

**ASSESSING THE
EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE**

MEDIA

**IN GHANA'S
DEMOCRACY**



NCCE

NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR CIVIC EDUCATION



WITH SUPPORT FROM
EUROPEAN UNION

PREFACE

A strong and vibrant media is one that strives for accuracy and objectivity in its reportage. An effective media also works to promote societal advancement through education and sensitization on social, political and economic issues such as human rights, domestic violence, inflation, disease outbreak, elections among others.

It is the aim of every democratic state to make information readily available to its citizens. The media provides major channels through which this aim can be fulfilled. Through the media citizens get a wider view of the development policies and programmes. The media also enables the presentation of divergent and dissenting opinion to all political parties, individuals, groups or body of persons. A contrary action will be to deny the citizens their fundamental right to speech, their right to choice, access to information and avenues for thought. It is for this reason that freedom and independence of the media is of essence in Ghana's democracy. A media democracy focuses on using information technology to both empower individual citizens and promote democratic ideals through the spread of information.

Debates on media platforms are very instrumental in a democracy. The free exchange of views on how to manage the affairs of the country is necessary to give the electorate an opportunity to assess the performance of the government in power. Through the media, citizens are able to get a wider view of policies and programmes of the political parties especially during political campaigns because news coverage of certain events informs electorates of whom to vote for and for what reasons.

Considering the vital role of the media and their presence in the two decades of Ghana's democracy, the NCCE sought to assess the effectiveness of the media as an institution in supporting Ghana's democracy. The research was organized in some selected districts throughout the ten regions of Ghana using questionnaire interviews.

The study centered on the following:

- Ascertain the public's assessment of the credibility, neutrality and independence of the media
- Assess the general understanding of Ghanaians on whether there is a link between media and democracy.
- Examine what the general perception of the main roles and functions of the media constitute

- Ascertain Ghanaians' perception on the performance of the media
- Assess the general competence and professionalism of media personnel
- Ascertain whether Ghanaians want curbs on media freedom
- Explore the possibility of what more can be done to improve the performance of the various media establishments
- Find out the contribution of the media to Ghana's democratic stability and success

The report indicates that the media is promoting democratic stability and success in Ghana. Ghana's fourth republic has seen three successful and peaceful transitions from one democratically elected government to the other. To this effect, respondents' were of the view that media freedom contributed to this achievement. While freedom if left unchecked could lead to abuse and chaos, more than half of the respondents indicated that they want curbs on media freedoms. Notably, more than three quarters of respondents acknowledge media growth.

Issues raised and suggestions proffered by respondents in the report presents a call to action for policymakers and practitioners with interest in the media to use the media in developing Ghana's democracy. It also emphasizes what the public expects from the media in order to achieve a long-lasting and better developed democracy as desired by all.

We are grateful to the European Union (EU) who funded this research and to the respondents and staff of the NCCE for their support in making this research possible.

Appreciation also goes to Professor Kwame Karikari for reviewing the report.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Credible	-	The news from the media is trustworthy and timely
Neutral	-	The news from the media is objective and unbiased
Partisan	-	The news from the media is skewed towards promoting a political party's interest
Independence	-	The content from the media is devoid of external influence
Curb	-	A form of restriction or limitation
Assess	-	To make a judgment about something based on define criteria
Effectiveness	-	Ability to produce desired results
Media	-	The communication outlets or tools used to store and deliver information
Democracy	-	A form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Commission for Civic Education embarked on this study in September 2014 to ascertain the public's assessment of the effectiveness of the media in Ghana's democracy. Specifically, the rationale of the study was to assess whether there is a link between the role of the media and democracy and the contribution of the media to Ghana's democratic stability and success. Additionally, the research explored the possibility of actions that can be taken to improve the performance of the various media establishments.

The study was cross sectional, conducted as a representation of the national population covering 72 of the 216 districts in all the 10 regions of Ghana. A total of 2,910 respondents, 18 years and above were interviewed.

Findings obtained from the study showed that radio is a broader source of information for a majority of Ghanaians. In assessing the credibility, neutrality and independence of the media, 46.9% of respondents found the news they receive to be credible, 32.5% found it neutral and 17.6% also viewed the news as partisan.

The research also showed that majority of the respondents prefer a form of restriction on media freedom and further that certain media outlets should be controlled in their dissemination of news and information. In relation to performance of the media, majority of the respondents were of the view that the media was doing a good job.

Also in assessing professionalism, 58.8% of respondents said the practitioners do exhibit competence and professionalism at work whilst 34% said they do not exhibit competence and professionalism. Respondents also mentioned some major roles of the media and notable among them were to disseminate information, educate the public and provide entertainment.

Quite a significant number of respondents also said the media was promoting democratic stability and success in Ghana and has helped the country's democracy. A high number of respondents were also happy with the current state of the media and how it portrays both the opposition and ruling parties.

Through news and information gathered from the media, majority of the respondents (75.2%) were of the view that the various political parties were not acting in the interest of Ghanaians and among the reasons given were that the political parties are corrupt, more loyal to their party interest than that of the national interest and they make campaign promises which they cannot fulfill in order to win power.

Also, there were a number of suggestions given on how political parties should treat each other. 49.1% of respondents mentioned that they should tolerate each other and another 18.7% said they should accord respect to each other.

In regards to suggestions on how to improve upon the media in Ghana, 27.9% of respondents said all media practitioners should have professional training, 17.9% were of the view that media commission and other regulatory bodies should be more efficient and 13.7% said there should be strict adherence to laws and policies guiding media practice in Ghana.

In effect, the report makes a judgment about the ability of the media to produce desired results towards Ghana's form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.

METHODOLOGY

This was a cross sectional study conducted as a national sample survey. It made use of primary data from the field as well as secondary data. The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data.

A sample size of three thousand (3000) was decided upon based on financial, time and other resource constraints. A confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of two (2) applied. A combination of random and purposive sampling techniques was employed in the study. It is worthy to note that two thousand nine hundred and ten (2910) questionnaires returned. The study was conducted in all the ten (10) regions of the country. In all, seventy-two (72) districts were covered. Two hundred and sixteen (216) districts made up the sampling frame out of which seventy-two (72) were included in the sample for this research.

The number of districts per region was selected based on the region's proportionate share of the national population from the results of the 2010 population and housing census. Regions with 10 percent and above of the national population had 44 questionnaires per district. Regions with less than 10 percent of the population but greater than 5 percent had 40 questionnaires per district whilst regions with 5 percent or less of the national population had 36 questionnaires per district. Based on this distribution pattern, selected districts in Greater Accra, Ashanti, Eastern, Northern regions each received 44 questionnaires. Selected districts in Western, Brong Ahafo, Central and Volta regions received 40 questionnaires each while selected districts in the Upper West and Upper East regions each had 36 questionnaires per district.

Within a region however, selection of individual districts sampled were based on the purposive and random sampling techniques. Attempts were made to get a fair representation of both rural and urban areas. All regional capitals were purposively sampled while rural districts were randomly selected for the study. The Upper East regional capital was purposively replaced with Bongo due to political unrest in the regional capital at the time the research was being conducted and also as a result of proximity of Bongo to Bolgatanga.

From the seventy-two (72) districts, the three thousand (3000) respondents were selected using specified sampling techniques. The primary sampling unit was the household and the unit of analysis was the individual respondent. The random walk was used where in the case of sparsely populated areas a sampling gap of three was used where respondents had to count an interval of three houses whiles walking to the right. But in densely populated areas

a sampling gap of five was used and respondents had to count an interval of five houses and move to the fifth house.

The Days' Code was used to select the first house to enter to begin the days' work. After research assistants had identified a house to enter, the household selection grid was then used to select a particular household where an individual respondent would be selected. A household, for the purpose of this study follows the Ghana Statistical Service definition which defines it as a person or group of persons who live together in the same house or compounds, share the same housekeeping arrangements catered for as one unit. After a particular household was selected, the interviewer used the score card to select the individual respondent who would then answer the questionnaire. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to elicit the information from the respondents.

A pre-testing exercise was carried out on a sample of respondents in some selected districts to ensure that the questions were duly cleared of ambiguities and other forms of mistakes.

Research assistants drawn from the Commission's workforce were trained in the use of a mobile telephony system to collect the primary data.

Response to Questionnaire Administration

REGION	REGIONS ALLOCATED NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE (%)
Ashanti	528	528	100%
Brong Ahafo	280	280	100%
Central	280	280	100%
Eastern	396	395	99.75%
Greater Accra	352	352	100%
Northern	352	308	87.5%
Upper East	144	144	100%
Upper West	108	91	84.26%
Volta	280	253	90.36%
Western	280	279	99.64%
Total	3000	2910	97%

The data was edited and analyzed at the research department of the Commission using a combination of data analysis tools and software.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

INTRODUCTION

Background

The most important democratic functions that we can expect the media to perform include monitoring of socio-political developments, identifying the most relevant issues, providing a platform for debate across a diverse range of views, holding officials to account for the way they exercise power, provide incentives for citizens to learn, choose, become involved in the political process, and resist efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence (Gurevitch and Blumler 1990).

