# Report on
# ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE GOVERNANCE OF MEDIA AND THE INTERNET IN GHANA

Team Members

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Kobby Mensah, PhD

For

**CDD-GHANA**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ensuring accountability in media governance and the internet is crucial for upholding the democratic principles of developing countries like Ghana. For the governance system to be effective, the media ownership system and regulations, the media literacy of the audience, and the internet rights system must ensure the existence of ethics and standards.This can also be promoted by ensuring that members of the media fraternity adhere to the profession's standards through various communities of knowledge practice. These factors help democracy to thrive on public knowledge of the media and its related functions and roles. Hence, media literacy and governance are closely linked because an informed and media-literate citizenry is essential to operationalising and developing a participatory democracy that reflects the people's aspirations.

As the fourth estate of our democratic experiment, ensuring good governance and effective democratic values in Ghana and everywhere rests on the efficiency and effectiveness of the media. Touted as one of the beacons of democratic hopes in Africa, Ghana lacks coherent laws and policies that shape the use and application of the internet (including social media). This study was thus undertaken to understand the Ghanaian situation to promote accountability in the media and internet space.

Methodologically, the study adopted a mixed-method research approach with a survey of a sample of 1001 respondents and interviews with 15 key informants. The survey data was gathered through online questionnaires and face-to-face administered to media stakeholders (journalists, editors, managers, owners, directors), media associations, academia, CSOs, and the public. The interview data was gathered from 15 key informants from the media industry, including editors/managers of media organisations and some members of the Professional Association and the Civil Society (CSO).

The findings indicate a wider gender disparity between males (68.8%) and females (31.2%) regarding the use of social media platforms in Ghana. These gender differences in use can be attributed to data and mobile device costs, access to these platforms, and gender social roles.

On authorisations and ownership, the National Communications Authority (NCA) gives more authorisations for the operation of media outlets (e.g., radio, TV, etc.) to Ghanaians throughout the country. The aim is to promote diversity and even representation in the media's communication and education of the citizenry. However, the results of this study indicate that most authorisations are offered to private business groups and individuals mostly aligned to political and ideologically

linked entities, mainly resulting in a media cross-ownership[1]. These media cross-ownership can have implications for the diversity and plurality of content the citizenry consumes, as it may promote exclusions of (and limit representations from) the most marginalised groups. This is so because of the potential that exists under this situation for a single media entity to influence public opinion across different platforms. Most media houses invest more in the media space or diversify into other areas such as manufacturing, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, banking and finance, insurance, etc, ostensibly to ensure the sustainability of the media business.

On emerging business models, study findings show that most top media houses are now raising significant revenue through subscriptions to their YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok accounts. The print media, for example, has seen a significant growth in the subscriptions of their online versions. These are not paid subscriptions, but the increasing numbers of subscribers to the digital versions of the media houses increase their viewership, listenership and readership, hence generating monetisation opportunities for their content. Also, respondents believe that most of the existing big media houses in the country rely on conglomerates to capture the media market share in Ghana. Despite this development most participants believe that the media's financial sustainability is shaky and weak and so affects the welfare of practitioners in the industry. The situation has significant implications for journalism, the media landscape and how information is shared. Ownership and control of the media market share remain limited to a few media houses (Multimedia, Despite, Angel, EIB, GBC, Media General, Omni, Class, etc.). These media houses, which are few and have expanded, influence the content, agenda, and narratives for consumers in Ghana.

With these findings, the study recommends that:
  i. A specific and targeted regulatory framework must empower and strengthen the existing regulatory institution (media and broadcasting law and the regulatory National Media Commission), shaping the media practice in Ghana to improve the standards, ethics, unassailable rights and responsible content production. These regulations should address content moderation, privacy, data security, and online harassment. The framework/ guidelines must guide content moderation, considering the right to freedom of expression and speech from the 1992 constitution while addressing harmful and illegal content.

  ii. The government must develop a social media policy linked to the media and broadcasting law to allow for the optimal use of digital platforms. This will help curb the threats, violence, and trolls purveyed by social media users.

  iii. There must be a coordinated operational process of working together by these state agencies (the Data Protection Commission, the Right to Information Commission, the

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[1]A media cross-ownership refers to a situation in which a single corporate entity owns multiple types of media companies (that may include print, radio, broadcast television).

National Information Technology Agency (NITA), the National Identification Authority (NIA), the Cybersecurity Authority, and the Ghana Police Service) to help address the disinformation challenge, and online harassments as well as strengthen the fact-checking system by all media houses.

iv. Through the NCA, the government must review the authorisation policy by reducing the number it authorises or downsizing for effective regulation of the frequencies.

v. Aside from that, issuing authorisations to politically exposed or political party sympathisers and businesses linked to governments of the day has to be discouraged, if not stopped, to allow for fairness and inclusiveness of all eligible Ghanaians to have access to the frequencies.

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# ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| NCA | National Communications Authority |
| NITA | National Information Technology Agency |
| GJA | Ghana Journalists Association |
| NMC | National Media Commission |
| GIBA | Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association |
| IPR | Institute of Public Relations Ghana |
| CDD | Center for Democratic Development |
| EC | Electoral Commission |
| MFWA | Media Foundation for West Africa |
| PRINPAG | Private Newspaper Publishers Association of Ghana (PRINPAG) |
| AAG | Advertisers Association of Ghana |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisations |
| EIB | The Excellence in Broadcasting Limited |
| GBC | Ghana Broadcasting Corporation |
| UN | United Nations |
| KII | Key Informant Interviews |
| NPP | New Patriotic Party |
| NDC | National Democratic Congress |
| OTT | Over The Top |
| IOT | Internet of things |
| DSTV | Digital Satellite Television |
| GoTV | GoTV |
| UG | University of Ghana |
| NIA | National Identification Authority |
| UBIDS | Simon DiedongDombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| CEAG | Communication Educators Association of Ghana |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Fast-changing technology and the growing influence of the internet and mobile devices in disseminating news are significantly impacting the media environment. As of 2017, about 27% of Ghanaians look to social media for news, and 25% find their news online, while radio, television and newspaper sources have seen thinning audiences.[2] Internet penetration and the use of mobile devices have accelerated rapidly in West Africa in recent years. Digital technology's rise has fundamentally changed how media is produced, distributed, and consumed globally and in Ghana. Traditional media outlets have had to adapt to the digital era, with online platforms becoming significant sources of news, entertainment, and education purposes. The internet has enabled the democratisation of content creation, allowing individuals, communities of practice and small organisations to reach global audiences.

According to the National Communications Authority (NCA, 2023), Ghana has 728[3] FM Broadcasting Stations and 170[4] TV stations with different authorisations. In Ghana, nearly 40% of residents are connected to the internet, and there are 134 mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants.[5] Almost half of Ghanaian internet users use the internet to access news and information about politics and government services.[6] These statistics are positive indications of the media plurality and strength in Ghana. But how have the 26 years of Ghanaian democracy fared with these media statistics, and has the democratic dividend promised been achieved? By the existence, plurality and strengthened media, as has been argued by Ladyzhensky (2022) that a stronger media is better the functioning and health of a democracy been achieved? According to Bernard Avle (2018), 'generally, the freer a media or openness in a country, the more responsive duty bearers are to the needs of the people, and the more responsiveness we have, the more accountability and better quality of governance experienced'[7]. Despite these benefits, numerous challenges are presented by the burgeoning digital age of democracy. Relevant and factual news sources are joined by widespread disinformation and misinformation, sometimes so intermingled it can be difficult to decipher between falsified information and reliable sources.[8] Disinformation (intentional dissemination of false or misleading information) has been weaponised to sow distrust in election

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[2]Afrobarometer, 2018
[3]https://nca.org.gh/authorised-radio/ sourced on 4th November 2023
[4]https://nca.org.gh/television/ sourced on 4th November 2023
[5]"Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," Data (World Bank).
[6]Laura Silver and Courtney Johnson, "Internet Use Growing across Sub-Saharan Africa" 2020
[7]Bernard Avle, (2018). Rethinking the National Conversation.
https://citinewsroom.com/2018/11/full-text-of-bernard-avles-lecture-on-rethinking-the-national-conversation/
[8]CDD, (2020) "Driving Division? Disinformation and the New Media Landscape in Nigeria," 2020

integrity, which can result in voter apathy, low electoral participation and even violence.[9] Such content continues to attract a following for such individuals or groups on various social media platforms.

Sensationalism and the pressure to break the news quickly may lead to insufficient fact-checking and verification processes, thus affecting the quality of journalism (Markowitz et al., 2023; Knobloch-Westerwick, &Hastall, 2007). Furthermore, fake social media accounts or imposters can systematically disseminate disinformation with overwhelming efficiency using automated bots. Finally, information circulated online is not subjected to the same standards and accountability mechanisms as traditional media sources. Bloggers, commentators, influencers, and the like generate news and in many ways, practice journalism, but without the same scrutiny and peer review applied to formal publications and broadcast journalists. What do we know about fast-changing technology, the internet and the increased access to mobile phones and their effects on the Ghanaian media scene, particularly regarding the ability to maintain high journalistic standards?

Changing technology, the internet and increased access to mobile phones, have affected how news is disseminated and changed how media houses raise revenue. There is a raging debate over the regulation of the internet. Recent developments in Europe make it clear that the debate has gone beyond whether to regulate, but how to do it in a way that does not threaten its contribution to democracy building through participation. In Ghana, there is a broadcasting bill in the offing since 2004 that seeks to partially address some of the regulation issues. Otherlaws, like the Cyber Security Act, seek to also deal with criminality online.

The Internet and social media monetisation modules by media houses (e.g., sponsorships, advertisements, endorsements, and digital payment systems) have taken over the new media ecology and public sphere. These include conglomeration, media business diversification and the current digital financing models available to a sustained media landscape in Ghana, in sync with global funding modalities.

Media ownership (public, community and private) has different funding regimes, each impacting sustainability. The findings show that majority of the sector players struggle to pay decent wages, are unable to pay or renew their authorization fees[10], whereas others, especially some public media houses, have their consumption of utility services disconnected due to bill payment challenges.

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[9]Kofi Annan Foundation, "Protecting Electoral Integrity in the Digital Age"2020, pp. 55-62
[10]Kojo Emanuel, (2019). 57 radio stations shut down in Ghana. Pulse.com.gh. Retrieved from https://www.pulse.com.gh/news/local/57-radio-stations-shut-down-in-ghana/lx6zsl1

## Study Objectives

1. Ensure quality, professional journalism and media that are free to carry out their work while maintaining accountability and meeting industry ethics standards.

- Assess the level of fact-checking and review documents produced for publication within media houses and the limitations that may restrict the media's capacity to conduct oversight roles.

- Advance the conversation addressing the balance between media freedom and quality standards for journalism.

2. Deepen understanding of the rapidly changing technological environment and what the implications are for media accountability.

- Provide commentary and research data on the dynamics of a technology-driven media environment.

3. Examine how media houses now generate revenue amid a vibrant social media annexing the space.

- Assess the existing business models used by the media in Ghana (advertising, social media monetization, crowd funding, and business diversification).
- Determine the success level of existing and new models used by the media platforms.
- Assess and compare the models' challenges, risks, and sustainability margins.
- Examine the impact of the type of authorisations on the revenue streams.
- Assess the impact of the revenue level on the conditions of services, welfare and general pay structure of the journalists and owners and how it affects balanced reportage in a fragile democracy.
- Assess how media organisations respond to emerging challenges.
- Assess how the consolidation process of Ghana's democracy is being shaped within the context that ''Democracy thrives on media serving as scorekeepers, gatekeepers, and watchdogs''.

4. Assess the impact on democratic consolidation associated with shifts in media practices and technological evolution.

- Offer proactive solutions that contend with digital media's threats while preserving the benefits.
- Explore issues of politically exposed ownership and editorial influence.

**Expected Outcomes**

- Increased understanding of current media trends, how these trends threaten or strengthen democracy and what developments will likely occur moving forward.
- Enhanced awareness and evidence-based discourse concerning the dangers and benefits associated with online and offline media consumption.
- Increased understanding of the various business models available with their success rate, risk margins, employee retention and remuneration and overall ongoing concern and sustainability of the media industry in Ghana.
- Improved stakeholder uptake of recommendations and policy proposals on protecting media freedom, promoting accountability, and responding responsibly to threats from the internet in ways that strengthen democratic consolidation through improved news dissemination.

# 2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study used the sequential mixed method design approach in the data collection process and the analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This means the quantitative (surveys) data was collected and analysed, and then qualitative (key informant interviews) in two consecutive phases of the study. As a national study, it captured respondents from different media sectors from all parts of the country. The media scope included print, social media, traditional media, stakeholders within the media, and the socio-political space.

## Purposive and Cluster Sampling

Stakeholders for the study were selected in clusters and purposively on the basis of;
- Location and types of audience (the southern, middle, or northern zone of Ghana).
- Language and education of the audience and whether the audience lives in urban or rural areas.
- Key criteria include ownership and types of authorisation (i.e., public, private, commercial, community, individual, group, political/business/religious) and stakeholder institutions.

## Data collection

The data collection process started with a scholarly literature review, focusing on industry reports, literary works, and published social media content. The second layer of the collection process was clustering the country into three zones for accessible data collection (the Southern zone, the Middle zone and the Northern zone). Thirdly, we identified various social media groups of professional groups as targets and shared our online data instruments (questionnaire) with those groups across the country.

Quantitative data was collected through online surveys, in-person questionnaire administration, and key informant interview sessions. The quantitative data was gathered through online and face-to-face questionnaires administered to media stakeholders (journalists, editors, managers, owners, directors), media associations, academia, CSOs, and the public.  The online survey tools were deployed to various digital platforms and knowledge of practice networks nationwide on May 25th and closed on June 30th. As a national study (grouped into the North, Middle Belt and South), the survey links were placed on professional, school, alums, and media pages nationwide to allow for a good mix of responses reflecting the country's structure. Some regional-level Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) members and research assistants' members supported the survey's administration process.

The questionnaire was structured into four broad themes, namely:
1. Basic information
2. Rapidly Evolving Media Environment
3. Business Models and Sustainability of Media Houses
4. Emerging Threats Posed by Expanding Internet Use

Table: 1. Key Informant Interviewees

| No | Codes | Informants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | KII 1 | Journalism and Media Scholar |
| 2 | KII 2 | News Editor, Media House |
| 3 | KII 3 | Journalist, Media House |
| 4 | KII 4 | Blogger |
| 5 | KII 5 | Regional Executive, Professional Association |
| 6 | KII 6 | Senior Editor and Manager, Media Organisation |
| 7 | KII 7 | Head of PR and Communication, CSO |
| 8 | KII 8 | Programme Manager, CSO |
| 9 | KII 9 | Executive of a Professional Association |
| 10 | KII 10 | Director, Professional Association |
| 11 | KII 11 | Finance, Investment and Economics Scholar |
| 12 | KII 12 | Director, Media Organisation |
| 13 | KII 13 | News Editor, Media House |
| 14 | KII 14 | Political Science Scholar |
| 15 | KII 15 | Blogger |

In gathering qualitative data, we identified 15 key industry players and actors (Table 1) for engagement and interviews, from editors/managers of media organisations, Professional Association Members as well as Civil Society Organisation (CSO) members. We interviewed some media executives, public servants, senior journalists, practitioners (editors, managers), self-regulators (GJA/GIBA, PRINPAG, IPR, AAG), academia and civil society (Table 1). Key informants usually have deeper perspectives and informed opinions on aspects of the study (Cossham, 2019; Akhter, 2022), in this case, knowledge of media and internet governance in Ghana. They provided an in-depth perspective on the media, the internet, ethics, cybersecurity, social media and blogging, and media financial sustainability, among other things. An interview guide addressing the main themes was developed to explore deeper and multiple standpoints from industry actors and other key stakeholders in the country.

