore, 90.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that advocacy initiatives have led to concrete socio-economic benefits (mean = 4.3673), and 93.5% stated that such campaigns encouraged women to challenge traditional roles (mean = 4.4252). This aligns with Onyango and Maina's (2023) findings that gender-transformative advocacy not only alters public opinion but also empowers women to question systemic inequalities. Overall, these results suggest that sustained advocacy initiatives in Nyagatare District have significantly contributed to fostering mindset change and socio-economic empowerment.

Descriptive Results on Fostering mindset change

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics related to fostering mindset change and socio-economic empowerment among the respondents. The table summarizes responses to various statements that measure the extent to which interventions have influenced shifts in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. In order to get a feel for how people generally feel about mindset development, we used a Likert scale that goes from "Strongly Disagree" (SD) to "Strongly Agree" (SA). For the purpose of evaluating the efficacy of community-wide initiatives to foster a shift in perspective, the mean and standard deviation numbers provide light on the extent to which respondents agreed and the dispersion of their answers.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Fostering mindset changes

Statements on Fostering mindset change	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
I believe that mindset change is essential for socio-economic empowerment in my community.	0.7%	1.4%	1.4%	50.0%	46.6%	4.4048	.65793
Educational programs have helped me change my approach to financial decision-making.	0.0%	1.4%	5.4%	37.1%	56.1%	4.4796	.66450
I feel more confident in my ability to improve my economic status after participating in empowerment programs.	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	43.2%	52.7%	4.4456	.72175
Community-based interventions have successfully changed the way people view economic opportunities.	0.0%	2.0%	6.1%	33.3%	58.3%	4.4830	.70448
I have developed new skills that are helping me achieve economic independence.	0.7%	2.0%	2.0%	45.6%	49.7%	4.4150	.69952
Mindset change initiatives are effectively addressing barriers to socio-economic empowerment in my area.	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	43.2%	52.0%	4.4728	.58794
I believe that fostering mindset change can lead to long-term economic stability for individuals and families.	0.0%	0.7%	3.4%	35.7%	60.2%	4.5544	.59758

Source: **Primary data, (2025).**

The findings in Table 5 reveal strong consensus among respondents that fostering mindset change is crucial for socio-economic empowerment within their community. An overwhelming 96.6% agreed or strongly agreed that mindset change is essential for empowerment, indicating consistent responses. This aligns with recent research by Nkosi and Mthembu (2022), who emphasize that shifting mental attitudes is foundational for sustainable empowerment and development. Furthermore, 93.2% of respondents credited educational programs with positively influencing their financial decision-making approaches (Mean = 4.4796, SD = 0.66450), supporting findings by Adeoye and Olajide (2023) that education significantly shapes economic behavior and decision-making in rural communities.

The data also indicate that empowerment programs bolster respondents' confidence and community perceptions of economic opportunities. Over 95.9% felt more confident improving their economic status post participation in empowerment initiatives (Mean = 4.4456, SD = 0.72175), which resonates with the work of Banda and Chirwa (2021) highlighting confidence as a key outcome of empowerment. Similarly, 91.6% agreed that community-based interventions have changed local views on economic opportunities (Mean = 4.4830, SD = 0.70448). These findings echo the results of Moyo et al. (2020), who documented significant shifts in community perceptions following targeted interventions, leading to greater acceptance of women's economic roles. Additionally, 95.3% of respondents confirmed that new skills acquired contributed to achieving economic independence (Mean = 4.4150), consistent with Okeke and Ude (2024), who found that skill development is a critical driver of empowerment and economic autonomy.

Finally, the table highlights the effectiveness of mindset change initiatives in addressing barriers and promoting long-term stability. More than 95% agreed these initiatives effectively tackle socio-economic barriers (Mean = 4.4728, SD = 0.58794), which supports the findings of Simelane and Dlamini (2023), who emphasized the role of cognitive and cultural change in removing empowerment obstacles. Notably, 95.9% of respondents believed fostering mindset change leads to sustained economic stability for families (Mean = 4.5544), the highest mean score in the table, underscoring the critical importance of this factor. This concurs

with recent studies by Adebayo and Ogunleye (2023), who highlight mindset transformation as a cornerstone for long-term socio-economic development and financial resilience in marginalized communities.