The freedom and independence of the media is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ghana, 1992 which is the fundamental law of our land. Article 162(3) stipulates that “there shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media, and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for communication or information”.

Ghana’s Constitution in Chapter 12 spells out the freedom and responsibility of the media and makes the mass media one of the pillars of Ghana’s democracy and an important vehicle through which Ghana can establish and sustain its democratic culture. The media is said to be the fourth organ of government, playing a watchdog role on government and other institutions. It is the main sustenance of democratic view and is proactive in covering elections in a way that ordinary people are able to follow.

However, there is a growing concern that the mass media are not fulfilling these functions properly. Some of the major challenges facing the Ghanaian media in the recent past include difficulties in monitoring and ensuring good governance, sensationalization of issues, attack against media personnel and the politicization of various media houses among several others.

The functions of the media include ensuring good governance and government accountability through the provision of adequate and accessible information, which is a

requirement of democracy. This is however not always the case as some media platforms do not provide enough detailed information on specific issues to allow people to make their own decisions, but also attempt to sway the listeners and viewers by projecting certain stories and issues in very subjective ways. Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan in a statement on the Media and the Rwanda Genocide, said

“Media were used in Rwanda to spread hatred, to dehumanize people, and even to guide the genocidaires toward their victims. Three journalists have even been found guilty of genocide, incitement to genocide, conspiracy and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda” (Statement by Kofi Annan, 2007).

Some growing concerns in media reportage as mentioned by Altheide and Michalowski is that; social problems involving fear and danger are very attractive to the media and such topics often make up a significant part of the stories. At times the media exaggerates minor risks where reassurance would be more sensible. In other cases they ignore serious risks, e.g. when new technologies are uncritically described as progress (Kitzinger and Reilly 1997; Glassner 1999). Also, the media make us afraid of the wrong things. Minor dangers are hysterically blown out of proportions, while much more serious dangers in our society go largely unnoticed (Glassner 1999).

Another major challenge is the lack of sensitivity in reporting issues of a disturbing nature. Media reportage in recent times in the country has been riddled with multiple cases of violence against women, girls, boys and men (in a few cases). Such news should however, be reported in ways that are sensitive to the lives of the victims so that, that do not end up embarrassing or stigmatising the victim involved.

Nonetheless, some analysts hold the view that; the media have been instrumental in safeguarding Ghana’s democratic principles (Ayee, 2001a). They have played vital roles in both the historical and socio-political development of the country (Ansah, 1991a; Gyimah-Boadi, 1999/2001a & b; Smith & Temin, 2001).

The media are critical to the realization of the ideals of Ghana’s democracy. They monitor the extent to which people’s rights to free speech, free expression, free movement, free association, and equal opportunities in employment and education, among others, are respected in democracies (Ansah, 1991).

Research Problem

Throughout Ghana's history, relations between the mass media and government have varied from regime to regime (Anokwa, 1997; Yankah, 1997; Asante, 1996). Various governments have tended to excessively control the media and to use them largely as mouthpieces for propagating their political agenda (Anokwa, 1997; Asante, 1996; Ansah, 1991a). During much of Ghana's post-independence history, the mass media have been largely under government monopoly and control (Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998).

The media of mass communication regarded as the "fourth organ of government" is neither an arm of government nor above society. Though, if it is to be worth its esteemed position, is expected to be independent of the state and government as well as of other entities of social and economic influence in society. Yet, who monitors the media?

The Ghanaian media is riddled with a number of problems (such as lack of logistical support, low job satisfaction and poorly paid staff) thereby making it difficult to effectively play its role in the country.

Though the Right to Information Bill is yet to be passed into law, there seems to be an unbridled freedom with the repeal of criminal libel law and weakening of the regulatory functions of the National Media Commission over the media. The absence of certification and low professional standards also contribute to weak content, programming and poor development of communication and agenda setting.

Accountability, probity and transparency in democratic governance and feedback from the public highlight the importance of the mass media. This however appears to be a challenging role for the media to accomplish. A press conference held in September 2014 by the National Media Commission, Ghana Journalists Association, Private Newspaper Publishers' Association of Ghana and Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association cited that there have been many physical attacks on journalists in the course of their work. In January 2014, the police arrested three persons in the studios of SunGmale FM at Wa in connection with the expression of their ideas on radio. February 2014 saw irate youth vandalizing the premises of Gift FM in Dormaa Ahenkro in the Brong Ahafo Region, In March, of the same year, security officers arrested TV3 crew at Adjei Kojo for trying to publicize the living conditions of residents in the area after a demolition exercise.

Instead of playing an effective "watchdog" role the media might end up playing a "lapdog" role due to fear for their lives.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to assess the performance of the Media in Ghana's democracy under the Fourth Republic.

The specific objectives of the study include:

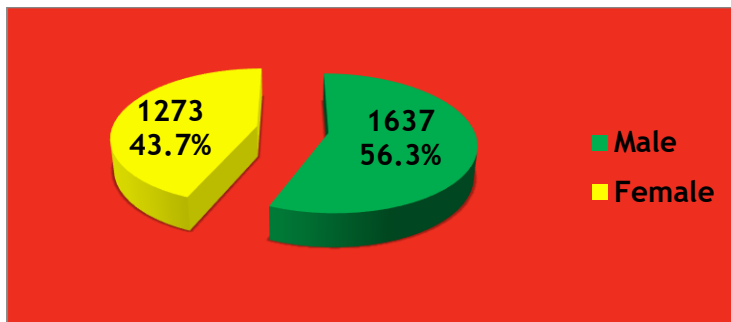
- Ascertain the public's assessment of the credibility, neutrality and independence of the media;
- Assess the general understanding of Ghanaians on whether there is a link between media and democracy;
- Examine what the general perception of the main roles and functions of the media constitute;
- Ascertain Ghanaians' perception on the performance of the media;
- Assess the general competence and professionalism of media personnel;
- Ascertain whether Ghanaians want curbs on media freedom;
- Explore the possibility of what more can be done to improve the performance of the various media establishments; and
- Find out the contribution of the media to Ghana's democratic stability and success.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Sex of Respondents

The data obtained from the field revealed that of the 2910 respondents interviewed, 1637 of them were males (56.3%) whilst the females were 1273 (43.7%).

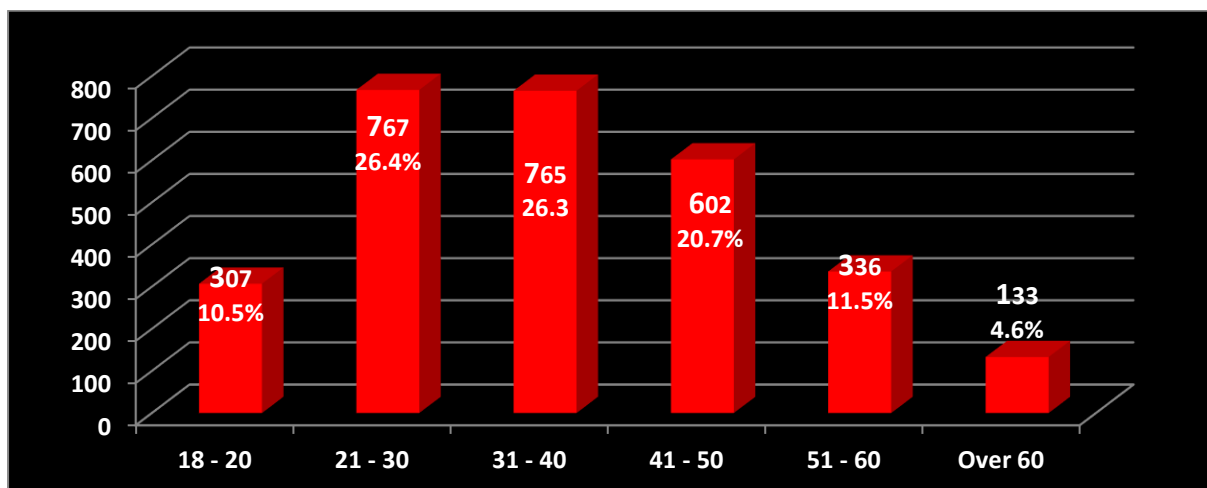
Fig 1.1: Sex of Respondents



Age of Respondents

A little over a quarter of the respondents, 767 (26.4%) of the respondents were aged between 21 - 30, followed by those aged 31 - 40 who were 765 (26.3%). Those aged 41-50 were 602 (20.7%), whilst those between the ages of 51-60 were 336 (11.5%). The least number of respondents fell within the age bracket of 18-20 and those over 60 years were 307 (10.5%) and 133 (4.6%) respectively. Please see figure 1.2 below for the detail results.