## Data Analysis

We collected relevant data from the review of documents, key informant interviews, and analysed using quantitative content analysis and qualitative analysis methods. Document analysis mainly focused on reviewing legislation, research reports, media policy documents, editorial policies, media regulations, official reports of professional associations and government offices, and training documents.

The interviews with the audience were recorded (upon consent from the key informants) and transcribed. Transcribed information was then coded and analysed into themes using the qualitative NVIVO software. Data from the questionnaire survey was analysed in quantitative analysis, mostly with descriptive statistics for the three main research themes. The identities of the key informants were anonymised using KII 1……15...n, as designations in the study

## 3.1. Study Demography

The survey data was collected from 1,001 respondents through online platforms, and 15 key informants from across the country's media industry were interviewed.

## Gender

In this study, males constituted more than two-thirds (i.e., 68.8 %), compared with less than a third (i.e., 31.2%) of females. A similar scenario is observed when using the various social media platforms (see Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1 below). Multiple sources on the participation of women in the Ghanaian media space demonstrate that female representation in the Ghanaian media is low, which implies lost voices from more than half of the country's population (e.g., The Conservation, 2021; Asare & Agomor, 2023; Alliance for Women in Media Africa [AWMA]/University of Ghana School of Information & Communication Studies, 2020). The low representation of women, both from the demand and supply sides of the media space, is often attributed to factors, including the cost of mobile devices and data and socio-economic and cultural barriers to engagement. The affordability of mobile devices and data plans presents a significant hurdle, particularly in regions where women may have limited financial resources (Alliance for Affordable Internet, 2021). Deep-rooted socio-economic and cultural norms often dictate gender roles, limiting women's engagement in media spaces (OECD, 2018). Existing systemic issues, including a lack of equal opportunities for women in media professions, contribute to the under representation of women's voices. Overcoming these structural inequalities in Ghana demands proactive affirmative efforts to ensure equitable opportunities and fair representation at all levels of media organisations (Tsikata, 2018).

Additionally, limited access to education and training opportunities for women hinders their entry into the media industry and other professions like the judiciary, politics, and engineering (Forsgren et al., 2019; UN Women, 2018). For MFWA (2017), such difference could be attributed to the lack of females as owners and managers of the media space who could offer opportunities and representation to other women.
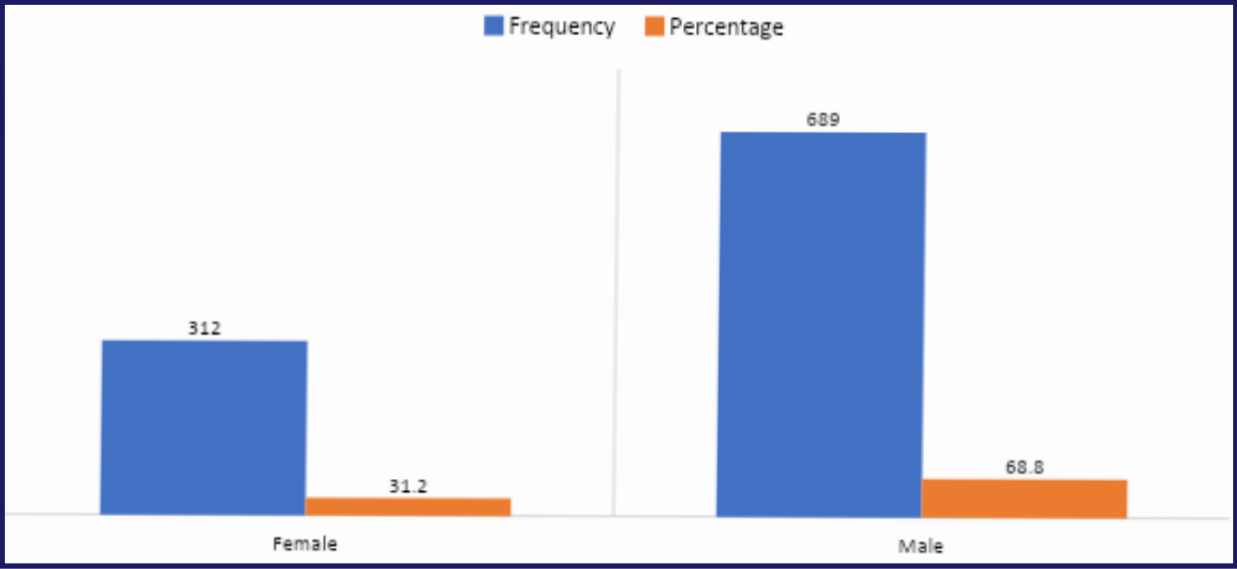
**Figure 3.1. Respondents Gender**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

**Table 3.1. Gender use Proportions of some social media platforms in Ghana**

| Social media platform | Users (millions) | Male % | Female % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 5.65 | 60 | 40 |
| Twitter | 1.15 | 79 | 21 |
| LinkedIn | 2.1 | 65 | 35 |
| Instagram | 1.7 | 58 | 42 |

**(We Are Social & Meltwater, 2023)**

## Education

A significant majority, 68.8% of respondents (see Figure 3.2), have attained university diplomas and degrees, showcasing a high level of formal education within the media industry. A note worthy 21.3% of respondents hold postgraduate degrees, indicating a commitment to advanced education and specialisation within the field. Also, 8.9% of respondents (see Figure 3.2) possess basic-level qualifications, providing diversity in educational backgrounds within the media workforce. The prevalence of qualifications in journalism, communication and media-related studies, and other social science courses highlights the industry's emphasis on relevance and specialisation. The implication is that these qualifications, coupled with newsroom training and guidance, suggest a skilled labour force capable of contributing to the quality and ethical standards in the media industry.
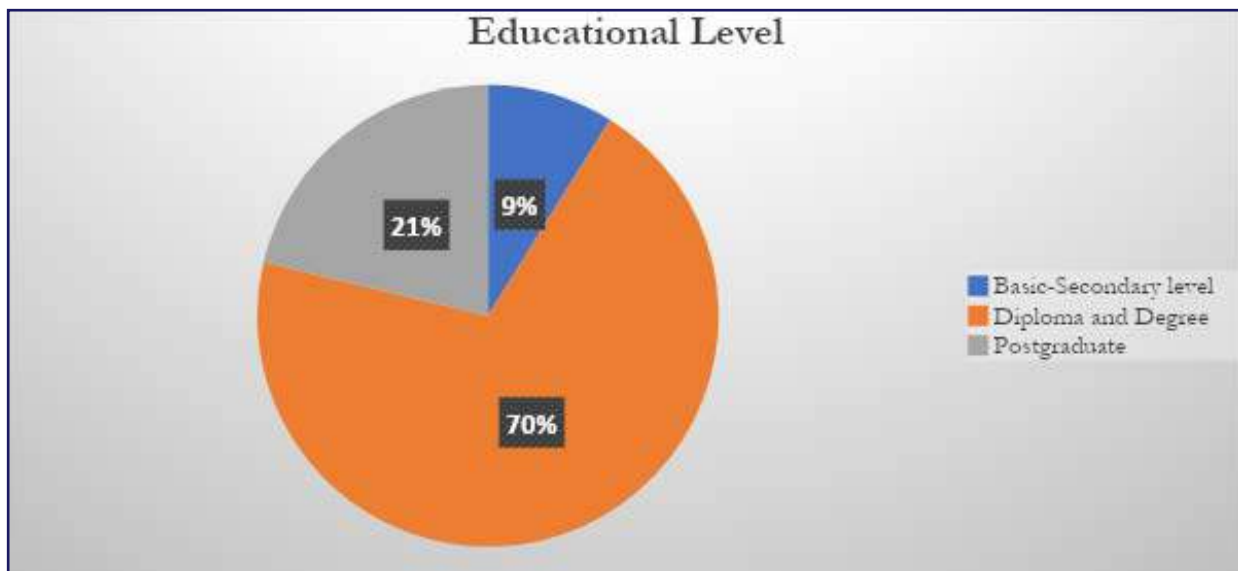
**Figure: 3.2. Educational Level**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

Recognizing the pivotal role of formal higher education in shaping media professionalism, the complementary importance of in-house newsroom training, guidance, mentoring and practice towards ethical journalism within the media industry in Ghana remains key.

## Employment

A significant portion of respondents, almost three-fourths (73.8%), function in roles extending beyond journalism, showcasing the prevalence of multi-functional responsibilities within respondents' media organisations. Respondents who indicated they were in management and other clerical administrative level jobs were 23.8%. About 16.8% (%) (Table 3.2)of the respondents were engaged in governance and advocacy-related functions, signifying a commitment to broader industry issues and initiatives beyond day-to-day journalistic activities. 15.6% of respondents serve as news editors and supervisors, playing crucial roles in shaping and guiding the editorial direction of media content.

Other various journalistic roles from the findings were represented, including presenters, reporters, broadcasters, and anchors, collectively constituting 14.8% of the respondents. Additionally, freelancers (1.4%), managers (3.1%), and board members (3.4%) (Table 3.2)contribute to the diversity of roles, representing the presence of individuals working independently, in managerial capacities, and at governance levels. A segment (2.2%) was involved in public relations and communications, highlighting the convergence of media outreach roles and organisational messaging roles. About 9.2% of the respondents were part of self-regulated associations, showcasing a commitment to professional standards and ethical practices within the media industry.

These findings indicate the interconnectedness of roles and underscores the need for professionals to navigate both journalistic and administrative dimensions, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the industry. With the diversity of roles and individuals serving in different capacities in their media organizations, the potential for collaborative decision-making, activity co-creation, and support in the newsroom and other activities of the media can be higher.

| Categories of Jobs of Respondents | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Governance and Advocacy | 168 | 16.8 |
| News Editors | 156 | 15.6 |
| Management roles | 238 | 23.8 |
| PR and Communications | 22 | 2.2 |
| CEOs/Owners/Managers | 31 | 3.1 |
| Presenters/reporters/broadcasters | 148 | 14.8 |
| Programmes in democracy and right base roles (NCCE, and EC) | 95 | 9.5 |
| Freelancer | 14 | 1.4 |
| Self-regulated association roles (GJA, GIBA, IPR, AAG, PRINPAG) | 92 | 9.2 |
| Board Member roles | 34 | 3.4 |
| | 998 | 99.8 |

Source: (Research Data, 2023)

# 4. RAPIDLY EVOLVING MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

## 4.2.1. MEDIA AUTHORIZATION AND LICENSING IN GHANA

Media authorisation and licensing regimes encourage and support diversity in ownership, content development and use, and critical representation within the media industry, especially for a developing country. This includes affirmative action and support to under represented groups, including women, minority groups, and marginalised communities, in media ownership and decision-making roles. Media licensing regulations in Ghana are designed to ensure that information is accessible to all segments of society. Licensing criteria may include provisions to ensure that media services cover a wide range of diverse topics, faith, language, geographical, social and economic status, development and other perspectives that reflect the needs and interests of citizens.

**Table 4.3. NCA Authorised Television Stations in Ghana, 2022**

| N O. | TYPE OF TELEVISION SERVICE | TOTAL NO. OF AUTHORISED STATIONS | TOTAL NO. OF STATIONS ON AIR | TOTAL NO. OF STATIONS NOT ON AIR |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Analogue Terrestrial Television | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 2. | Digital Terrestrial Free-To-Air Television Programme Channel (Nationwide Coverage) | 38 | 38 | 0 |
| 3. | Digital Terrestrial Free-To-Air Television Programme Channel (Regional Coverage) | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| 4. | Digital Terrestrial Pay Television (Service only) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. | Digital Terrestrial Pay Television (Service and Frequency) | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| 6. | Digital Terrestrial Television (Network only) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. | Digital Terrestrial Radio Service on TV Multiplex | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| 8. | Satellite Television Broadcasting (Pay TV Direct-To-Home Bouquet) | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 9. | Satellite Television Broadcasting (Free-To-Air Direct-ToHome Bouquet) | 9 | 6 | 3 |

| 10. | Satellite Television Broadcasting (Free-To-Air Direct-ToHome Single Channel) | 77 | 49 | 28 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | Digital Terrestrial Television Additional Services (eg. Teletext, etc) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12. | Digital Terrestrial Mobile Television Service (Stand-alone Authorisation) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13. | Digital Cable Television | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 14. | Television over Internet Protocol (Pay TV) | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 15. | Subscription Management Service for a Satellite Television Broadcasting (Pay TV Direct-To-Home Bouquet) | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | | 152 | 112 | 40 |

**Source:  NCA, (2022)**
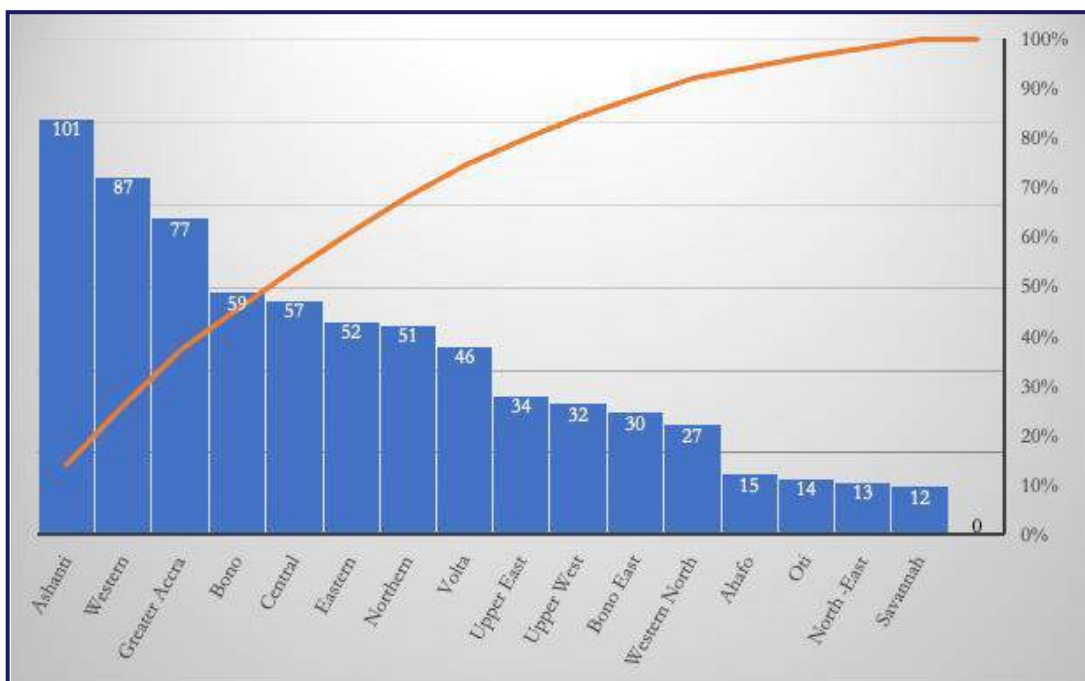


Figure 4.4: NCA Authorised Radio Stations in Ghana, 2022
Source: (NCA, 2022)

There have been significant changes in the broadcasting space in Ghana, though the country does not still have a broadcasting law guiding its operations. Since 2014, this draft bill[11] has gone through stages of passage; however, there has not been a strong and committed effort by the executive and parliament to pass the bill into law to shape the practice of broadcasting in Ghana. The bill expressly articulates the fundamental values, principles, and objectives of broadcasting in Ghana. it classifies the types of broadcasting systems and articulates their responsibilities and prerogatives. The objectives of public service broadcasting are to provide quality broadcasting that reflects the diversity of society and to inform, educate, and entertain the public.