Regression results for Advocacy and Fostering mindset change

The regression analysis examining the relationship between advocacy and fostering mindset change indicates a modest but positive association. The model summary shows an R value of 0.249, suggesting a low to moderate correlation between advocacy initiatives and changes in mindset among participants. The R^2 value of 0.062 implies that approximately 6.2% of the variance in mindset change can be explained by advocacy efforts, with the adjusted R^2 of 0.059 accounting for the number of predictors in the model. The standard error of the estimate (0.24611) reflects the average deviation of observed values from the regression line, indicating the model's predictive accuracy. Overall, while advocacy contributes to mindset change, other factors beyond this model likely play a more substantial role in shaping attitudes and perceptions (Hair et al., 2021; Field, 2020).

Table 6: Model summary for Advocacy

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.249 ^a	.062	.059	.24611

a. Predictors: (Constant), Advocacy

Source: **Primary data**, (2025).

The ANOVA results for advocacy and its effect on fostering mindset change indicate that the regression model is statistically significant. The table shows that the regression sum of squares is 1.168 with 1 degree of freedom, while the residual sum of squares is 17.687 with 292 degrees of freedom, resulting in a total sum of squares of 18.854. The calculated F-value of 19.276, with a significance level of $p = .000$, demonstrates that advocacy significantly predicts mindset change among participants. This indicates that the model explains a meaningful portion of the variance in the dependent variable, confirming that advocacy interventions have a measurable impact on fostering positive changes in mindset (Field, 2020; Hair et al., 2021).

Table 7: ANOVA results for Advocacy

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	1.168	1	1.168	19.276	.000 ^b
1	Residual	17.687	292	.061		
	Total	18.854	293			

a. Dependent Variable: Fostering mindset change

b. Predictors: (Constant), Advocacy

Source: **Primary data**, (2025).

The coefficient results for advocacy in relation to fostering mindset change indicate a significant positive effect. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.185$, $SE = 0.042$) shows that for every one-unit increase in advocacy efforts, mindset change is predicted to increase by 0.185 units, holding other factors constant. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.249$) reflects a moderate effect size, indicating that advocacy is a meaningful predictor of mindset change. The t-value of 4.390 and a significance level of $p = .000$ confirm that this relationship is statistically significant, suggesting that advocacy interventions play a crucial role in promoting positive shifts in mindset among historically marginalized communities (Field, 2020; Hair et al., 2021).

Table 8: Coefficient results for Risk Reduction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.614	.191		18.963	.000
	Advocacy	.185	.042	.249	4.390	.000

a. Dependent variable: Fostering mindset change

Source: **Primary data**, (2025).

Discussion of the Findings - Advocacy and Fostering mindset change

The findings of this study demonstrate that advocacy has a significant and positive influence on fostering mindset change among historically marginalized communities in Nyagatare District. The regression analysis revealed a positive relationship between advocacy efforts and mindset transformation, with a standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.249) indicating that advocacy contributes meaningfully to changes in attitudes and perceptions. The ANOVA results further confirm the statistical significance of this relationship ($F = 19.276$, $p < .001$), highlighting that advocacy interventions are effective in promoting social inclusion and empowering individuals to challenge long-standing biases and barriers (Field, 2020; Hair et al., 2021). These results align with global literature emphasizing that structured advocacy initiatives, including community engagement, education, and awareness campaigns, can drive cognitive and behavioral shifts in marginalized populations (Tracy, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Moreover, the study underscores that while advocacy is a significant predictor of mindset change, it accounts for a modest portion of the variance ($R^2 = 0.062$), suggesting that other socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors also contribute to shaping perceptions and behaviors. This aligns with findings from contemporary research indicating that multi-faceted approaches—combining advocacy with policy reform, capacity building, and participatory decision-making—tend to produce more substantial and sustainable changes in mindset (Saunders et al., 2022; Zhou & Yu, 2022). The study highlights the importance of continued advocacy efforts tailored to the local context, reinforcing the role of participatory and inclusive strategies in fostering empowerment and equitable development in marginalized communities.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that advocacy efforts are essential in raising awareness and promoting gender equality, which contributes to a gradual shift in mindset within the community. While advocacy alone may not be the strongest factor, it plays a vital supportive role in encouraging women's participation in decision-making and reducing discrimination, thereby laying the groundwork for broader socio-economic empowerment..

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