Fig 1.2: Age of Respondents

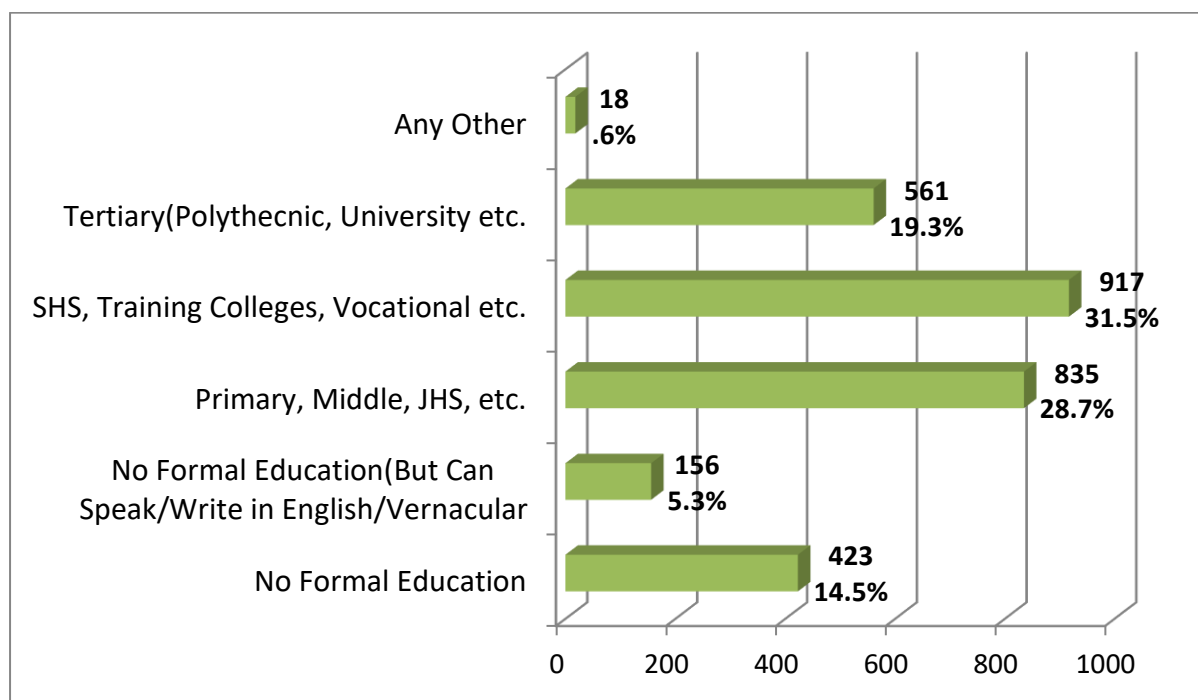


Educational background of respondents

A look at the educational background of the respondents indicates that 917 (31.5%) of the respondents have had education up to the Senior High School level, Training College or vocational level, with 835 (28.7%) having only basic education. This was followed by those with Tertiary education, 561 (19.3%). Eighteen respondents have had education through the Koranic or Bible school system.

On the other hand, 423, representing 14.5% of the respondents have had no form of formal education whilst, 156 representing 5.3% have had no formal education but can read and write in English and/or vernacular.

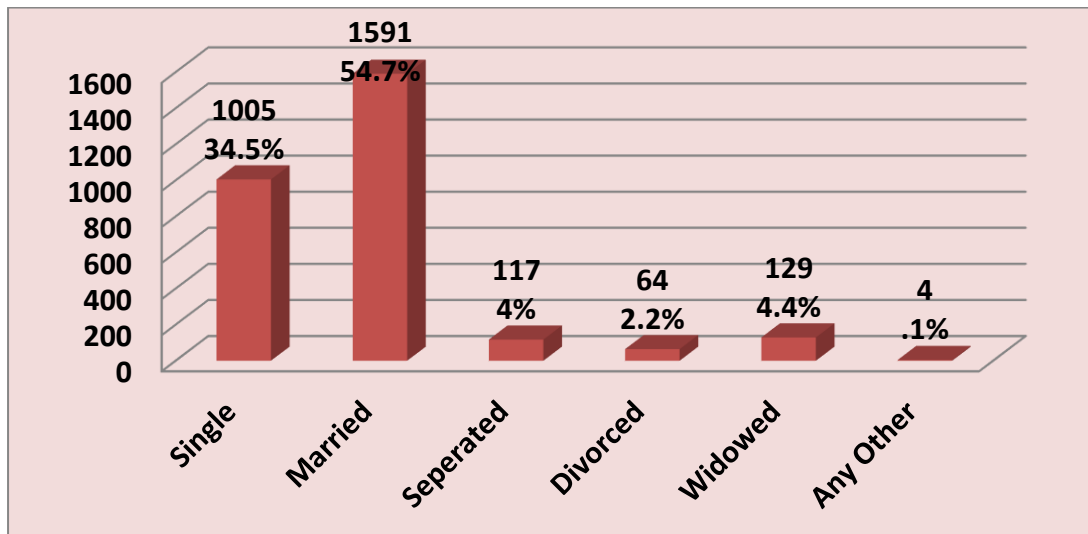
Fig. 1.3: Educational background of respondents



Marital status of respondents

The data portrayed a high number of respondents, 1,591 (54.7%) of the respondents as married. 1,005 representing 34.5% of the respondents were single. Respondents who were separated from their spouses were 117 (4%) of the total number of respondents. Sixty four respondents representing 2.2% were divorced with 129 (4.4%) of the respondents widowed.

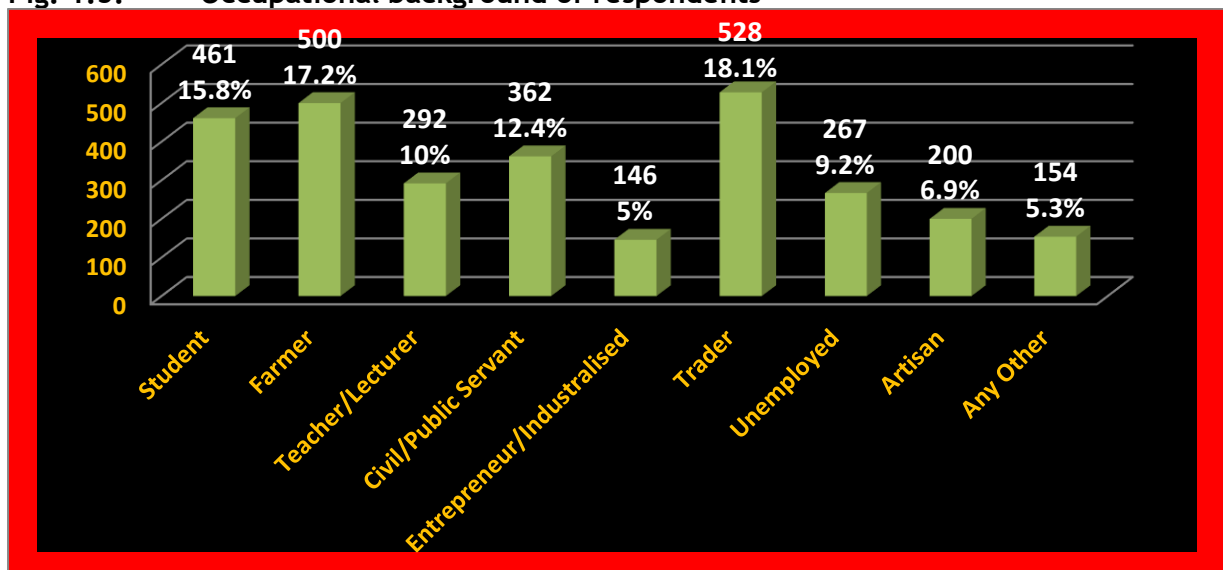
Fig. 1.4: Marital status of respondents



Occupational background of respondents

The respondents interviewed indicated the occupations they were involved in. Trading was the highest with 528 respondents (18.1%). Farmers were 500 (17.2%), followed by students who were 461 (15.8%). Civil or public servants were 362 (12.4%), teachers or lecturers were 292 (10%). Artisans were 200 (6.9%) whilst 146 (5%) were industrialists. Those serving as security officers, mallams, priests and engaged in other activities not specifically stated, were duly acknowledged as 'Any other' and were 154 (5.3%). 267 (9.2%) indicated that they were unemployed.