The Information Minister, Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, said on November 8th, "The successful passage of the broadcasting bill, which is at the draft stage and yet to be tabled before parliament for consideration, requires enhanced stakeholder participation by way of input"[12].

The adoption of digital technologies in satellite television broadcasting represents a fundamental shift from traditional analogue systems in Ghana. Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) transmission is part of the global transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. It involves the use of digital signals for television broadcasting, providing several advantages over traditional analogue broadcasting, including improved picture and sound quality, more efficient use of frequency spectrum, and the possibility of offering more channels.

This transition in Ghana, enhances efficiency, signal quality, and the overall viewer experience. The incorporation of High-Definition (HD) and Ultra-High-Definition (UHD) content delivery signifies a commitment to providing Ghanaian viewers with an enhanced visual experience. These technologies offer sharper images, richer colours, and improved overall picture quality. The operationalization of digital technologies in satellite television broadcasting represents a transformative phase for Ghana's media industry, promising enhanced quality, accessibility, and technological convergence. The free-to-air satellite television aspect highlights a shift towards broader accessibility and inclusivity of Ghanaians, thus allowing viewers to access content without subscription fees.

## OWNERSHIP OF THE MEDIA IN GHANA

Ghana has seen a dramatically increasing growth rate in media size since the liberalization and deregulation of the sector in 1992. This meteoric rise has led to the idea that there is a mismatch between the country's population size and media density. One of the positive sides to the growth is the local language stations that offer the opportunity for diversity and inclusivity in media production and consumption. Tietaah, Braimah and Asante (2023), argue that the ownership and

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[11]Revised Broadcasting Bill 3
https://moc.gov.gh/bills/
[12]Information Minister calls for stakeholder engagement to ensure speedy passage of Broadcasting Bill. November 8th 2023. https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/general-news/broadcasting-bill/2023/

ideological dynamics **(Table 4.4)** of acquiring authorisations seem to skew the distribution towards the bigger metropolitan areas **(Figures 4.4).**
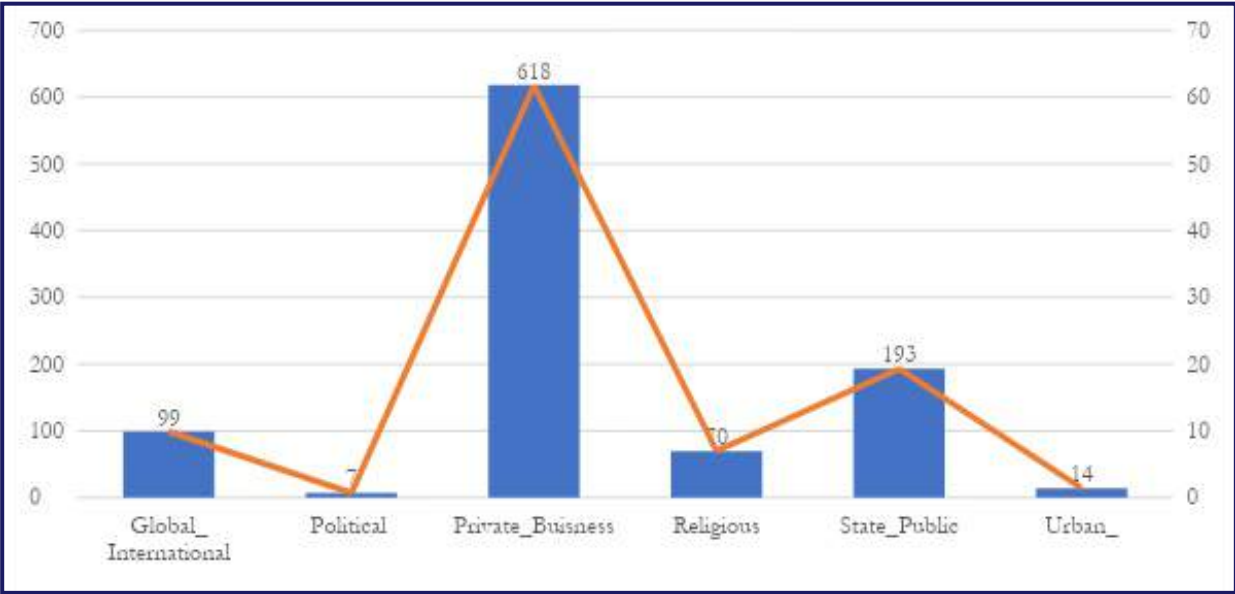


**Figure:4.5. Frequency Analysis of Media Ownership Category in Ghana**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

The ownership landscape of the media in Ghana is diverse, encompassing both public and private entities. The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) is a state-owned or public media entity that operates under government ownership. A mix of individual and corporate ownership characterises private media ownership in Ghana. The private media entities include newspapers and digital platforms, radio stations, and television channels. Business owners, entrepreneurs, and individuals with interests (52%) in various industries also have ownership stakes in media organisations. Politicians or individuals with political affiliations and sympathisers (50%) may have ownership interests in media outlets (Figure 4.5). This ownership dynamic raises considerations about the potential influence of political figures on media content and public discourse. This is confirmed by MFWA (2017); and Tietaah, Braimah and Asante (2023) in the State of the Media Ghana study by the University of Ghana and the Media Foundation for West Africa. The perception of traders, farmers, and market women owning or being involved in media ownership in Ghana, as mentioned by respondents, suggests an interesting aspect of public perception. However, from the literature and industry reports, it is yet to be established that farmers and traders are part of the owners of Ghana's media.

**Table 4.4. Identities of the private businesses owning the media space**

| People/Groups/Org | Frequeny | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Businesses | 522 | 52 |
| Companies | 302 | 30 |
| Religious groups/persons | 411 | 41 |
| Politicians | 496 | 50 |
| Farmers | 82 | 8 |
| Market women/men | 56 | 6 |
| Others | 21 | 2 |

Source: (Research Data, 2023)

Respondents believe that the political class often hide behind companies and other business interest groups to own these authorisations obstructively. Aside from that, the few powerful media houses with significant market shares have dominantly taken over and determined the content Ghanaians should consume. Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)-public broadcaster, the Multimedia Group Limited, the Despite Media Group, the Class Media Group, the EIB Group, the Media General, and the Omni Media Group- controls what Ghanaians consume and sets an agenda for the country. These cross-media ownership types can have implications for the diversity and plurality of content we consume and promote exclusions and important representations from most marginal groups, which has the potential for a single media stand to influence public opinion across different platforms.

Beyond the politically linked ownership, there is a growing tendency of individual faith-based owners to acquire these authorisations without following the tenets of broadcasting rules or ethical codes. The public cue from these praxes is that there is not much trust in most of these media houses whose actors are not associated with the GJA and GIBA nor follow the authorisation terms by the NCA or the broadcasting guidelines from the NMC.

In 2016, there was a joint communique by both the NMC and the NCA on the conduct and use of the various authorisations/frequencies during the elections, which was a strong caution to avoid abuse and use of inflammatory language on air and rather adhere to the ethical codes and guidelines, towards decent and responsible journalism.

"In this regard, the NCA and NMC wish to remind all frequency authorisation holders of their obligations regarding using a national resource. This responsibility extends to all those who, in one way or another, use a frequency allocated for fair and responsible dissemination of news. These obligations can be found under the terms of their broadcasting authorisations, the various

guidelines of the National Media Commission, the Code of Conduct of the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) and the Code of Ethics of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA). As authorisation holders, you must ensure that your platforms are not used to incite violence and, in all situations, diligently and independently investigate all allegations and claims by interest groups before putting them out. Broadcasting houses should, at all costs, avoid disseminating false news, a phenomenon which can escalate tension at such a critical time" (NMC and NCA, 2016).
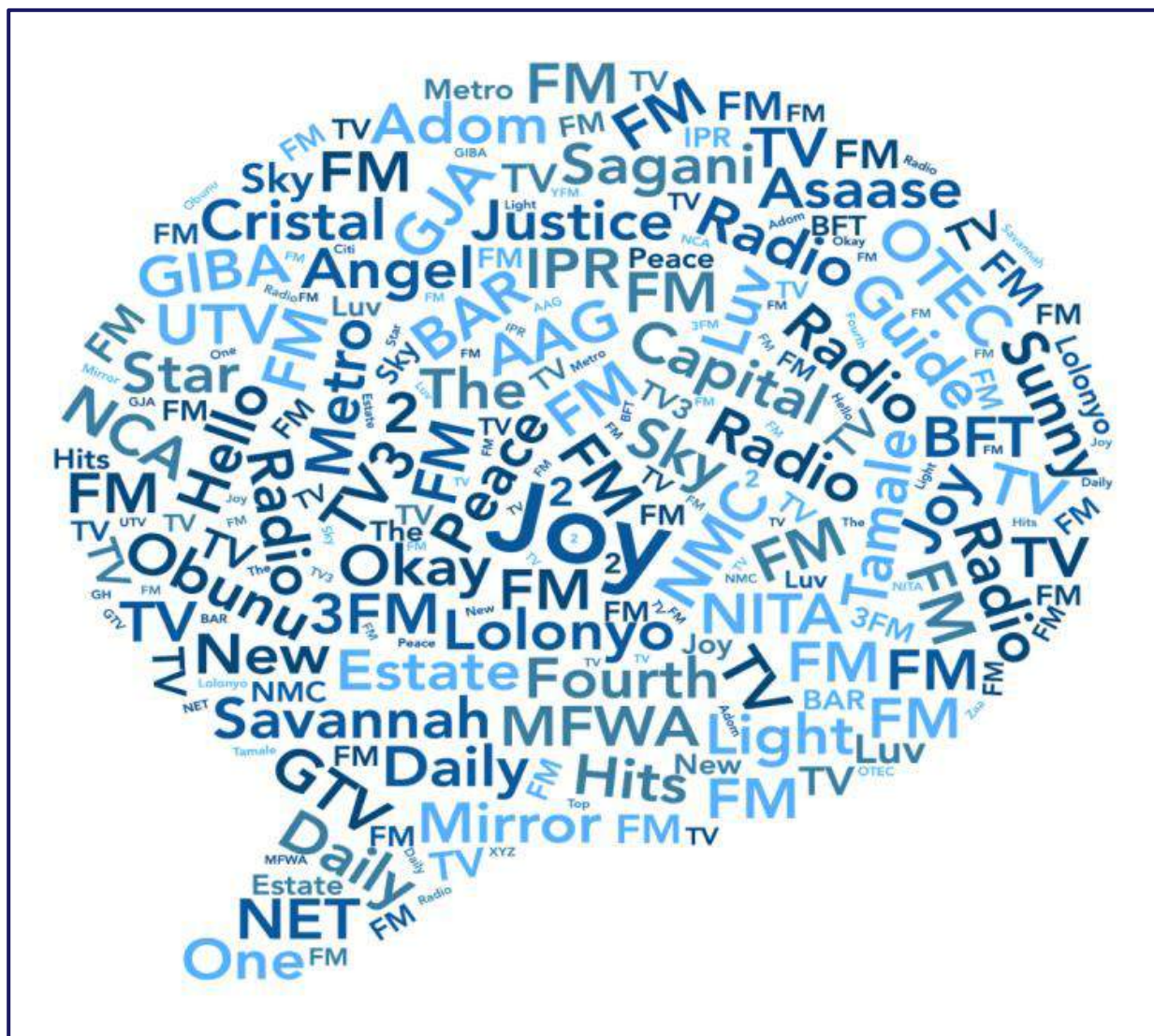
### 4.2.2.   APPLICATION AND USE OF TECHNOLOGIES

Like many other countries, Ghana has seen a significant increase in digital technologies and social media use over the past years. Social media platforms have become very popular news and general information sources for many Ghanaians due to their fast, easy, real-time value and mobile-driven nature. The study revealed that the use of technologies by media practitioners in the digital era is mainly to generate, distribute and consume news (59%) (Figure 4.5), for transcription/editing and production purposes (33%), and to check fake news (8%) in a very rampant state. The influx of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies (the Metaverse, Zoom, Microsoft Teams) to facilitate television broadcasting and social media use is shaping how we consume media content.
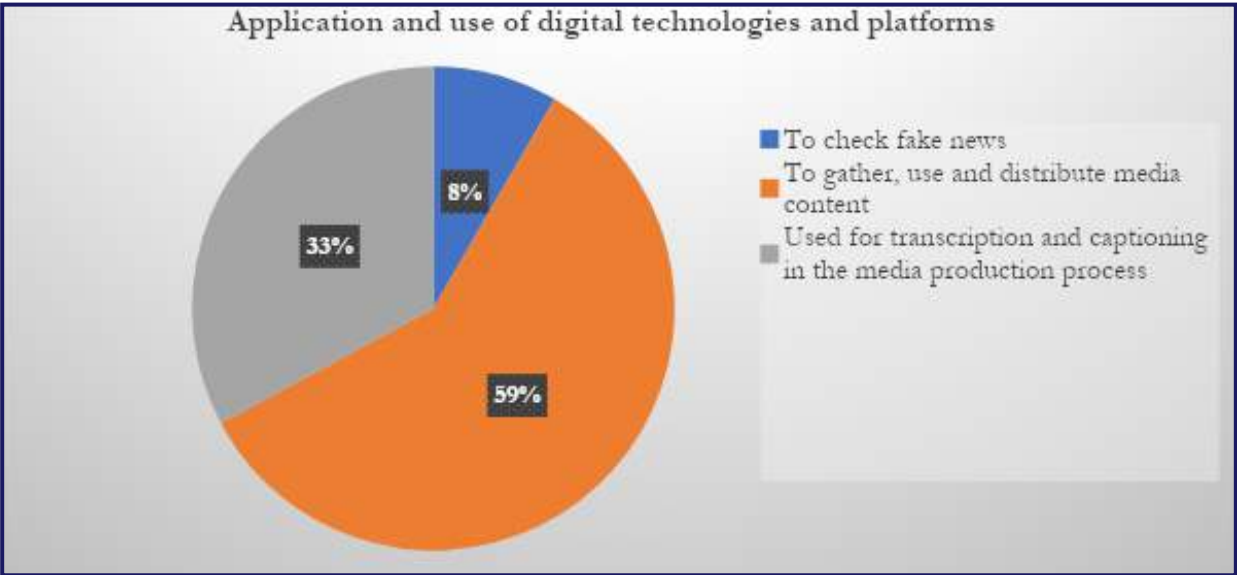


**Figure 4.5. Application and use of digital technologies and platforms**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