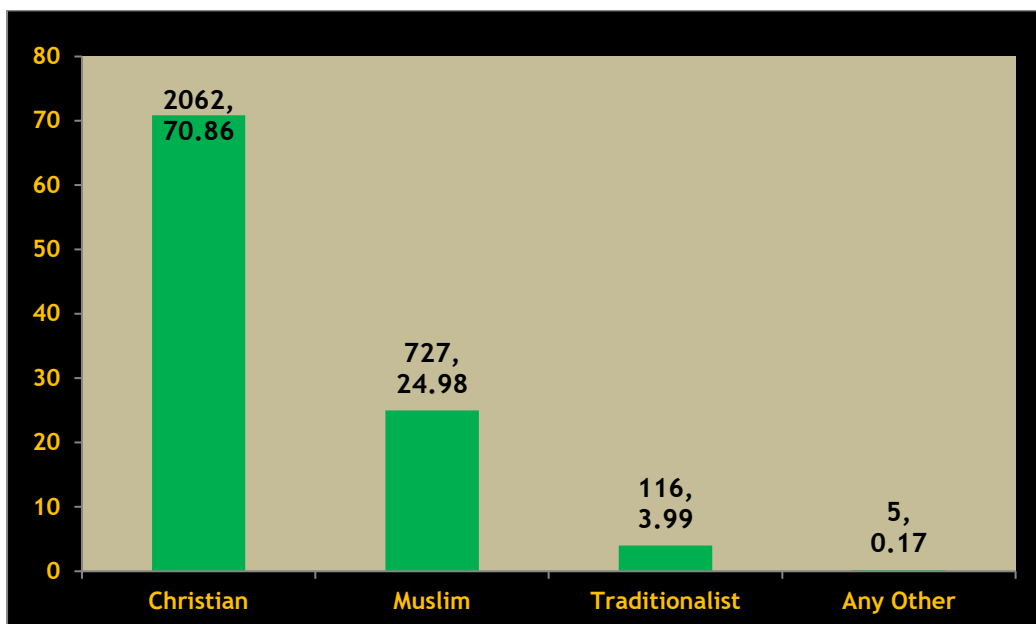
Fig. 1.5: Occupational background of respondents



Religious affiliation of respondents

The findings show that majority of the respondents interviewed were Christians (70.9%), followed by Muslims (25%) and Traditionalists (4%). Among the category of 'Any other' (1%) were respondents who were Eckankar, Buddha, Hindu and those who did not belong to any of the religious affiliations cited above.

Fig. 1.6: Religious affiliation of respondents



CHAPTER TWO

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Ghana has a dynamic news media which plays a key role in shaping culture, political discourse, influencing behaviour and setting agenda. The media which emerged in the nineteenth century in Ghana has given voice to movement for independence, development and national unity.

The media presents its news and information in various forms. It may take the form of a broadcast media as in the case of television and radio, online (internet) or print media like newspaper and magazine. The internet has evolved as a platform for social media among individuals. News and information is capable of reaching tens of thousands of people across the world.

The chapter looks at the sources of news and information to the people of Ghana and also the public's assessment of the credibility, neutrality and independence of the media.

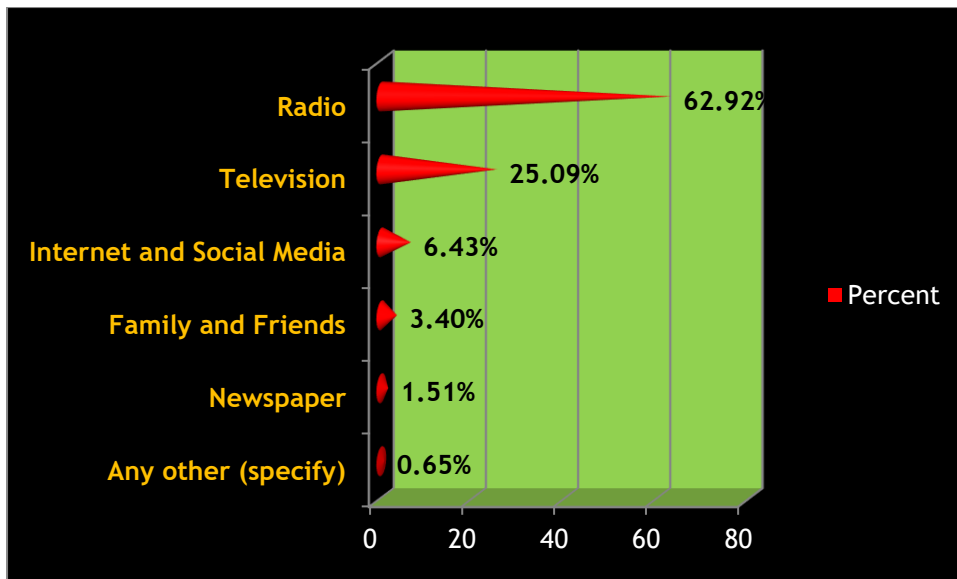
Source of news and information

There are so many sources of news and information and primary among them are radio, television, newspaper, family and friends, internet and social media. Results from the findings indicated that 62.9% (1831) of respondents regarded radio as their primary source of information.

Television which is the most widely source of information was chosen by 25% of the respondents (730). The choice of Internet and the Social media as respondents' primary source of information represented 6.4% (187) of total respondents. Respondents whose source of information was from Family and Friends represented 3.4% (99) of total respondents. Negligible percentage of 1.5% (44) obtained information from Newspapers.

Any other responses on primary source of information were community address system and dialogues. Figure 2.1 shows the primary source of news and information among respondents.

Fig 2.1: Primary source of news and information



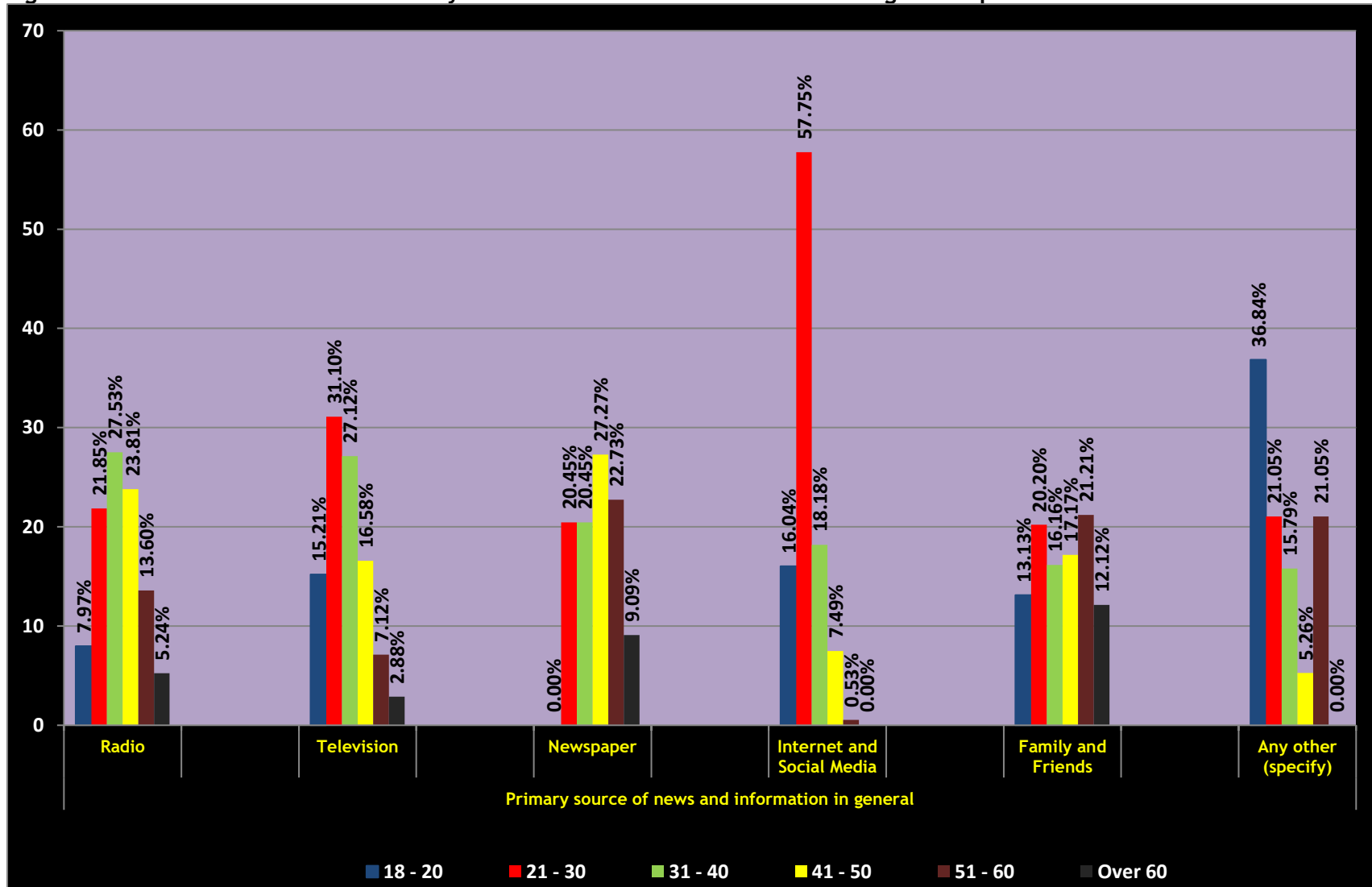
Data analysis indicates that males read newspapers more than their female counterparts as 90.9% (40) of those who chose newspaper as their primary source of information were males and only 9.1% (4) were females.

Additionally, for the respondents who chose the family and friends category as their primary source of information, 72.7% (72) were females and males 27.3% (27).

A look at the age group of respondent shows that of the individuals with radio as their primary source of information, a high number of them (27.53%) were in the 31-40 age group category. For respondents who chose television, 31.10% of them were in the 21-30 age group. The newspaper was more patronized by those in the 41-60 age range which had 50% of those who chose it. For internet and social media, majority of them (57.75%) were 21-30 years.

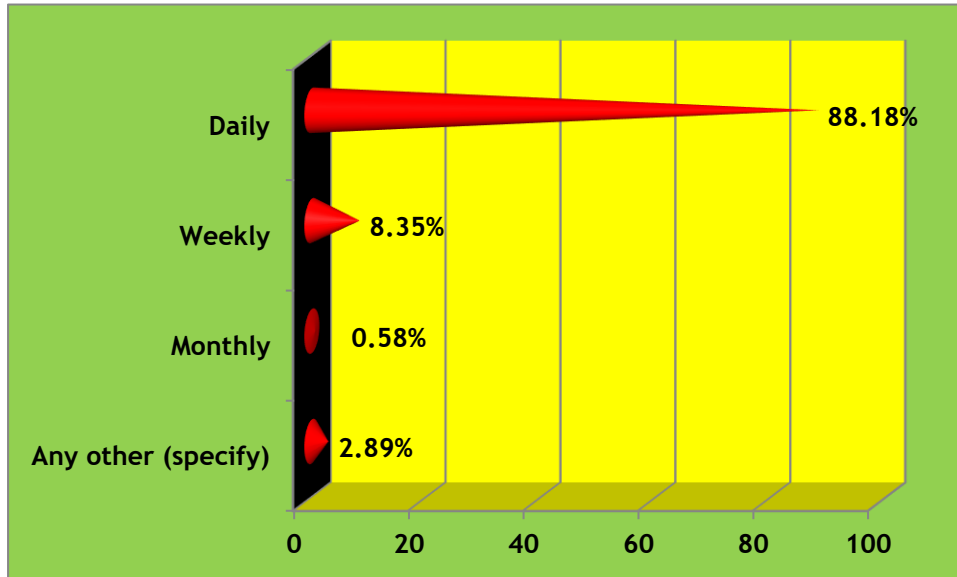
The figure below presents the cross tabulation of the age of respondents and their primary source of news and information.

Fig 2.2: Cross tabulation of Primary source of news and information and age of respondents



88.18% of respondents said they had access to this form of media “daily” while 8.35% said “weekly” and 0.58% said “monthly”. Other responses in the “Any other” category comprising of “None” and “Don’t know” amounted to 2.89%.

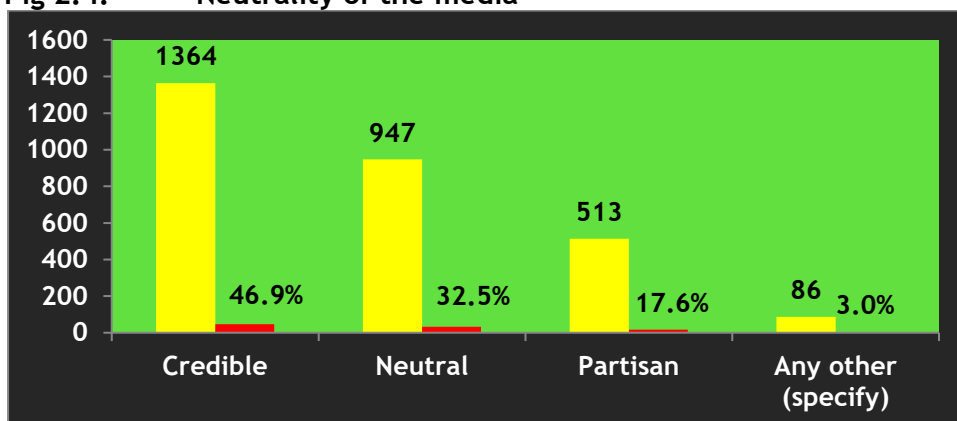
Fig 2.3: How often do you have access to this form of media?



Neutrality of the media

In order to ascertain the neutrality of the media, respondents were asked, what they thought about the news they received from the media. Data shows that 46.9% hold the view that the news is credible (trustworthy), 32.5% hold the view that the news is neutral and 17.6% hold the view that the news is partisan (See fig 2.4).

Fig 2.4: Neutrality of the media



The study revealed that of the 1,831 respondents who chose radio as their primary source of news and information, 48.4% of them found the news they received as credible, 30% found it neutral and 19.4% found it partisan. With regards to the 730 respondents who chose television, 45.8% found the news credible, 37.8% neutral and 14.2% partisan.

For newspapers however, 56.8% of the respondents find the news items to be credible, 34.1% find it neutral and 6.8% find it partisan. In the case of internet and social media, 46.5% find the news from this source to be credible, 38.5% neutral and 13.9% partisan. In relation to respondents who chose family and friends as their primary source of news and information, only 26.3% of them found the news to be credible whereas 32.3% found it to be neutral. 23.2% thought the news they received was partisan in nature.

CHAPTER THREE

FREEDOM AND ROLE OF THE MEDIA

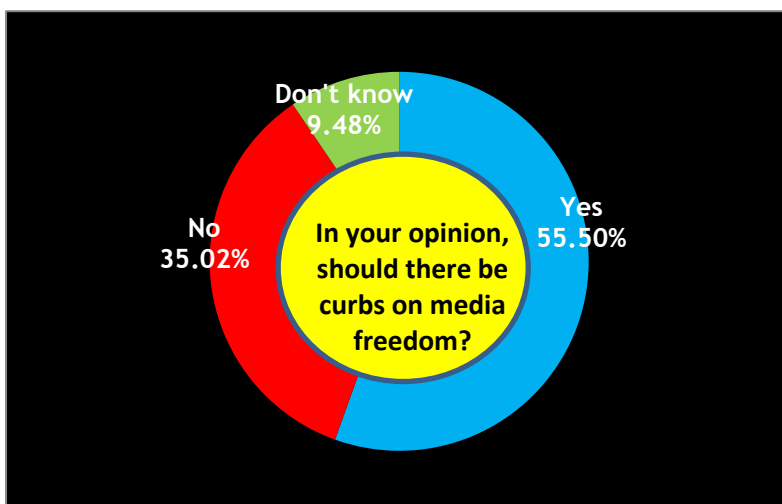
If a nation acts in a way to silence the operations of the media, whether print or broadcast media, not only is it infringing on the expressive rights of the media and of the journalists, editors and publishers, but it is also violating the rights of its citizens to receive information and ideas freely (Limpitlaw, 2012). The freedom of the media is intertwined with the right to freedom of expression by individuals since it is the individual that receives and gives information for the media to have access to.

The media is however not a monolithic body but rather a broader term which is made up of diverse content provided to the public. The content provided by the media includes news, politics, business, fashion, current affairs, religion, entertainment, food, celebrity and lifestyles and many other topics. (Limpitlaw, 2012).

This chapter examines the perception of the citizenry on the roles and performance of the media and whether there should be curbs on media freedom.

Curbs on media freedom

Fig 3.1: Curbs on media freedom

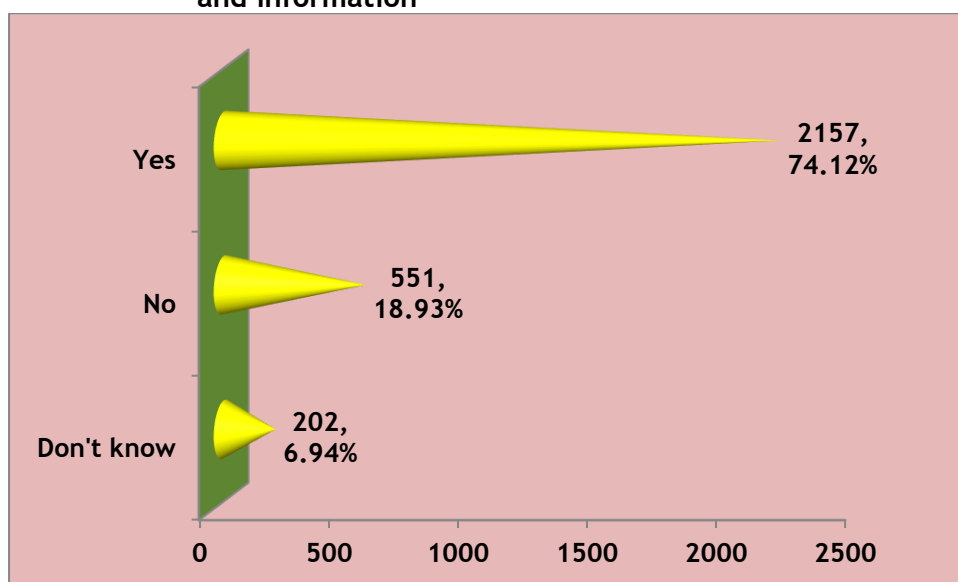


Even though the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana provides for the freedom and independence of the media, results from the study indicates that majority of the people want a form of restriction on the freedom the media enjoys.