As of January 2023, Ghana had about 6.60 million social media users from 23.05 million internet users (Digital 2023). This means that the dependency on digital technologies and social media for news, information, education, and general media content has been more compelling than before.
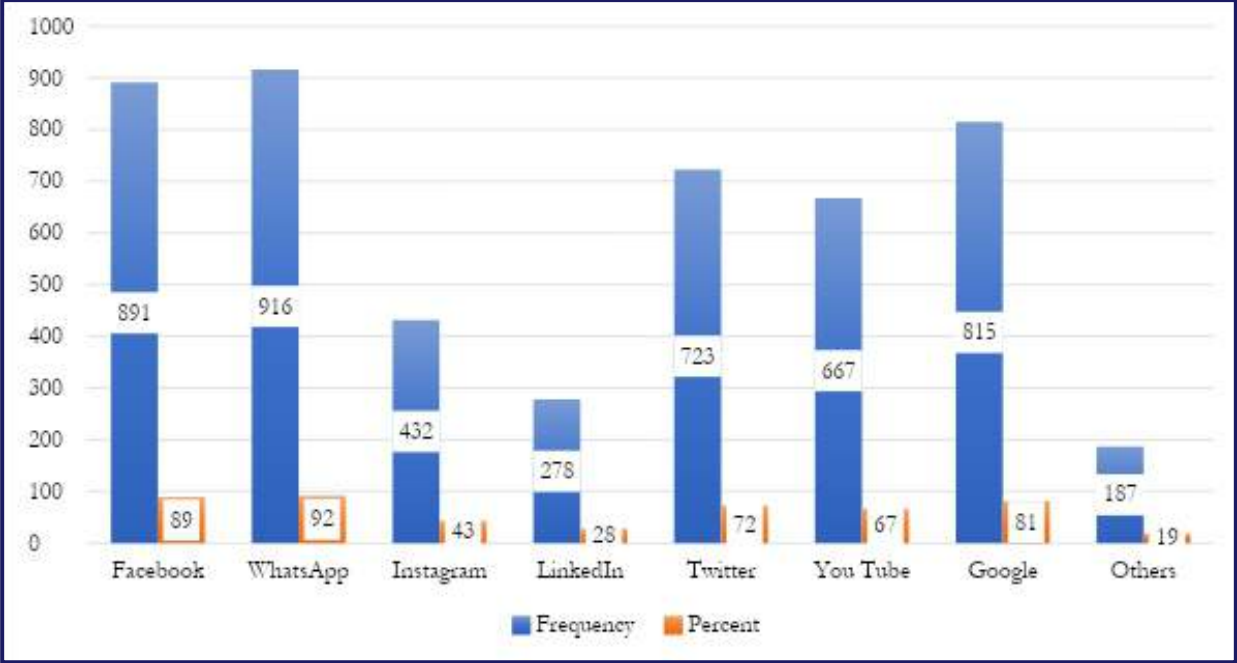


**Figure 4.5. Social media/Digital platforms**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

Respondents (Figure 4.5) revealed that WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Google (Figure 4.5) were the dominant digital platforms for accessing news and general information from the mainstream media. Interestingly, respondents who chose Twitter, now officially known as X, mainly used the platform for advocacy and activism-related issues besides news and information consumption. Respondents understood that YouTube is known for hosting a wide variety of content, including longer-form videos such as documentaries, tutorials, and vlogs, in addition to shorter videos that allow for uploading, sharing, and viewing. Additionally, the perception they viewed Google as the information suite for which everything is searched reflects the dominant position of Google as a search engine. Google is widely used for information retrieval and serves as a gateway to a vast array of online content. The integration of Google Search and other services like Google Chats, Gmail, and Google Drive contributes to its reputation as a comprehensive information suite. This affirms the Digital (2020) report that about 38% of Ghanaians used social media as their main news source.

With 23 million Ghanaians on the internet and 6.6 million people on social media, it remains a hugely competitive platform with the legacy media, and these platforms play a significant role in shaping public discourses, connecting individuals across the country, and disseminating news faster than we have experienced before. Some legacy media outlets have established their digital

presence, providing content through websites, mobile applications, and social media channels (Figure 4.6).

The study observed that, the use of Over-the-Top[13] (OTT) technology platforms, such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram Live, and streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime, along with the integration of the Internet of Things[14] (IoT), has increased Ghanaians' online media content consumption and access. Most of the media houses in Ghana use platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram Live to enable users to broadcast live broadcast content to their followers. This has become a popular way for media houses, journalists, public figures, brands, and influencers to connect with their audience in real time. Services like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime offer on-demand streaming of a wide range of content, including movies, TV shows, documentaries, and original productions.

Consumers can now transition seamlessly between different devices for content consumption. For example, they might start watching a show on their smart TV and later continue from the same point on a tablet or smartphone. The combination of OTT platforms and IoT has significantly reshaped the media consumption landscape, providing users with more choices, flexibility, and personalised experiences. Respondents can transition easily between different devices for content consumption from their smart TVs and tablets or smartphones at the same point and time.

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[13]OTT stands for "over-the-top" and refers to technology that delivers streamed content over the internet.
Ausif Mulla (2022). Assessing the factors influencing the adoption of over-the-top streaming platforms: A literature review from 2007 to 2021, Telematics and Informatics, Volume 69, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2022.101797.
[14]IoT stands for "Internet of Things" and refers to the network of connected objects/interfaces that can collect and exchange media content and related information general data in real-time using embedded sensors. It connects the digital and physical worlds.

Sang Kyun Kim, NevaditaSahu, Marius Preda (2017). Beginning of a new standard: Internet of Media Things. KSII Transactions on Internet and Information Systems, 2017, 11 (11), pp.5182 - 5199. ⟨10.3837/tiis.2017.11.001⟩. ⟨hal-01686326⟩https://hal.science/hal-01686326/
Ramli, T. S., Ramli, A. M., Adolf, H., Damian, E., &Palar, M. R. A. (2020). Over-the-top media in the digital economy and society 5.0. Journal of Telecommunications and the Digital Economy, 8(3), 60–67. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.514493621007870

## 4.2.3. THREATS, OPPORTUNITIES AND REGULATIONS OF THE SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Although media practitioner respondents are excited about the benefits and opportunities of the digital space, they equally express concern on the open threats of the digital space. Most respondents (92%) cited fake news (Figure 4.6) as the most dreaded challenge with social media technologies. Others considered cyberbullying (89%), fake accounts and cloning (77%) and privacy challenges (83%).
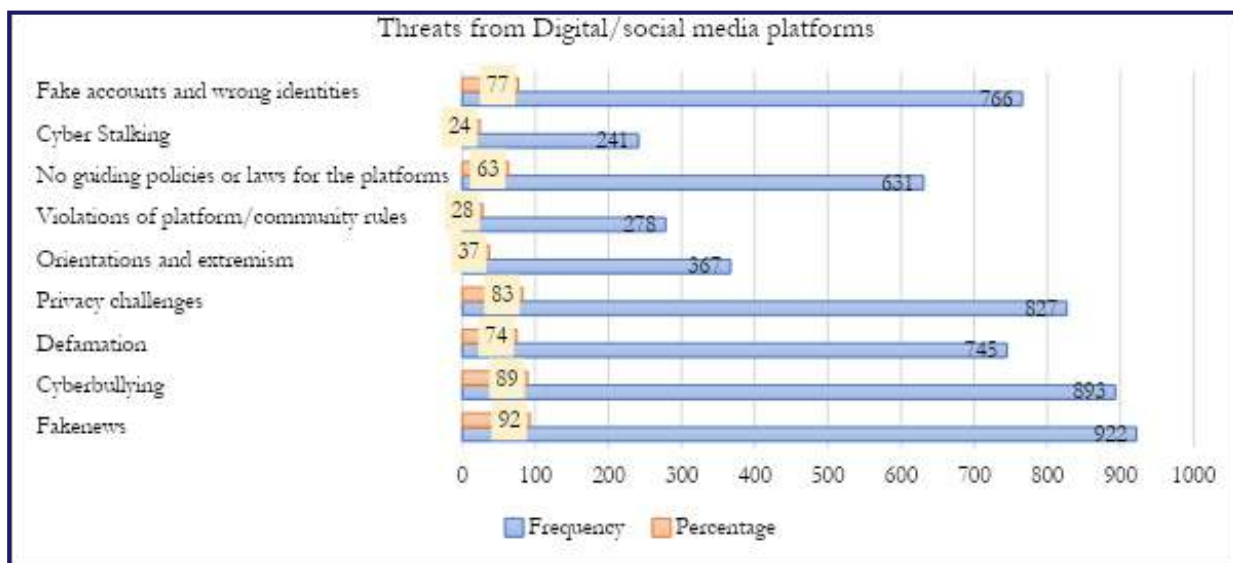


**Figure 4.6. Threats from Digital/social media platforms**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

However, one critical challenge of these platforms was the lack of social/digital media policies or regulations (63%) in the country, which could have addressed some of the other revealed challenges.

According to respondents, Twitter (72%) (Figure 4.6) is a popular platform Ghanaians use. Social media activism, advocacy and the popular use of the hashtag online make many people hang with Twitter. However, it was revealed that bullying and trolling were more rampant on Twitter than on many other platforms.

> Cyberbullying, especially on Twitter, has been crazy in Ghana. They bully, troll, cyberstalk, and use surveillance systems on people they disagree with or want to bring down. They are internet-veiled groups. Since we all now consume media content from these platforms, we have no choice but to be on them. Not many will have the time to be home and watch TV and listen to the radio all the time. Social media has taken over, and it's very mobile for everyone. But we need regulation within that space; this is a national challenge. …KI 1.

Some participants expressed worry that Ghana still does not have specific policies and regulations shaping the practice of the social media space. Some participants opined that since Ghana does not have a well-defined social media policy for effective use of the platform, it can lead to most of these online threats and privacy rights abuse. A well-crafted social media policy can serve as a tool to guide users about responsible online behaviour, privacy concerns, and potential risks.

With the higher penetration of the internet and the use of social media, a regulatory regime will likely enhance a better digital landscape. Respondents believe the rapid spread of false information, which leads to the dissemination of fake news and creates conflict and disagreement in Ghana, stems largely from social media.

### Digital/social media regulations

There should be a coherent policy and regulation shaping how we manage and use social and digital media/technologies in this country. Sadly, we don't have. Hmm. It seems there are existing laws that we can rely on to guide misbehaviour and breaking the laws. For example, cybersecurity laws, data sharing laws, national identification laws, libel and sedition laws, copyright laws, and many others that I don't even exist to protect us as citizens and that guide social and digital media, too, in my opinion…. Again, I remember in Ghana. If you do share revenge porn, you will be arrested and jailed for that. However, what about hate speech? what about false accusations of witchcraft? I know Parliament is working on that. What about promoting Fake News? And many other things that we need…KI…..1

This has resulted in the spread of several fact-checking initiatives and approaches to build credibility and trust for our information sources, including institutions and consumers. Over the period from 2016, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) led the overhaul of fact-checking the media, government, social commentators, etc.

'People are now looking into the faces of the political figures and saying to them that what they said is false. You see somebody having his or her show of Johnny's Bite or Benjamin Akapko's blunt thought. This one's address or this one's specifically looking at claims politicians have made and trying to address it. So, the fact-checking processes are at that mushrooming stage where it is still picking up. Of course, also on the back of training workshops that we keep organising, introducing journalists to the concept of fact-checking, the tools and verification processes, it is helping'……KI 8.

A key question to an informant on the credibility and validity of fact-checking processes revealed that several processes are followed to fact-check content.

Normally, we start from the source of the information to ascertain the authenticity or otherwise. The source can be from state institutions like Parliament, Ministry of Finance or Bank of Ghana, Ghana Education Service, Associations or groups, policy documents, political party campaign promises, budget statements, the Auditor General, Civil Society, etc. We sometimes even move further to check with the development partners (World Bank, UN, WHO, FAO, UNDP, etc.) Depending on the content, we check literature and webpages. We check the dates, the credibility of the authors, Photoshop tendencies with images, inconsistencies, etc., the nature of the content and the truth it attempts to establish, among other things. We also rely on experts to offer opinions on the content we fact-check. All these should help us determine if the content is false or true, but public awareness and literacy are key…KI 8

If the professionalism preached is adhered to by practitioners in the industry and regulated by industry watchers, including the professional associations, the margins of misinformation and general disinformation disorder will drastically reduce, though social media is serving as the quick purveyors of fake news and misinformation.

For the traditional media houses, respondents (80%) in Table 4.5 revealed that they follow the journalism ethical standards and that most of them follow the ethical codes of the GJA, The bloggers and social media content generators, on the other hand, argue that following strictly the ethical codes could be counterproductive to their sustainability. They note that:

**Table 4.5. Application of Journalistic ethical codes**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 804 | 80 |
| No | 109 | 11 |
| Not sure | 88 | 9 |
| Total | | 100 |

**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

The use of clickbait approaches, misleading headlines, sensational content, and other tactics to attract traffic to their blogs/websites is a common strategy employed by some content creators, including bloggers. These practices can erode the credibility and trustworthiness of a blog and the news content.

"For us bloggers and many of the upcoming websites, we all use the clickbait approach and misleading headlines to direct traffic to our sites. Sensational heading, adult or revealing content heading, pushing rumours that may not be true, a shortcut to rich information, gaming and other human-interest stories and people will rush to click to know. If we strictly follow the

ethical guidelines of the GJA, most Ghanaians will not visit our sites because Ghanaians like these headlines we give them…laughs. Our content expires quickly, so we are fast to publish before others"….KII…..4

Most of these bloggers have the misconception that the use of ethical guidelines and practices is particularly necessary for those who engage in political stories and not for entrainment and lifestyle blogging.

"I focus on celebrity, entertainment, and sports content. We don't do politics, so we are not in trouble. Some of our colleagues are into politics and development"…. KII…..4

Some of the bloggers see belonging to associations like Blogging Ghana, where they develop their own rules of best practice and networking, community support and rights of bloggers which can lead to collaborations, partnerships, and the exchange of ideas and improve their businesses.

"We have heard of Blogging Ghana, but some of us are not members yet. But we will join when we grow small and make small money"…. KII…..4

Others also do not see ethical standards as 'universal' to all media work but only guided by their personal beliefs. However, what they are missing is that search engines like Google prioritise content that provides value and richness to their users. Unethical practices and the use of disinformation tactics can lead to high bounce rates or low engagement, which may negatively impact a website's or blog's search engine ranking[15]. It is noted that despite the ethical challenges in the blogging space, as noted above, it has become a relevant source of media to the uncovered or under-represented groups, bringing inclusivity, empowerment to communities of practice, and general democratisation (Gabriel, 2015).

Citizens' and journalists' ability to fact-check the political class and policymakers indicates a progressively informed society with greater media literacy. The study's checks indicate that the number of media houses that now have fact-checking platforms and capacities is encouraging, thus leveraging on the training journalists across the country have had on disinformation. Hence, Ghanaians are gradually being informed to evaluate information sources critically and claims from the media and duty-bearers using digital platforms. Accurate and verified information is essential for citizens to make informed policy decisions on political party offerings, as noted by one of the respondents.

"In articles 1 & 2 of the GJA Code, Ghanaian journalists are "to bear in mind that their audiences" (the public) "have the right to true information and in social responsibility, journalists ought to "collect and disseminate information in all fairness and balance".

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[15]Smith Justine, (2022). Bounce Rates Impact on SEO & Search Rankings. https://www.outerboxdesign.com/search-marketing/search-engine-optimization/bounce-rate-effect-on-search-rankings

Fact-checking helps ensure that the information available to citizens is accurate and reliable and helps prevent the manipulation of information for political gain or evasion of responsibility by party foot soldiers and political commentators.