In response to the question “*In your opinion, should there be curbs on media freedom?*” majority of the respondents (55.5%) said “Yes”, a sizeable number of them (35.02%) said “No” and quite a few of them (9.48%) did not know whether there should be curbs or not.

Respondents were further asked if certain media outlets should be controlled in their dissemination of news and information. The results showed 74.1% of respondents indicating “Yes”, 18.9% “No” and 6.9% “Don’t know”. The figure below presents the findings.

Fig 3.2: Should certain media outlets be controlled in their dissemination of news and information



The table below shows the reasons given by the 2,157 respondents who said they wanted certain media outlets to be controlled in their dissemination of news and information.

Table 3.1: Reasons for Yes

Responses	Frequency	Per cent (%)
To prevent use of insults and vulgar language in media outlets	1556	39.68
To prevent certain news from coming into the public domain	1221	31.14
To prevent inappropriate use of media outlets by owners	760	19.38
To protect state secret	349	8.9
Any other	35	0.9
Total	3921	100

In the view of a sizeable number of respondents, certain media outlets should be controlled in their dissemination of news and information in order to prevent the use of insults and vulgar language in the media outlets. Other reasons were to prevent certain news from

coming into the public domain, prevent inappropriate use of media outlets by owners of the media establishment and also protect state secret.

Responses of the 551 respondents, who did not want media outlets to be controlled in their dissemination of news and information, included the following:

- Uphold the freedom of the media;
- Allow freedom of expression by the media;
- Avoid political and government interference in media activities;
- Ensure transparency and accountability of other institutions;
- Ensure agenda setting and developmental roles of the media and;
- Hold government and other public office holders accountable.

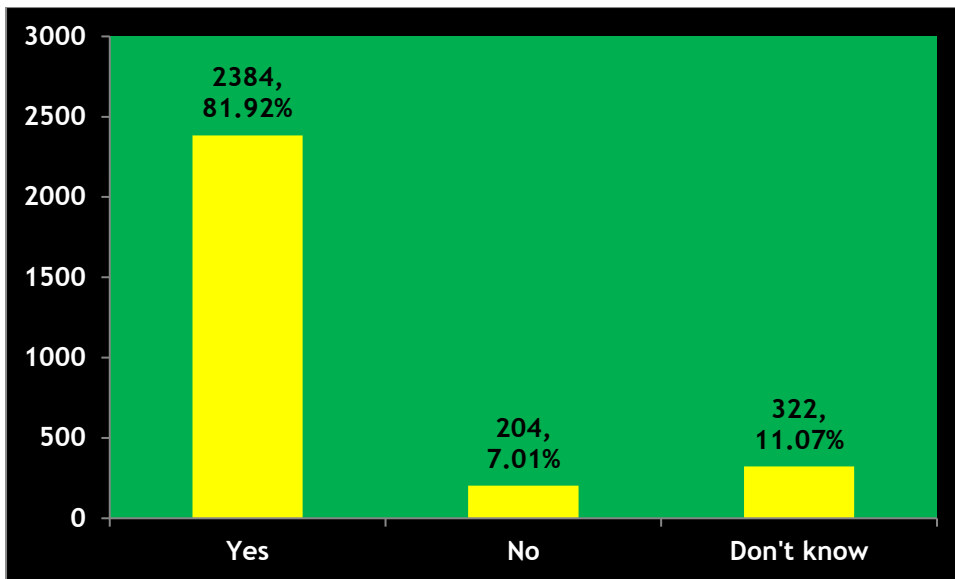
Table 3.2: Reasons for No

Responses	Frequency	Per cent (%)
The freedom of the media must be upheld	311	28.45
To allow freedom of expression of the media	291	26.62
To avoid political and government interference in media activities	195	17.84
To ensure transparency and accountability of other institutions	125	11.44
So they can hold government and public office holders accountable	119	10.89
So as to ensure agenda setting and developmental roles of the media	33	3.02
Any other	19	1.74
Total	1093	100

Performance of the media

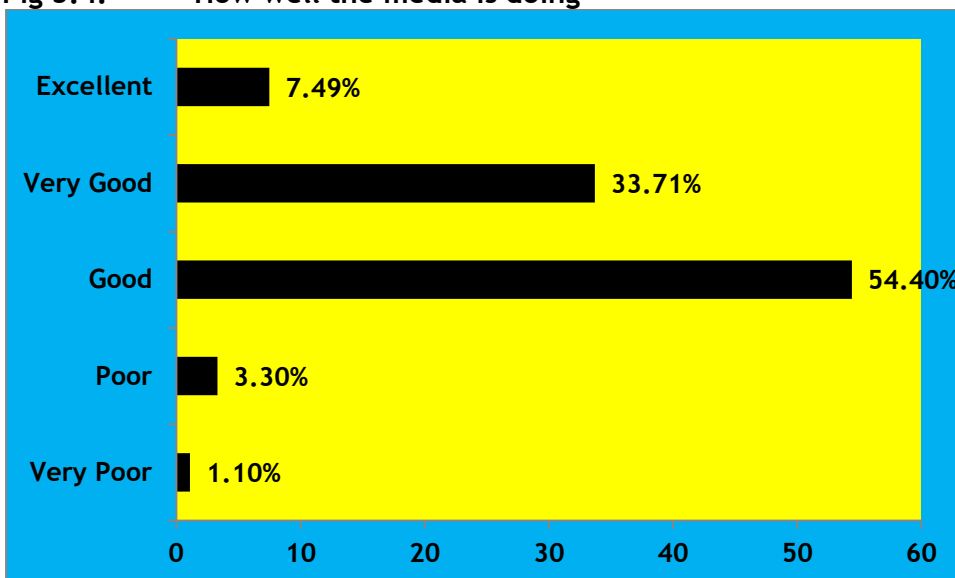
Figure 3.3 below depicts that a high percentage of the respondents agreed to the fact that the media in Ghana has improved over the last twenty years with just a few respondents holding a contrary view. For 11.07% of respondents, they are not well informed about media activities and some also have no idea at all about the performance of the media.

Fig 3.3: Whether the media in Ghana has improved over the last twenty years



The survey generally sought to find out from the respondents how well the media was doing. With a rating of Excellent to Very Poor, 7.5% said “Excellent”, 33.7% “Very Good”, 54.4% “Good”, 3.3% “Poor” and 1.1% “Very Poor” as seen in the figure below.

Fig 3.4: How well the media is doing



In the opinion of 1,710 (58.8%) respondents, practitioners of the various media houses exhibit competence and professionalism in their day to day handling of information they relay to the public. For some 989 (34.0%) respondents, the practitioners do not exhibit competence and professionalism in their day to day handling of information they relay to the public. Another 211 (7.3%) gave other reasons such as ‘not all of them show competence or professionalism’ and ‘don’t know’.

Respondents were further asked to state the reasons for their responses. Reasons cited by the 1,710 respondents who said “Yes” to the question “*In your opinion do you think media practitioners of the various media houses exhibit competence and professionalism in their day to day handling of information they relay to the public*”; were that the media practitioners:

- Have been regular in transmitting news to the public;
- Provide up-to-date issues in the global world;
- Provide information on social issues such as education, health, employment, disaster, electricity and water;
- Do not take sides in discussing issues; and
- Offer equal platforms on political issues.

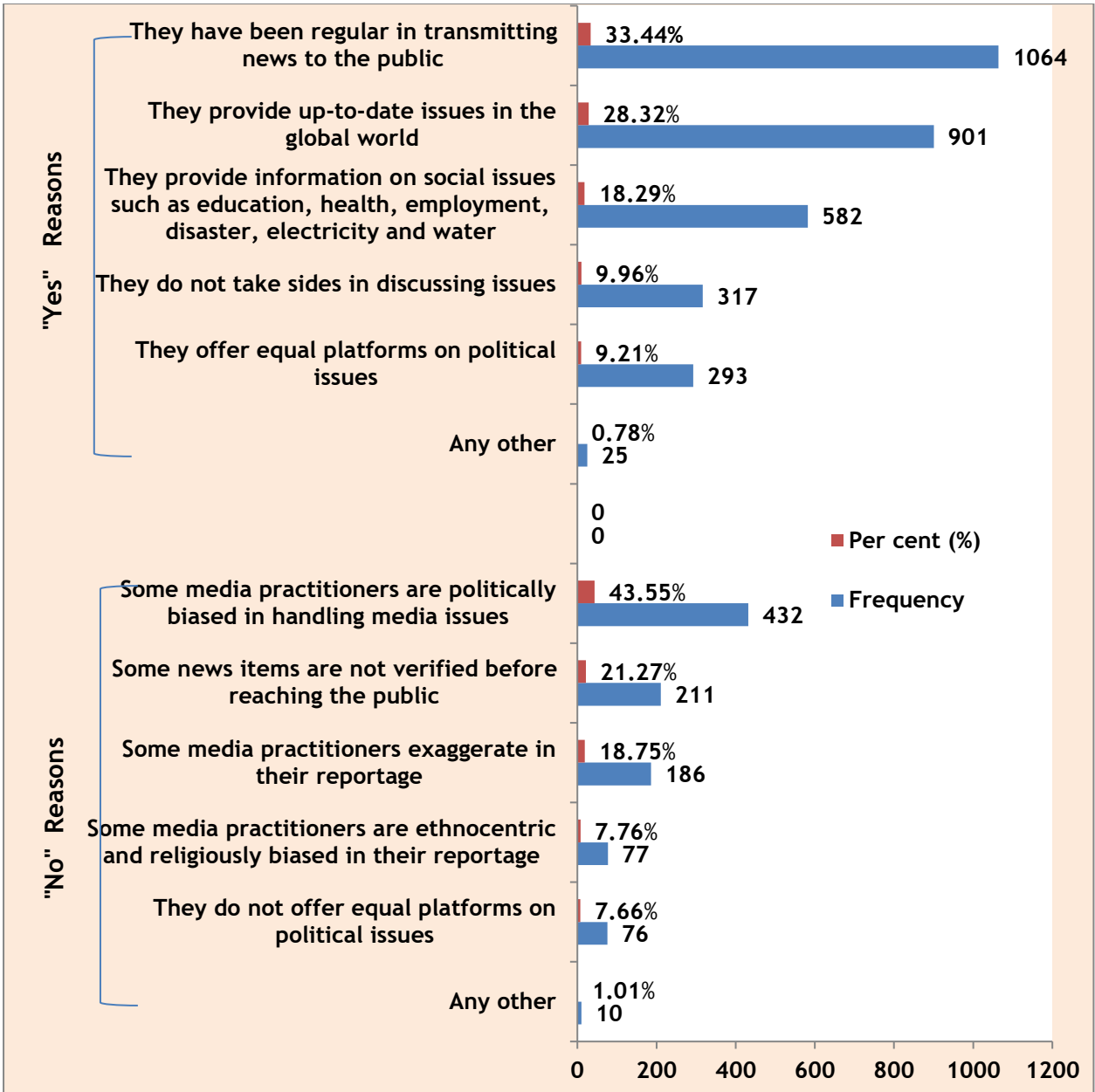
Among the “Any other” reasons were that; they provide credible and authentic information, undergo in-depth training, provide entertainment and motivate listeners/viewers.

In the opinion of those who cited “No”, reasons given were that:

- Some media practitioners are politically biased in handling information they relay to the public;
- Some news items are not verified before reaching the public;
- Some media practitioners exaggerate in their reportage;
- Some media practitioners are ethnocentric and religiously biased in their reportage; and
- They do not offer equal platforms on political issues.

Among the “Any other” reasons cited for “No” were the use of indecent languages in their reportage, lack proper training and posting of nude pictures on screens. Presented below is a figure of the various responses, their frequencies and percentages.

Fig 3.5: Yes and No reasons for whether practitioners of the various media houses exhibit competence and professionalism in their day to day handling of information they relay to the public



Roles of the media

The media as a body has several roles to play and the table below presents the major roles of the media as cited by the respondents. Notable among such roles is; to disseminate information, educate the public and provide entertainment.

Table 3.3: Roles of the media

	Frequency	Per cent (%)
To disseminate information	2299	35.23
To educate the public	1949	29.87
To provide entertainment	1340	20.54
To ensure that as the fourth organ of government, they act as watchdogs on activities of other institutions	486	7.45
To offer a platform for political participation, peace and religious messages	425	6.51
Any other	26	0.40
Total	6525	100

As to how well the roles above are being performed by the media, 7.7% of the respondents said “Excellent”, 35.5% “Very Good”, 52.5% “Good”, 3.6% “Poor” and 0.8% “Very Poor”. Clearly, majority (95.7%) of the respondents were of the view that the media is performing their roles well.

CHAPTER FOUR

MEDIA AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

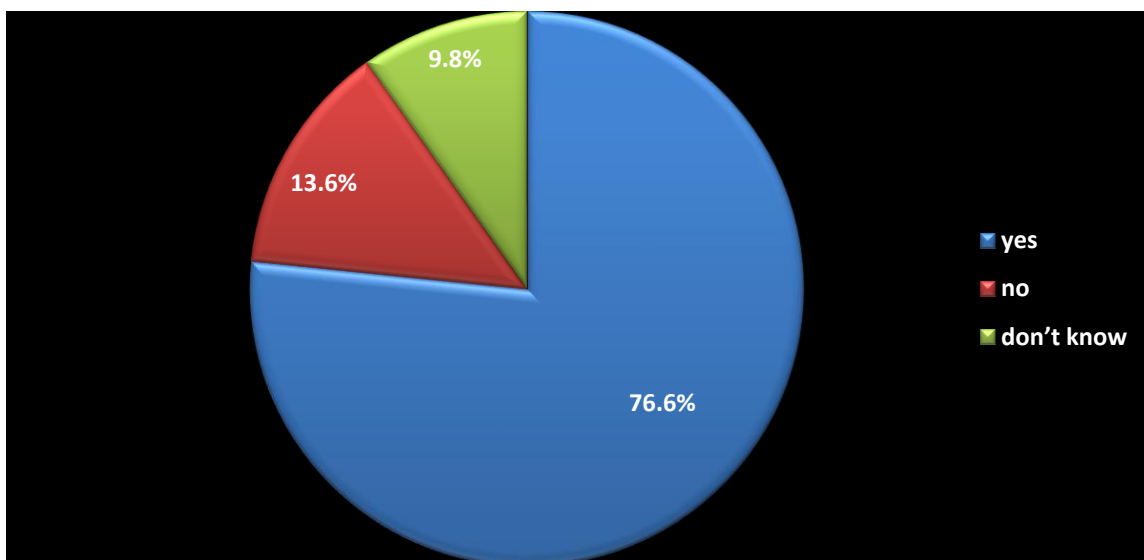
The Media is the most relied on means to communicate with and inform the citizenry about government policies as well as the alternatives to government policies proposed by opposition parties and civil society.

This chapter focuses on respondents' view on democratic consolidation by giving attention to their opinion on media freedom, general perceptions about politicians and their political parties and the conduct and manner of expressing divergent views on media platforms.

Media and democratic stability

A vast majority (76.6%) responded positively to the question on whether the media is working towards Ghana's democratic stability and success. 13.6% said the media was not working towards Ghana's democratic stability and success; and 9.8% said they "don't know". The figure below illustrates the findings.

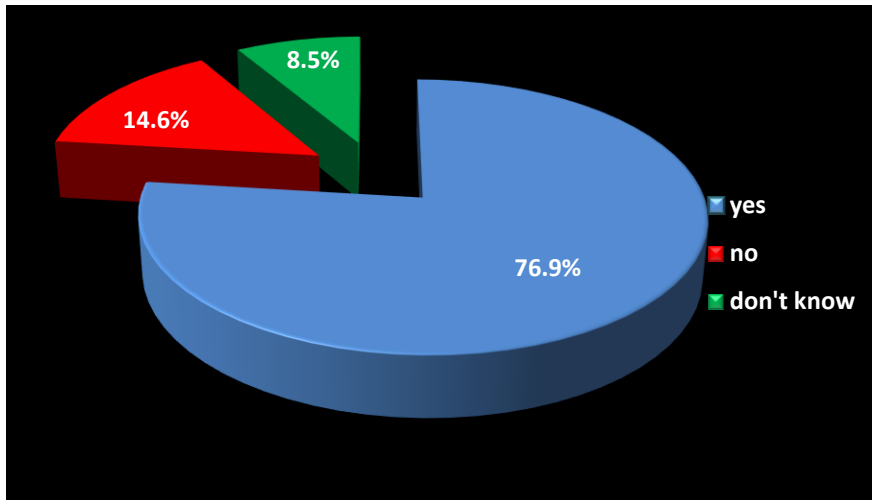
Fig 4.1: Media promoting democratic stability and success of Ghana



Media freedom and Ghana's Democracy

Respondents were asked, whether media freedom has helped Ghana’s democracy, 76.9% affirmed that media freedom has helped Ghana’s democracy, 14.6% said “no” and 8.5% said they “don’t know”. (See figure 4.2 below)

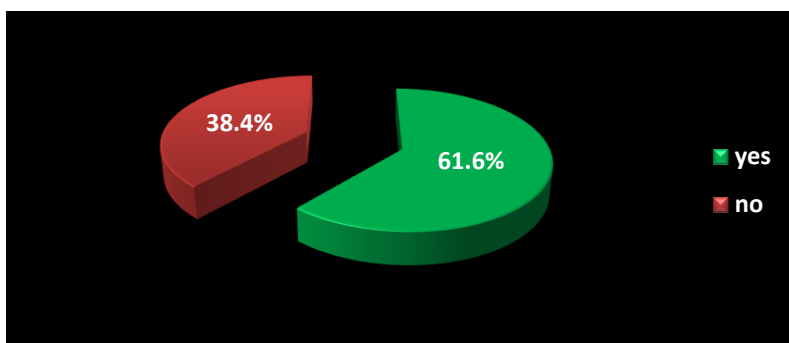
Fig 4.2: Media freedom and Ghana’s Democracy



Respondents’ opinion on the current state of the media and how it depicts the opposition and ruling party.