## 4.2.4. DEVICES USED BY THE MEDIA

Producing and enjoying media content cannot exist without the essential gadgets/devices to enhance the quality assurance process. Popular among these devices, from the respondents' feedback, was the use of the smart phone 824 (82%) (Figure 4.7) in the production, consumption, and distribution of media content. This wider choice by respondents could be attributed to smart phones performing the functions of everything a computer can do and having a strong embedment of high-resolution cameras and their portability and mobility. As of January 2023, the National Communication Authority reported a total number of about 45 million active mobile subscriptions in Ghana, reflecting the use pattern by Ghanaians and the respondents for this study.
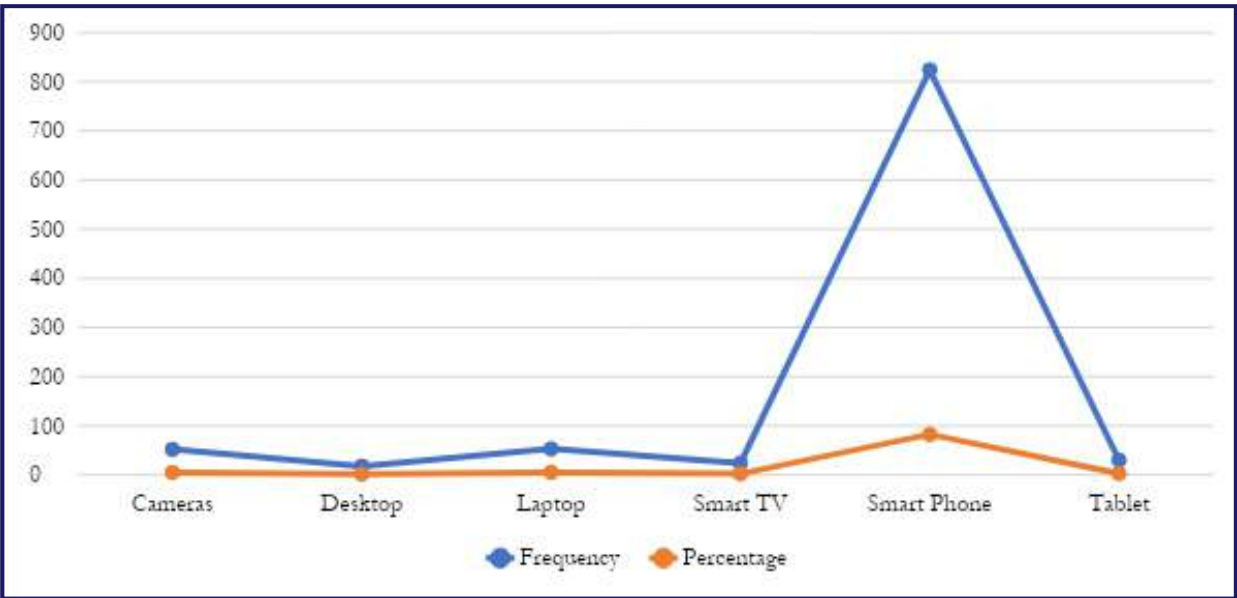


**Figure 4.7. Type of devices respondents use.**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

It can be inferred again that the use of software (such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Procreate and others), picture and video capture, as well as the availability and use of social media applications (WhatsApp and Facebook) on mobile devices, the podcasting opportunity of using microphones, headphones, and other audio interfaces, serves as a strong reason for respondents use or choice.

# 5. BUSINESS MODELS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF MEDIA HOUSES IN GHANA

## Revenue and business models of media houses

### Subscriptions

With the high number of media establishments in Ghana, earning enough revenue to offset operational costs and return on investment to shareholders remains challenging. Over the period, the decline in patronage of the print media, particularly in Ghana, because of the emergence of social/digital media, has had a dire financial impact on many newspapers.
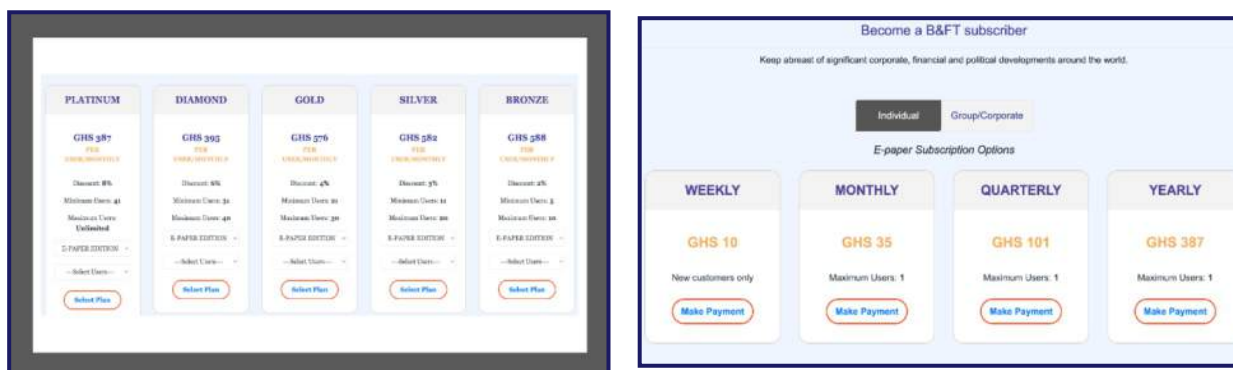


**Figure 5.1: Business and Financial Times Individual and institutional Subscription information**

Some newspapers collapsed, and others have struggled to maintain normal advertising revenues and profitability. Some print media houses have created digital platforms and offered digital subscriptions (Figure 5.1, 2). They maintain active engagement on social media to reach a wider audience, which in turn lead to increased revenue through 'ad placement strategies.'

**Figure 5.2: Business and Financial Times Individual Subscription information**

Similar strategies are employed by radio and television channels. The use of OTT and IoT technologies has made things easy in tapping into the opportunities of the stronger social media platforms in Ghana, where increased engagement of their content means greater opportunity for advertising revenues for the media houses through 'digital ad placement.' In addition, some TV and radio stations are found on the GoTV and DSTV platforms, enhancing their subscription revenue opportunities.
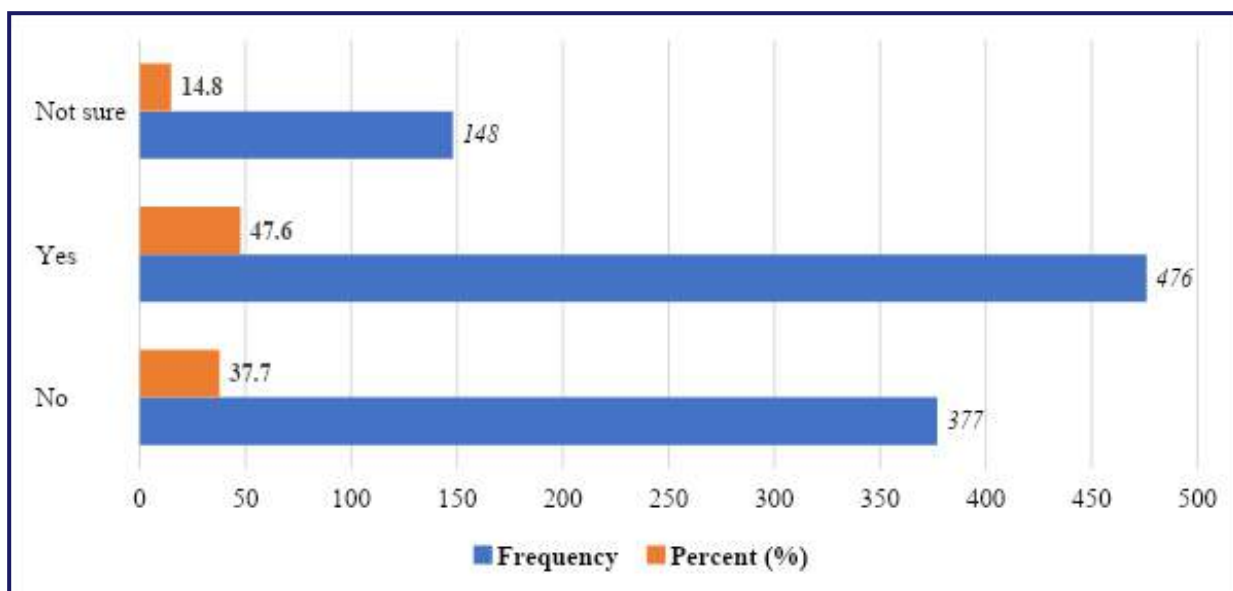


**Figure 5.3. Do you subscribe to paid media?**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

Respondents (48%)indicated that they subscribe to paid media for a variety of rich content provided. With this response, if the Ghanaian media business models are well-fashioned,like the DSTV and GOTV platforms, Ghanaians will be ready to subscribe and pay for the content directly, which can improve their revenue streams and sustainability. Yeboah-Banin and Adjin-Tettey (2023) revealed in their study that media organisations could cater to other cost elements, such as overheads, through subscriptions and online/digital monetisation.

## Social media monetisation

The study's findings highlight the potential for media houses to increase revenue through active engagement on social media and the exploration of digital business model. Active engagement on social media platforms can increase the reach of media content, attracting a larger audience for advertisers. Media houses can explore various monetization strategies, such as sponsored content, native advertising, and partnerships with brands to generate additional revenue. The recommendation to consider digital business models aligns with the changing landscape of media consumption including the readiness to pay for media content (Figure 5.3). Media houses should explore and adopt digital strategies, including online subscriptions, premium content offerings, and digital advertising, to diversify revenue streams and adapt to evolving consumer preferences.

The findings reveal that some media houses had an active dialogical and good content engagement online, leading tothe audience'interest in their subscription. In this regard, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, official Webpages and Twitter emerged as popular platforms for media houses to drive online revenues (Figure 5.4). Some of the popular media houses are verified and can easily make money through consistent content creation, influencer marketing (sponsored posts), super follows[16], and enabling ads on partner programs and endorsements.
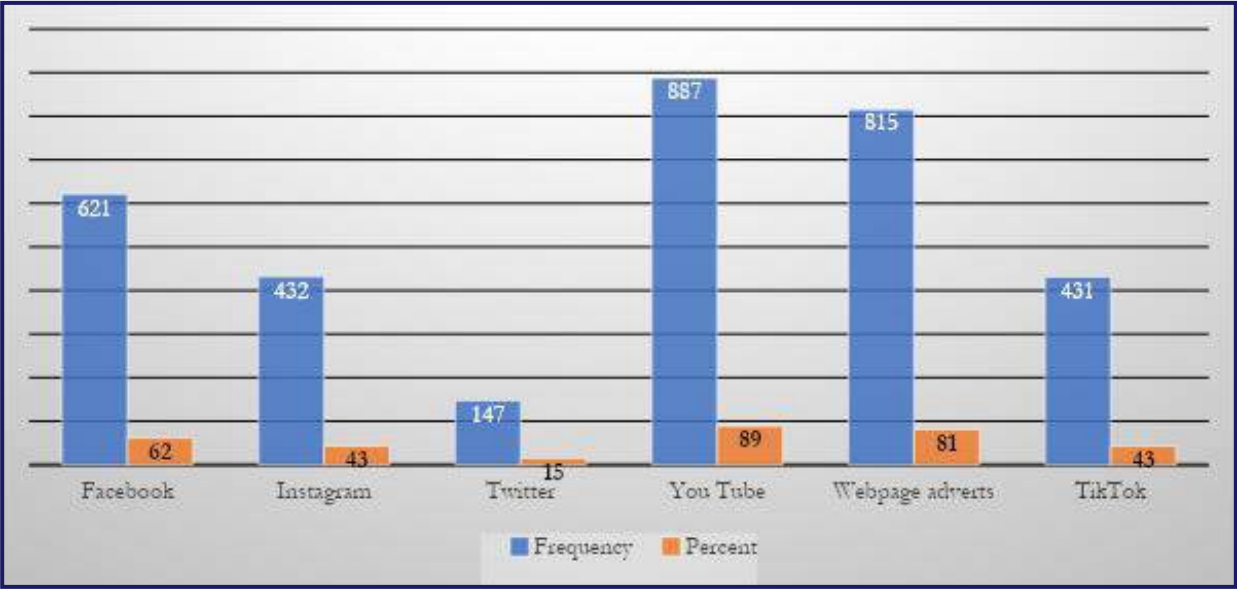


**Figure 5.4. Popular online/social media platforms for revenue generation**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

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[16]A Super Follow is a feature, which allows a subscriber/follower to access some exclusive content from the pages they follow for monthly subscriptions.

A key informant shared the progress and effort made by their social media team towards increasing their revenues as a media house, aside from the mainstream advertisements and gains from broadcasting rights. Hence, social media has some good low-hanging fruit benefits to them.

> Our social media unit now provides us with a good amount of revenue from our online engagements. The social media and sports teams are using online platforms well to drive our revenues. We are using the social platform to push for the payments of TV licences, and the signs are encouraging. The team has solicited the support of popular media influencers, which is helping. ….KI 12

However, respondents revealed that the core revenue sources for their media houses are traditional through marketing advertisements and projects/grants on core issues. Some key industry players revealed that not much is being made as profit from the media operations. Because of this poor revenue stream for the industry, most journalists are not paid well in Ghana. Apart from the media houses in Accra, whose revenue drives are better, the rest of the country and the peri-urban-rural areas have dire challenges in generating the required revenues to sustain their operations. This confirms the Ghanaian Media Report by UG & MFWA on the country's poor structural revenue stream system. Generally, this threatens media operations in Ghana as the sustainability effort is weak.

> "We observe that the media's financial stance is wobbly and weak, especially with the advent of digital platforms controlled bythe tech giants. These tech giants, Google, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and the like, have taken over the adverts from the media houses. So, the media's financial sustainability stands weak, affecting its sustainability.

The perception among respondents that the high cost of managing a media house leads to conglomeration reflects a common challenge in the media industry. Several factors contribute to the high operational costs of media houses, and these challenges can impact their operational and financial sustainability.

### A respondent noted that:
> "The other challenge with media sustainability is that where people canno keep and manage the license, they sell it to the politically exposed people or the existing better media houses with the money to acquire it. So, we see that even at the NCA point, they do not see who is taking over because, as far as the argument is, the conglomeration is not reflecting on their sheets. So yes, media sustainability in Ghana is not guaranteed and is very vulnerable…." KI 8

Another hindrance to media sustainability, the study observes, is the weak technological and strong digital infrastructure to support their digital content production and distribution. Media houses need to invest in modern technologies, content management systems, and digital distribution platforms to stay competitive in the digital era.

Also, the media market size and the saturation with more media houses pose a challenge to their advertising and other revenue drives. Due to the population and media density mismatch, there is evidence of oversupply, where the supply of media content overly outstrips the demand from the consumption of media content. This offers heated competition to the very small market available for the industry in Ghana, which presents the problem of watering down professionalism to meet demand:

> "The market is too small and even smaller in other parts of Ghana except Accra. We can talk of only a few model stations in the country, but generally, the viability of the media as business models with professional standards is not there at all…" KI 1

This perception that the media market is small, especially outside of Accra, reflects a common challenge in many countries where media concentration is often centred in major urban areas (Asare, 2009).Media outlets in smaller markets may explore collaborations and partnerships to pool resources, share content, and or adopt the conglomeration approach to deal with the challenge.

## Business diversification

Due to the dwindling nature of the revenue streams of the media in Ghana, especially due to the impact of COVID-19 and the current strained economic situation in Ghana, the expansion and diversification efforts of the media platforms appeared to support their operations. Respondents (Figure 5.5) revealed that most of the media houses were into other business setups aside from the core media activities. The diversification appeared to be linked to the ownership structure of the media. Respondents claim that the revenues from the other investments are often used to support the functioning of their organisational activities.
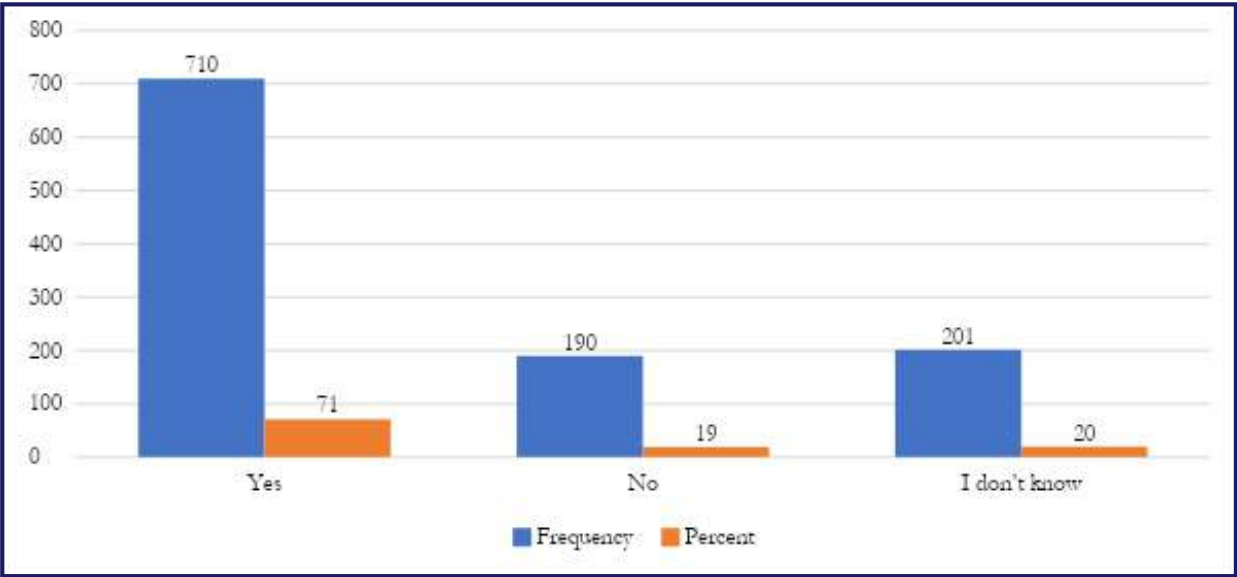


**Figure 5.5. Yes or No responses on whether media organisations diversify into other businesses.**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

Depending on the respondents' organisation, they enumerated areas besides the media businesses (radio, television, PR consulting mix) they engage in, including pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, water, beverages, financial and insurance sectors, etc. These confirm Yeboah-Banin and Adjin-Tettey's (2023) position that event organising and management, facility rentals and general conglomeration are part of Ghana's diversification mix of media houses.

> "They are just buying the platforms because they will use them to market their products. Finish. Despite (water, salt and other media platforms), Angel (angel products), Tobinco group (several media platforms, pharmaceuticals, financial insurance), EIB group (insurance, bank/financial and other media platforms), Multimedia (multi-tv and many other media platforms), Zeera group (many media platforms, agriculture, insurance, banks, manufacturing etc.), Might group (many media platforms, transportation, etc.) …..KI 8

These revelations by this respondent indicate a close nexus between the business community and the media. Thus, it is fair to infer that the business community invests in the media to promote their businesses first and foremost and not necessarily to contribute to the deepening process of accountability and democratic governance through ethical and standard broadcast journalism. For the political owners, a key informant had this to say.

They do not look at the news and media content or any accountability processes with an objective or fair lens. They set it up for political propaganda promotion purposes rather than to make money. It is about protecting political regimes if they are in power, speaking for the people when they are in opposition, and making governments unpopular. This is not a good attribute and decent character of the media and the plurality we ask for, but it is the reality across the country. I can assume that majority of the Members of parliament are having radio stations…KI 14

## Membership and sustainability

Ethical conduct and good practices, lobbying, capacity building, networking, positive competition, sharing ideas and practitioner collectivism are some benefits of professional associations (self-regulators). Adapting and adhering to the ethics of both state regulators as enshrined in the constitutional provisions (chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution) and the self-regulation of the media fraternity are critical to the standard and professional practice of the media in Ghana. It is important to note that the sustainability of the media business goes beyond the financial issues to include many other sectors of the media performance. Media sustainability arguments must expand to important areas like human resource retention, knowledge co-creation and support, professionalism and standards, fair and equitable regulations and authorisations, and inclusiveness. These are fundamental to the sustainability of the sector. Membership to State and non-state actors such as the NMC, NCA, GJA, GIBA, PRINPAG, IPR-Ghana, and AAG, Internet Service Providers and Blogging Ghana are central in shaping the operations and practices of all stakeholders in the sector.

"Our membership is open to all authorised and operational non-state-owned, private, and independent organisations nationwide. It is encouraging, but it is hoped that the private stations of the 700 plus radio and 140 plus television stations will all come on board for us to work together, be strong, push for our welfare and provide better self-regulatory support to members…." KI 9

Thus, the ethical guidelines and codes by these bodies/groups mean that capacities, professionalism, morals, the rule of law, truth, fairness, culture, guided freedoms, and standards are followed by members. However, not all actors and practitioners in the field are part of these bodies (especially the self-regulators), as noted in the early sections by some players in the blogging subsector. The professional associations keep encouraging media houses to join the fraternities for capacity development and sustainable media environment.

"We have given our members capacity development training on many topics, including businesses, sustainability, welfare issues, ethics, gate keeping, industry policy information and resources. So, the media houses who are not part, we encourage them to join…" KI 9

A stronger and sustainable media environment also requires training centres and educational institutions that feed into it. Currently, several communication and journalism training schools exist in Ghana (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1. List of Postgraduate communication programmes from public Universities**

| No | University/Institution | Programme |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | University of Media and Communication Studies | MA Media Management |
| | | MA Development Communication |
| | | MA in Public Relations |
| | | MA Journalism |
| 2 | University of Ghana (UG) | MA/MPhil/PhD Information Studies |
| | | MA/MPhil/PhD Communication Studies |
| 3 | University for Development Studies (UDS) | MA/MPhil/PhD Social Change Communication |
| 4 | University of Education, Winneba (UEW) | MA/MPhil/PhD Communication and Media Studies |
| 5 | Simon DiedongDombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) | MPhil Development Communication |
| 6 | University of Cape Coast (UCC) | MA/MPhil Communications in Oil and Gas Management |
| 7 | University for Professional Studies (UPSA) | MA Brands and Communications |
| 8 | Other Private Institutions | |

Most of the stakeholders engaged revealed that the decent work principles espoused by the labour laws (decent pay income, good health insurance, paid leave, pension contribution, good work environment, open to joining a labour union, etc.) are largely not part of the conditions offered by most of the media houses. Non-payment of pension contributions and salary arrears directly affects employees' financial well-being. This can lead to dissatisfaction, demotivation, and a higher likelihood of staff turnover, particularly among high-performing individuals. Addressing the sustainability challenge of the media related to employee welfare requires a holistic approach that

encompasses financial management, communication, legal compliance, and a commitment to ethical and fair labour practices.

**A key informant interviewee revealed that:**

> Sir, most of us are owed salaries for several months and our social security is unpaid. Most of us are paid 750 Ghana cedis and lower, and management will always complain of lack of funds. Most of us must do part-time jobs to support ourselves and not rely on this pittance. Our colleagues make enough revenue in some of the stations, but the owners will never pay them decent wages. We know for Accra, conditions are better for our colleagues as they are paid well, here in the regions and the North, particularly it is worse…..K 1 13

The challenge from this discourse is the accountability role of practitioners when their own welfare issues and basic needs are not catered for. It remains impossible to push for a responsible and accountable political class with the media as gatekeepers and watchdogs when they are hungry. In a strong, media-fluid environment, it becomes a conduit and purveying channel through which the ideals of democracy and good governance are practised and achieved on behalf of the social and economic good of the people.

# 6.EMERGING THREATS POSED BY EXPANDING INTERNET USE

## Media Literacy and Governance

Media literacy and governance are two interconnected concepts that play crucial roles in Ghana because of the fast-evolving media environment, digital technologies and the spread of fake news and disinformation in the media space. In a democracy, when individuals can analyse and assess media content, they are better equipped to participate and critically contribute to public debates, make informed decisions, and hold local and national duty-bearers accountable.

The media shapes how we think and on issues we think about through the media and public agenda setting. As an important stakeholder, they determine the state of a country through the issues being discussed on the airwaves and online. By serving as a platform for information dissemination, Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo and Lucky Emeka Umejei (2023) argued that citizens are educated, informed, entertained and work towards a national agenda. Respondents revealed that the media is very influential (78.7%) in shaping our thoughts and serving as society's watchdog.

**Table 6.1. Media and Influence**

| How influential is the media | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not all influential | 41 | 4.1 |
| Not very influential | 50 | 5 |
| Somewhat influential | 122 | 12.2 |
| Very influential | 788 | 78.7 |
| **Total** | **1001** | **100** |
| **Media Shaping public opinion** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Not very influential | 99 | 9.9 |

| Somewhat influential | 122 | 12.2 |
| Very influential | 780 | 77.9 |
| Total | 1001 | 100 |
| How important is media outlets | Frequency | Percentage |
| Not all important | 16 | 1.6 |
| Not very important | 30 | 3 |
| Somewhat | 156 | 15.6 |
| Very important | 799 | 79.8 |
| Total | 1001 | 100 |

Source: (Research Data, 2023)

Protecting media freedom, promoting accountability, and responding responsibly to threats from the internet remain key. Governments and regulatory bodies often establish frameworks (NCA and NMC) to ensure that media content is accurate, fair, and free from harmful influence, balance reportage, and protect the public interest. These bodies' main role is to shape the governance system and promote media pluralism, which ensures a diverse range of stances and varied sources of information. This prevents media monopolies and encourages a healthy and inclusive exchange of ideas and representation.

## Professionalism Ethics, Training and Freedom of Speech

Over the last few years, Ghana's press freedom index dropped, which citizens attributed to media gagging, censoring, and threats to practitioners when they are critical of the government. Effective governance supports the freedom of the press and safeguards journalists' ability to report without undue interference or censorship, allowing for informed citizens and a vibrant public discourse. Others also argued that irresponsible journalism is on the rise in Ghana due to the influx of social media and the weak state of Ghana's media regulation.

Sometimes, you see the excesses of some of our colleague journalists when they insult and call politicians all manner of names. That's not journalism. Focus on the issues. I don't want to mention names, but most of our colleagues are very irresponsible and unethical on the Accra platforms and even in the regions. Freedom must be measured and not total freedom, as it comes with costs and consequences. It is not fair….KI 14.

GJA, IPR, AAG, GIBA, and PRINPAG, including the National Media Commission (NMC) and the National Communication Authority (NCA), have all developed various guidelines and codes to guide the media and the internet practice. In the views of Merrill (2011), a journalist from the perspective of deontological ethics must conform to the formal set of rules, codes, or principles set out. Anything contrary means that the codes have been violated.

**Table 6.2 Do you apply some ethical codes or guidelines in your content development?**

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| No | 104 | 10.4 |
| Not sure | 249 | 24.9 |
| Yes | 633 | 63.3 |
| Total | 1000 | 100 |

Source: (Research Data, 2023)

Journalism is taught in the classroom or as an "apprenticeship" system on the job through knowledge transfer system from the senior media practitioners to the junior ones through mentorship. This is the period where professionalism and standard practices are learned. When this practice approach is learned, it helps media houses develop better newsroom and workplace efficiency, profitability, and credibility (UNESCO, 2018).

> They all did the apprenticeship model and transitioned into the traditional media space. Maybe some of them later went on to get a master's degree in journalism, but they went out and were able to do that. It's not because they were getting degrees in political science that they were able to be good journalists. Suppose you take Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, Addo Junior, Bernard Avle, Komla Dumor, Kwame Sefa Kayi, and Abdul Hayi-Moomen. All of them do not have any journalism background. But they've been able to do well. I can give you examples of people with a journalism background who do terrible journalism…KI 1
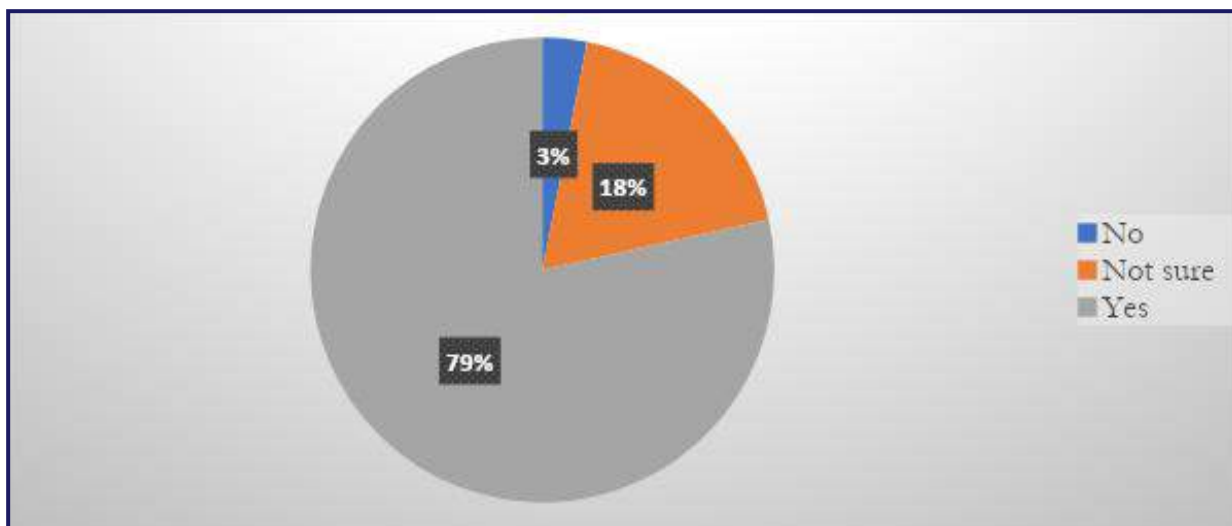
**Figure 6.1. Should the Media be regulated?**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

The data shows (79%) (Figure 6.1) that there should be some form of ethical regulation and standards through a guided broadcasting law put together by all media stakeholders and the government. The current regulatory environment is viewed to be weak due to the absence of a broadcast law that would help guide how broadcasting should be managed and regulated in the country.[17] The deductive inference from this response to media regulation could be on responsible content production, which the NMC is mandated to oversee. The prevalence of fake news, propaganda, hate speech, ethnic bigotry, misogyny, violence, and extreme ideologies practised by some journalists are indeed significant challenges that impact the credibility of the media and can have adverse effects on Ghanaian society. Balancing the need for free speech with responsible journalism is crucial.

Some key informants suggested that the country needs a special body or regulator for social media and legacy media to check on the content and the authorisation regime simultaneously for public and private media houses rather than the existing public sphere architecture. A support system of regulation to the professional groups (GJA, GIBA, IPR, etc.) that allows practitioners with accredited membership to operate on all media spectrums (public, private, community, commercial, etc.) can filter and check excesses and unethical practices on all media platforms for both English and the local languages.

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[17]Gadzekpo, A. (2016). Media Scoping Study.
https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/starghana-public/PDFs/Manuals-Strategies-Frameworks/STAR-Ghana_Media+Scoping+Study.pdf

When we even talk about professional journalism, we exclude an entire population of people, like the Akan language journalist, the Dagbani language journalist or the Ga and Ewe language journalists, many of whom did not attend journalism school. Many of them, even if they did go to journalism school, would still have to learn something beyond what they are taught because what they need to know is not all captured in the curriculum we have as it is, especially in the local language….. KI 1.

The default idea has been that most of our local language practitioners are not professionals compared to their colleagues broadcasting in English. However, aside from the language serving as the differentiator, every other approach to ethical journalism is viewed the same. In principle, decolonised ethical and standard broadcasting guidance in all regions with linguistic diversity for local community engagement and development is crucial. Outside of Accra, most of the daily broadcasts of programmes are done in the local languages, which adds to the inclusivity, representations, and cultural relevance. The community radios and all the rural and peri-urban networks use the local languages.

The use of local languages in media (Figure 6.2), especially in areas of high linguistic diversity, is important for effective communication and community engagement. In summary, ethics in broadcasting and the use of local languages are crucial considerations for responsible and effective media practices. Ethical broadcasting ensures that media content is credible, balanced, and serves the public interest. Using local languages in media enhances communication, inclusivity, and cultural relevance, fostering connections between media outlets and their diverse audiences.
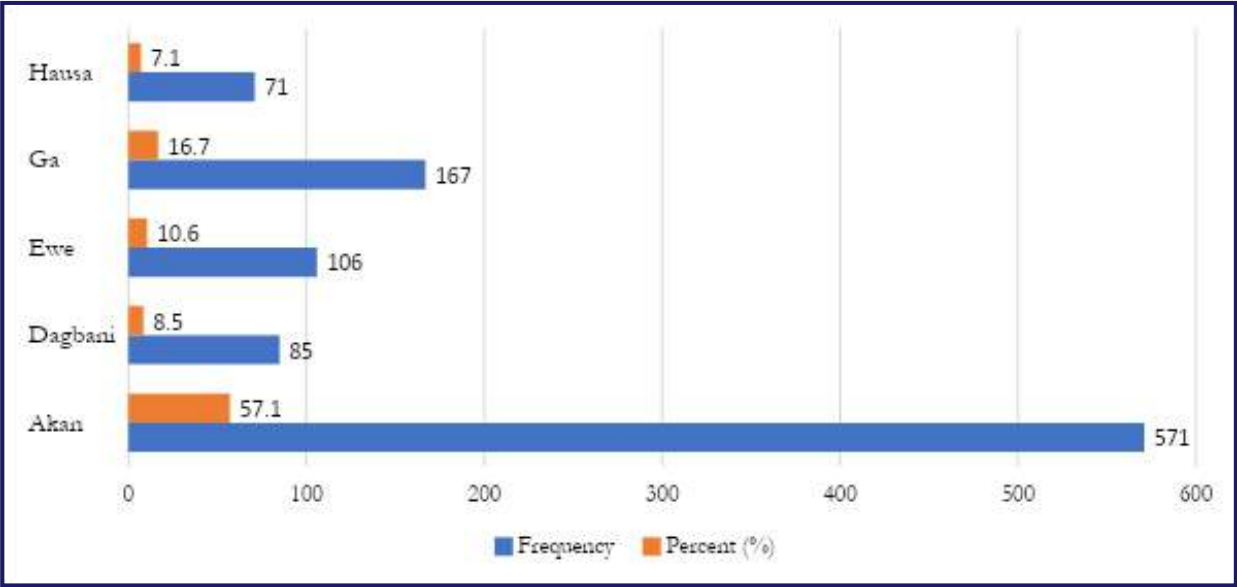


**Figure 6.2. Local Languages Used with the Audience**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

Sensationalism and the pressure to break news quickly may lead to insufficient fact-checking and verification processes, thus affecting the quality of journalism (Markowitz et al 2023). Many of the respondents (46%) in (Figure 6.3) claim that the economy, business, and the market were the popular topics and content they produced, followed by community and social development (20%) before politics (18%). However, whilst agreeing this is the reality, the form and pattern of media discourse around these critical development issues often take partisan and ideological lines. Hence, everything in the media space of politics is discussed by political actors rather than professionals with subject matter knowledge.



**Figure 6.3. Popular Media Content**
**Source: (Research Data, 2023)**

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Conclusion

The media environment characterised in both public and private spaces remains vibrant in Ghana, considering the plurality levels, number of authorisations, the spread in the 16 regions, the number of newspapers and blog pages, and the 6.60 million social media users from the 23.05 million internet users (Digital 2023).
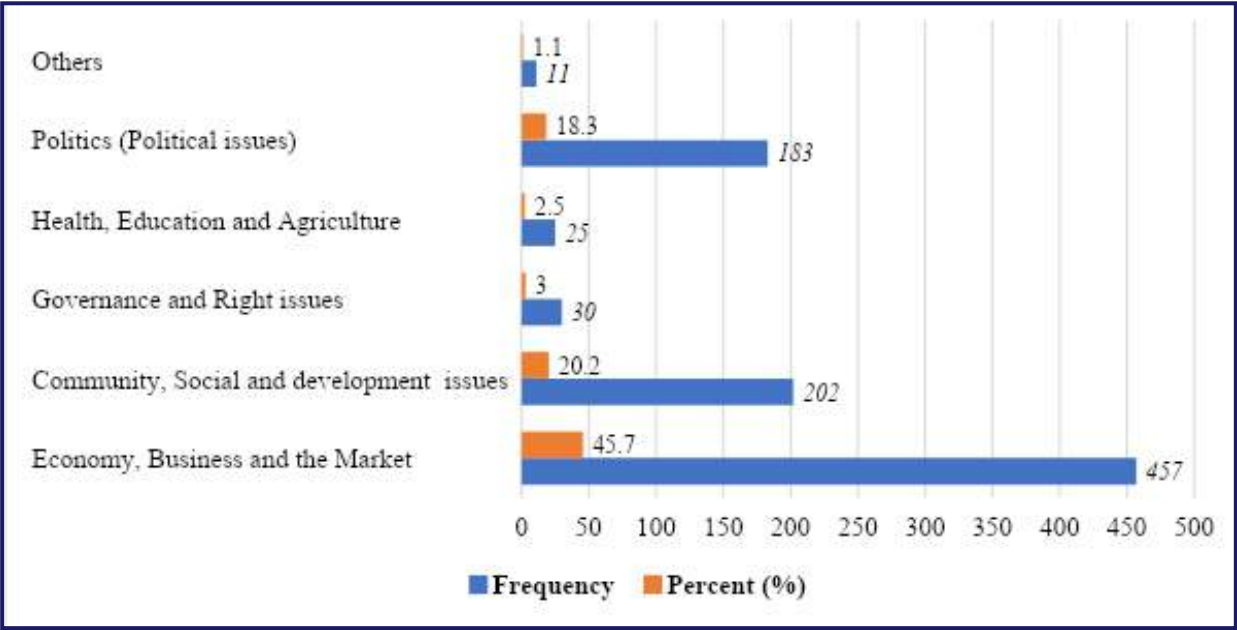
The conventional culture by governments over the past years, from 1992 till now, has seen a drastic change from the era of libel laws and seditions to a more pronounced and free media supported by chapter 12 of the 1992 constitution. The culture of tolerance within the media sphere served as a fertile spot for non-censured broadcasts. They further pushed for media liberation and deregulation in the early democratic build-up, all of which assisted in consolidating the gains of plural media in Ghana.

## The study summarized the following conclusions;

- The findings revealed that there is a wider gender disparity in the use of all the social media platforms in Ghana. These differences between the studies are attributed to data and mobile device costs, access to these platforms, and gender social roles. It further revealed that most of the female media practitioners are not in leadership positions.

- The analogue system of broadcasting using digital technologies from terrestrial transmitters and received by antennas installed on television sets through to current Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) broadcast, indicates the evolving pattern of Ghana's broadcasting and media industry.

- The NCA gives more authorisations to Ghanaians to serve diversity and even representation. However, the study found that most authorisations are offered to private business groups, largely politicians and ideologically aligned businesses and companies. These cross-media ownership types can have implications for the diversity and plurality of content we consume and promote exclusions and important representations from most marginal groups, which has the potential for a single media stand to influence public opinion across different platforms.

- The study found that a few of the existing big media houses are on the drive of conglomeration to capture the media market share in Ghana.

- Most media houses invest more in the media space or diversify into other areas such as manufacturing, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, banking and finance, insurance, etc.

- With the higher penetration state of the internet in Ghana, the dependency on digital technologies and social media for news, information, education, and general media content has been more compelling than before.

- One critical challenge of these platforms' study observed is the lack of social/digital media policies or regulations (63%) in the country, which could have addressed some of the other revealed challenges.

- Citizens, journalists, and media houses' ability to fact-check the political class and policymakers indicates a progressively informed society with greater media literacy.

- Most media houses now are improving their fact-checking systems as part of their gatekeeping and editorial policies.

- Ghanaians surveyed revealed that Twitter was the best platform for social media activism, advocacy, and the popular use of online hash tags, and topping as the platform with more bullying, threats, and trolling people.

- According to the National Communications Authority, about 45 million active mobile phones are used in Ghana. This study reveals that Ghanaians use smart mobile phones (82%) to access media content, consume, and distribute general telecommunication services.

- Media subscription is an emerging form of revenue diversification by media in Ghana. The print media, which has seen a significant fold-up in the industry, are using the subscription model. The use of OTT and IoT technologies has made it easy to tap into the opportunities of the stronger social media platforms in Ghana. In particular, GoTV, DSTV, Showmax Ghana, StarTimes and HD+ offer subscription services for many other stations on their platforms.

- Most participants believe that the media's financial sustainability is shaky and weak and thus affects the welfare of practitioners working. Most of the top media houses are now making monetised revenues from YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

- The study found that the conglomeration of the Ghanaian media through the multiple authorisations is alarming. It has significant implications for journalism, the media landscape and how information is shared. Ownership and control of the media market share

remain limited to a few media houses (Multimedia, Despite, Angel, EIB, GBC, Media General, Omni, Class, etc.). These media houses, which are few and have expanded, influence the content, agenda, and narratives for consumers in Ghana. Beyond that, when conglomerates form, large corporations or conglomerates acquire media properties like newspapers, TV stations, radio stations, digital media outlets, audience plurality of perspectives and representation from all Ghanaians at the social and cultural level suffers. These media houses leverage their media outlets to promote their content and products across platforms in all 16 regions of the country. For instance, water, medicine, and creams produced by Tobinco or Angel Group receive advertising on their TV channels and in their newspapers, resulting in a collaborative effect that positively impacts the corporation's overall business. However, advertising on other bigger platforms other than theirs can be more profitable than their own smaller platforms or network.

- It revealed that some practitioners of various associations, including NMC, NCA, GJA, GIBA, PRINPAG, IPR-Ghana, AAG, Internet Service Providers and Blogging Ghana, produce content within the ethical professional standards. According to some respondents, others appeared irresponsible for clickbait and monetised traffic, fame, and excitement to break the news.

- More educational institutions are being established to train journalists and other media practitioners, and Ghanaian audiences are progressively becoming media literate.

## Recommendations

From the findings and discussions, the study makes the following recommendations:

vi.  There must be a specific regulatory framework (media and broadcasting law and a regulatory commission) shaping the media practice in Ghana to improve the standards, ethics, rights and content production. These regulations should address content moderation, privacy, data security, and online harassment. The framework/ guidelines must guide content moderation, considering the right to freedom of expression and speech from the 1992 constitution while addressing harmful and illegal content.

vii.  The government must develop a social media policy linked to the media and broadcasting law to allow for the optimal use of digital platforms. This will help curb the threats, violence and trolls purveyed by users of social media.

viii.  There must be a coordinated operational process of working together by these state agencies (the Data Protection Commission, the National Identification Authority (NIA), the Right to Information Commission, the Cybersecurity Authority, and The Ghana Police Service) to help address the disinformation challenge, online harassments and strengthen the fact-checking system by all media houses.

ix.     Through the NCA, the government must review the authorisation policy by slowing down the number of frequency authorisations for effective regulation of the frequencies.

x.      Aside from that, the practice of issuing authorisations to politically exposed or political party sympathizers, and businesses linked to governments of the day has to be discouraged, if not stopped, to allow for fairness and inclusiveness of all eligible Ghanaians to have access to the frequencies.

xi.     Media companies must actively push for a greater social media presence for ethical and efficient monetisation of their digital platforms. The Internet of Things (IoT) and over-the-top technologies (OTT) support have to be used to benefit more on the digital monetisation drive whilst being conscious of digital rights.

xii.    To reduce the effects of the internet and general media threats, there must be clear-cut policies and strategies to address hate speech, extremism and online harassment, with consequences for users and beneficiaries who practice it.

xiii.   Media houses must improve the welfare support system (improved wages, health cover, education) for their employees to improve the standards of practice.

xiv.    Before engaging media practitioners, media houses must insist on the membership of potential employees with self-regulatory associations (GJA, IPR, AAG, and Blogging Ghana). This can support the existing standards of the industry.

xv.     Improving digital literacy through collaboration between training institutions like the Communication Educators Association of Ghana (CEAG), the Ministry of Information (MOI), and the media houses will be ideal and appropriate.

xvi.    Gender inclusiveness in all media spaces and chain management levels must be encouraged. Women's voices must be reflected in the media engagement processes, discussing issues on air and authorizations.

xvii.   Encouraging the use of crowd funding platforms or direct patronage to fund media operations and public-centred development programmes must be the new area of focus.

xviii.  For sustainability, the subscription and the pay wall approach for the print media should be encouraged.

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# *APPENDICES*

## CDD MEDIA, INTERNET AND GOVERNANCE RESEARCH
### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**GENERAL INFORMATION**
1. Gender
   - o Female
   - o Male

2. Educational level
   - o Basic (secondary level)
   - o Diploma and Degree
   - o Postgraduate

- Job Responsibilities
  - o Reporters
  - o Editors
  - o Presenters
  - o Media/communication/PR training related.
  - o Governance related roles
  - o Programmes in democracy and right base roles
  - o Advocacy roles
  - o Organizational owners
  - o Managers/management roles
  - o Self-Regulated Associations roles
  - o State-regulated roles
  - o Board member role functions

- Job category
  - o Full time employed.
  - o Part-time
  - o Self-employed
  - o Freelance

3. Category
   - o Radio
   - o Television

- o Print
- o Social media
- o Online
- o Blogging
- o Telecom
- o CSO
- o Public Sector
- o Development partner/international

4. License category
   - o Commercial
   - o Campus
   - o Community
   - o Public
   5. Coverage
   - o Community
   - o District
   - o Regional
   - o National
   - o Online
   6. Ownership…………………………………………..
   - o Organization (companies)
   - o Group
   - o Individuals

5. Ownership categories
   - o Political
   - o Religious
   - o Private Businesses
   - o Global/international
   - o  The State/Public
   8. Audience…………………………………………..
   - o Local language…………..
   - o Urban (English)
   - o Online
   - o Social media

**Why these audiences?**
…………………….
6. Media Content
   - o Economic/finance
   - o Political
   - o Business and market

  o  Community and Social
  o  Governance and right issues
  o  Health, education, and agriculture
  o  Others…………………………………….

7. Staff and Gender Composition……………………………………….
   Male…………….
   Female……………

8. Gatekeeping rules………………………………………….

9. Welfare protection for staff……………………………………….
  o  Welfare policy
  o  Protective equipment/gears
  o  Not available
  o  Not sure

10. Editorial and gatekeeping policy
  o  Yes
  o  No
  o  Not sure

11. Code of ethics for the organization (multiple selections allowed)
  o  Use of the GJA Code of Ethics
  o  NMA and NCA guides
  o  Organizational ethical guidelines
  o  Others
  o  Not available

12. How do you apply the GJA code of ethics in your duty?.........................

13. Staff professional memberships
  o  GJA
  o  GIBA
  o  IPR-Ghana
  o  AAG
  o  BloggingGhana
  o  Others……………………………………………………….

14. Social media handles of the organization
  o  Facebook
  o  Twitter
  o  Instagram

     o YouTube
     o LinkedIn
     o Snapchat
     o Tiktok
     o Others…………………………………………………………………..

15. Management structure……………………………………………………………..
     o Reporting structure exists (HR, Accounts, Research, Sustainability, Market/sales/events, Newsroom, Editor, technical production, transport, legal etc.).
     o Reporting structure does not exist.
     o I don't know.

16. Corporate governance (multiple choice allowed)
     o There exist a governing council/Board/Trustees
     o Corporate governance policy
     o No existing policy
     o I am not sure

17. Corporate social responsibility of the organization (multiple choice allowed)
     o Corporate social responsibility policy
     o Sustainability policy
     o Community and external relations engagement office
     o None existing.
     o I am not sure

18. Conflict of interest of members
     o Conflict of interest policy/guide exists.
     o Ethical code/guide
     o Policy does not exist
     o I don't know

## BUSINESS MODELS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF MEDIA HOUSE

1. Which business model does your media house operate? (multiple choices allowed)
     ● Subscription
     ● Leasing and Franchising
     ● Freemium
     ● Paywall
     ● Membership
     ● Advertising
     ● Classified
     ● Donations

- Transactional
- Merchandise
- Crowd funding
- Online sales
- Event organising
- Commission based
- Diversified business models
- Affiliate media marketing approaches
- Commercial marketing
- Bricks and clicks
- Across media formats (writing, videos, music, podcast, games, etc.),
- Licensing
- Content marketing
- Online monetisation

2. How do the media make money?

3. Which other businesses is your media house engaged in?
.................................................................................................
.................................................................................................

4. Are your marketers/sales teams working on targets and commission systems?
- Yes
- No

5. How........................................................................
.............................................................................
6. Which industry is your media house investing in?

7. National media organizations consistently break even or achieve profits/ surpluses.
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

8. Local news media organizations consistently break even or achieve profits/ surpluses.
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

9. Media organizations can develop diverse sources of revenue.
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

10. National media organizations' advertising market share provides a dependable revenue stream.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

11. Local news media organizations' advertising market share provides a dependable revenue stream.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

12. Third-party digital platforms do not control digital and online advertising.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

13. Digital and online advertising are a major source of media revenue.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

14. The digital and online audience structure now shapes our content.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

15. Media organizations can generate revenue from their own digital and online content.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

16. Ad fraud does not siphon many news media organizations' digital ad revenues.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

17. Most non-PSB news media organizations operate without direct subsidies (from the government or donors).
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not sure

18. National news media organizations have enough diversity in advertising clients that editorial independence is safe.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

19. Government advertising is distributed among news media companies fairly and transparently, which is not used to constrain editorial independence.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

20. There is competition among advertising agencies, so commercial advertising is not available to news media organizations only through a monopoly or near monopoly distributor.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

21. Small and medium-sized news media companies can survive.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

## MEDIA LITERACY/GOVERNANCE

22. Citizen education across the nation fosters critical thinking about news media content and the forces that shape it.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

23. The public's opinion of news media organizations and journalists is in line with, or slightly higher than, public opinion regarding government and other social institutions.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

24. Public trust in the accuracy and fairness of news media content is high.
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

25. The Public demonstrates loyalty to the news media organizations that serve them.
    ● Yes
    ● No
    ● Not sure

26. Do you partner with fact-checking organisations?
    ● Yes
    ● No
    ● Not sure

27. Public trust in the accuracy and fairness of news media content is high for our media house.
    ● Yes
    ● No
    ● Not sure

28. Our News media organizations can access reliable audience data.
    ● Yes
    ● No
    ● Not sure

## BLOGGING AND WEBSITE/PAGES

29. What are the number of bloggers/blogging pages registered in Ghana?
    …………………………………………

30. Types of content produced.
    a. Entertainment/gossip
    b. Sports
    c. News
    d. Economic/finance
    e. Health/environment/agriculture
    f. Politics
    g. Technology
    h. Others…………………………….

31. Ethical operational guides for Bloggers
    a. There is an ethical guide and code for members
    b. No ethical guide and code for members
    c. I am not aware

32. How to drive blogging pages (multiple choice allowed)
    o  Use of clickbait.

o Propaganda
o Spamming
o Wrongful headlines and content
o Phishing
o blackmail
o Promotion of Adult and illegal content

33. What factors influence the success and popularity of blogs and websites in Ghana?
   o Traffic
   o Adverts
   o Monetization
   o Fakenews/misinformation/disinformation
   o Propaganda
   o Others....................................

34. Tell us about your motivation for blogging.
   o Journalism
   o Hobby and passion
   o Monitory gains
   o Popularity
   o Development impact
   o Others......................................................................

35. Why do you use of clickbait, fake news, deep fakes, misinformation, disinformation, fact-checking, media hype, propaganda, and phishing in your publishing/blogging?
   …………………………………………………
   …………………………………………..

# RAPIDLY EVOLVING MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

**POLICY AND REGULATION**

1. How do media policies and regulations shape the structure, content, and distribution of media products in Ghana?

2. What are the implications of media ownership concentration and cross-ownership for media diversity and pluralism in Ghana?

3. Should the media be regulated? Guided, have its law?

4. What are the Code of ethics and guides of your media house?

5. How do media policies and regulations protect media freedom and independence in Ghana?

6. What are the challenges of implementing and enforcing these policies in Ghana?

7. How do media policies and regulations address issues related to the digital divide and access to media and information for underserved communities in Ghana?

8. What are the implications of media globalisation for media policies and regulations in Ghana?

9. How can policies and regulations address the challenges posed by the transnational flow of media content in Ghana?

10. How do media policies and regulations address Ghana's media literacy and education issues?

11. What are the most effective strategies for promoting media literacy among different demographic groups in Ghana?

12. How do media policies and regulations address privacy, data protection, and cybersecurity issues in Ghana's digital media environment?

13. How do media policies and regulations address issues related to hate speech, fake news, and disinformation in the digital media environment in Ghana

14. What are the challenges of implementing and enforcing these policies in Ghana?

15. How do media policies and regulations address issues related to copyright and intellectual property in Ghana?

## LEGACY/TRADITIONAL MEDIA

1. What are the effects of the proliferation of fake news and misinformation on legacy/traditional media in Ghana?

2. Tell us about how legacy/traditional media's rise impacted news and information consumption by different demographic groups in Ghana.

3. What are the implications of media convergence on the business models and revenue streams of traditional media outlets in Ghana?

4. How does media convergence affect the financial plans and sources of income of established legacy/traditional media in Ghana?

5. How are new technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, changing how traditional media content is produced and consumed in Ghana?

6. How are traditional media companies addressing data privacy and security issues in Ghana's age of big data and artificial intelligence?

## BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

1. How does your media house respond to changes in economic and technological advancements?

2. How do media companies in Ghana balance their role as businesses with their role as public institutions that serve the public interest?

3. How does media consolidation affect local news coverage and civic engagement in Ghana?

4. How do Ghanaian media companies navigate the tension between commercial imperatives, journalistic ethics, and values?

5. What are the ethical and legal implications of native advertising and sponsored content in the digital media landscape in Ghana?

6.  How do media companies use data analytics to optimize their business strategies and improve their understanding of audience behaviour in Ghana?

7.  How do media companies address diversity, equity, and inclusion issues in their business practices in Ghana?

8.  What are the implications of media piracy and intellectual property infringement for media companies and the broader business environment in Ghana?

## BUSINESS MODELS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF MEDIA HOUSES

9.  Which industry is your media house investing in?

10. What are media houses' current trends and challenges regarding revenue generation and business sustainability in Ghana?

11.  How can media houses navigate the challenges and opportunities of Ghana's post-COVID-19 pandemic media landscape?

12. What types of departments are created to support the functioning system of the media house?

13. Tell us about the sales team and policy structure used to support the functioning system of the media house.

14. What types of professionals and practitioners are involved in managing the organization?

15. How do media houses balance the tension between financial profitability and public interest?

16.  What are the ethical and social implications of different revenue models, such as subscription, commission-based journalism and advertising?

17. What are the implications of digital disruption for media houses?

18. What are the implications of globalization and cross-border media flows for media houses?

19.  How can Ghanaian media houses adapt to the changing global media environment?

20. How do media houses collaborate with other stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, academia, and government, to promote media sustainability?

21. How do media houses foster a culture of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship?

## THE AUDIENCE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

1. Who is your target audience?
   ....................................................

2. Why these customers/audiences?
   .........................................................

3. With these audiences, is it sustainable to focus on them?

4. How do Ghanaian audiences consume and engage with different media types, such as news, entertainment, and social media?

5. How do media platforms shape audience exposure to diverse and opposing viewpoints in Ghana?

6. How do media audiences participate in Ghana's online and offline civic and political activities?

7. How do media audiences respond to crises and emergencies, such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and pandemics?

8. How do media audiences use and respond to fact-checking and verification tools in Ghana?

9. What are the implications for media credibility and trust in Ghana?

## SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND INTERNET TECHNOLOGIES

1. Describe the effects of social media use on social relationships.

2. How do social media platforms shape users' online experiences in Ghana?

3. Tell me about the implications of social media use on privacy, free speech, and digital rights in Ghana.

4. What are the implications of social media use for political communication and participation in Ghana?

5. How can policies and regulations address these issues in Ghana?

6.  How do internet technologies and platforms affect how people engage with other cultures in Ghana?

7.  What are the implications for Ghana's content creators, distributors, and consumers?

8.  How do internet technologies and platforms transform the nature and dynamics of work in Ghana?

9.  What are the opportunities and challenges of internet technologies and platforms for education and learning in Ghana?

10.  How can policymakers and educators promote these technologies' effective and equitable use in Ghana?

11.  How can policies and regulations promote the sustainable use of new media technologies in Ghana?

12.  How do internet technologies and platforms affect the nature and dynamics of social movements and activism in Ghana?

13.  What are the implications for participatory democracy and governance?

14.  What are the implications of emerging internet technologies, such as blockchain and virtual communities, on Ghanaian society?

15.  How can policymakers and stakeholders anticipate and respond to these developments in Ghana?

## APPLICATION AND USE OF THESE TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED

1.  How are emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, being applied within the media landscape in Ghana?

2.  What are the opportunities and challenges of these applications in Ghana?

3.  Tell me about user-generated content.

4.  How are over-the-top technologies applied in the new media landscape in Ghana?

5.  How do organizations adopt and implement new technologies like content seeding and the Internet of Things?

6.  What factors affect the successful adoption and implementation of new technologies?

7.  What are the implications of digital transformation for organizational structures and cultures in Ghana?

8.  How can organizations manage the changes and challenges of digital transformation in Ghana?

9.  How do technologies enable new forms of collaboration and entrepreneurship in Ghana?

10. How can technologies be designed and deployed to promote inclusive and equitable access and use?

11. Tell us about content grazing and spider webbing.

## ETHICAL CODES, GUIDES, GATEKEEPING, PROFESSIONALISM AND GENERAL SELF-REGULATION

1.  What are the ethical and social implications of using technologies in the media landscape?

2.  How can these implications be addressed through policies, regulations, and ethical frameworks?

3.  How do media professionals and organizations interpret and implement ethical codes?

4.  What are the challenges of ethical codes and guidelines in addressing new and emerging ethical issues, such as deepfakes, online harassment, and social media manipulation?

5.  How do media professionals and organizations balance the competing values of free expression, public interest, privacy, and accountability?

6.  What are the ethical frameworks that can guide these decisions?

7.  What are the implications of gatekeeping practices in the media in Ghana?

8.  How do these practices affect public opinion and participatory governance?

9.  How do media professionals and organizations address conflicts of interest in Ghana?

10. What are the ethical norms and guidelines that can prevent and mitigate these conflicts?

11. Tell me about the ethical responsibilities of media professionals and organizations in reporting on sensitive and controversial issues, such as violence, terrorism, and hate speech in Ghana.

12. How can they balance these responsibilities with the right to freedom of expression?

13. How do media professionals and organizations foster a culture of professionalism, accountability, and transparency in Ghana?

14. How do you apply the GJA code of ethics in your duty?

15. What are the best practices for promoting ethical conduct and professional development among media practitioners in Ghana?

16. How do media professionals and organizations address new and emerging technologies' ethical and social implications?

## BLOGGING AND WEBSITE/PAGES

1. How do blogs and websites reflect and shape cultural values and identities?

2. What are the implications for cultural diversity and inclusion?

3. How can content creators optimize their strategies for audience engagement and monetization?

4. Tell us how different blogs and websites, such as news blogs, personal blogs, e-commerce sites, and social media platforms, differ in content, audience, and business models.

5. What are the ethical and legal issues involved in blogging and website publishing, such as plagiarism, defamation, and privacy violations?

6. How can content creators and publishers navigate these issues?

7. How do blogs and websites affect political discourse and agenda-setting?

8. Tell me about the implications for democracy and civic engagement.

9. Describe how blogs and websites facilitate online communities and social networks.

10. What are these communities' dynamics regarding social identity and values?
11. Describe the technological and design features that make blogs and websites user-friendly and accessible.

12. How do content creators and publishers optimise these features for different audiences and purposes?

13. How do blogs and websites contribute to the digital economy in Ghana?

## GOVERNANCE, EMERGING THREATS AND THE INTERNET AND CYBER SECURITY AND FACT-CHECKING TECHNOLOGIES

1. Why and how do cyber-attacks flourish in Ghana?

2. What is the cost of such attacks and their associated risks?

3. How do they occur beyond a computer and an internet connection-prone security issue?

4. How is the anonymous and veiled nature of the internet protecting the culprits/perpetrators of such crimes from prosecution?

5. What are the effects of increased access to mobile phones on the Ghanaian media scene?

6. Will the self-regulating ethical guide and jurisdictional issues be the normative model for the public and content providers?

7. What are the Linkages between modernisation, democratisation, and technology in Ghana's overall state of the media?

8. Tell us about the mandate of National security, NMC, NCA, etc

9. What human rights and governance security issues exist in this country?

10. Do you partner with fact-checking organisations?

11. How do you situate their work?

12. Tell us about Cybersecurity, bullying, scamming, impersonation, and blackmailing.

13.    What do you know about Google Analytics in news and data presentation?

14.    Tell us about the use of clickbait, fake news, deep fakes, misinformation, disinformation, fact-checking, media hype, propaganda, and phishing within the media landscape of Ghana.

15.    What are the potential opportunities and dangers posed by artificial intelligence? (e.g.ChatGPT)

16.    What is Ghana's regulatory framework on internet regulation and its auxiliary threats?

17.    What can we learn from other jurisdictions that are ahead on this issue?