In response to the question “Are you happy with the current state of the media and how it portrays both the opposition and ruling parties”, 61.6% said “Yes” while 38.4% said “No”. Figure 4.3 below illustrates the findings.

Fig 4.3: Current state of the media and how it depicts the opposition and ruling party



The pressing opinion among the “Yes” responses was that the media gives equal platforms to both the opposition and ruling government signifying 38.7%. 29.3% said there was balance in their reportage and 20.9% thought the media was factual and objective in discussing issues about the opposition and ruling government.

Dominant in the “No” response was that the media does not properly verify news relating to the ruling and opposition parties before publication (32.8%) and overly criticizes the ruling government (23.8%). Those who gave “any other” responses said the media exaggerates issues which causes confusion most of the time.

Perceptions about politicians and political parties formed through media reportage

It is the media that brings the actions and inactions of politicians and political parties to the doorstep of the citizens. Therefore through patronage of the various forms of media, citizens are able to determine if politicians and political parties act in the interest of Ghanaians or not. It is from this perspective that respondents were asked; “How do you feel about the current crop of politicians in government and opposition”. Inferring from the opinions listed in the table (4.1), although majority felt that current politicians manage the affairs of the country well and implement policies and plans to develop the nation (23.6%), 21.1% said they make empty promises, while others thought they are selfish (18.6%).

The positive responses were:

- current politicians manage the affairs of the country well and implement policies and plans to develop the nation;
- they are committed to the national interest;
- they fulfill campaign promises;
- they seek the welfare of the people; and
- they educate the public on their political rights and civic responsibility.

The negative responses gathered were, they:

- mismanage and misappropriate state resources;
- make empty promises;
- are selfish;
- incite violence in the people;
- are not objective in handling issues; and
- are corrupt.

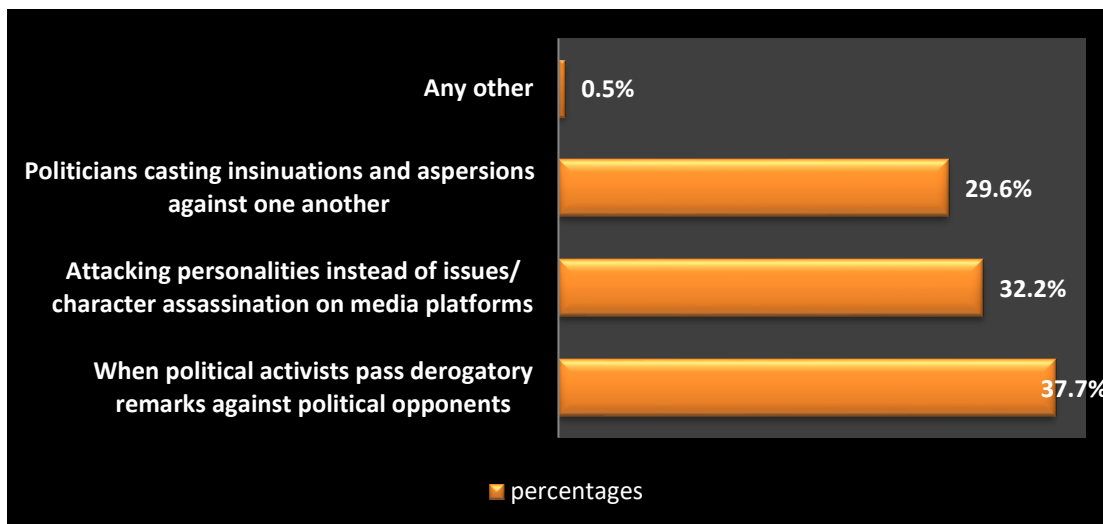
Table 4.1: How respondents feel about the current crop of politicians

Responses	Percentages (%)
They manage the affairs of the country well/implement policies and plans to develop the nation	23.6
Make empty promises	21.1
Are selfish	18.6
Mismanage and misappropriate state resources	10.3
Are not objective in handling issues	8.1
Incite violence among the citizenry/trade insults and are guilty of character assassination	4.5
Are patriotic and committed to the national interest	3.6
Fulfill campaign promises	3.5
Seek the welfare of the people/ improve their living conditions	3.0
Educate the public on their political rights and civic responsibilities	2.7
Are corrupt	0.2
Any other	0.8
Total	100.0

Opinions specified for the “any other” response category were that, some politicians are corrupt, others said most of them are not acting in the interest of the country and others also said they seek the welfare of their party faithfuls only.

The assessment went further to ask what respondents understood as “politics of insults”. The highest response 37.7% said it is when politicians pass derogatory remarks about each other and 32.2% also said when personalities are attacked instead of issues. The other responses are illustrated in figure 4.4 below.

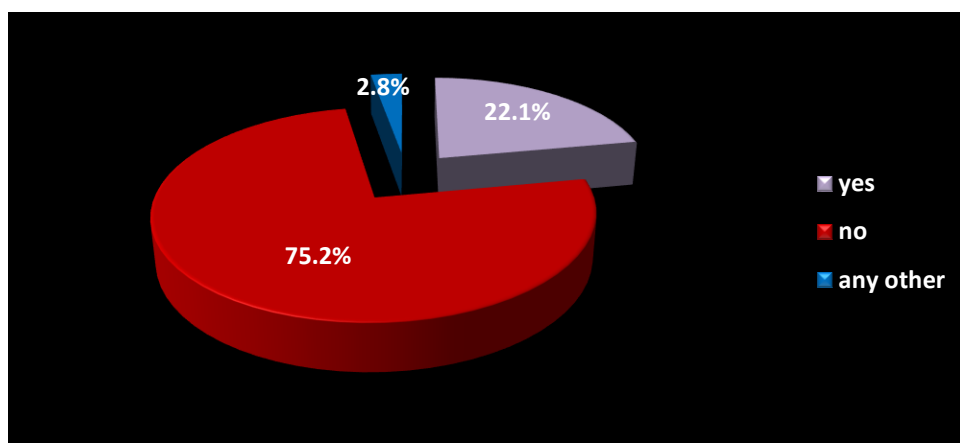
Fig 4.4: Politics of insults



Political parties acting in the interest of Ghanaians

Respondents were asked whether or not political parties act in the interest of Ghanaians. Majority (75.2%) said “no” and 22.1% said “yes”. The dominant opinion in the “any other” response representing 2.8% was “some of the politicians” act in the interest of Ghana. (See figure 4.5 below)

Fig 4.5: Political parties acting in the interest of Ghana



Upon further enquiry on why respondents said “no”, majority representing 29.9% said politicians are corrupt, 20.9% said they are more loyal to their party interest than to the national interest and 20.5% said they make campaign promises which they cannot fulfill, in order to win power.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE UPON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Introduction

The media provides a voice for the citizenry to engage with their leaders on broad issues of concern in governance. It is evident from the success of countries where democracy has been in existence for several decades that a vibrant media ensures a well-informed people to live in peace and harmony knowing they have the capacity to improve the quality of their lives by their influence on issues of national concern through the media.

The focus in this chapter is on recommendations from respondents on what they think the media and political parties should do to improve democratic governance in Ghana; it is an outline of what the people expect and how to realize these expectations.

Suggestions on how political parties should treat each other

Based on the nature of interactions among political parties on media platform, respondents offered suggestions on how they would like the various political parties to treat each other. Pertinent among these views was the appeal for politicians to be tolerant of each other which represented 49.1% of responses. This suggests the objective acceptance of dissenting views rather than discarding them and further politicians should accord respect to each other which represented 18.7% of responses. Politicians educating or sensitizing their supporters or followers to live in peace with their opponents represented 12.8% of responses.

Other suggestions given by respondents were:

- Politicians should desist from trading insults with their opponents;
- Politicians should talk more about national issues;
- Politicians should not interrupt the programs of their opponents;
- Politicians should desist from teasing and mocking of the losing parties after elections;
- Politicians should desist from defacing or tearing their opponents' posters during campaign seasons; and

- Politicians should desist from using political power and state institutions to pursue political opponents. (See table 5.1 below)

Table 5.1: Suggestions on how political parties should treat each other

Responses	Percentages (%)
Tolerate each other	49.1
Accord respect to each other	18.7
Educate/ Sensitize supporters or followers to live in peace with their opponents	12.8
Desist from trading insults with their opponents	6.1
Talk more about national issues	5.1
Not interrupt programs of their opponents	3.5
They should desist from teasing and mocking of the losing parties after elections	2.8
Not deface or tear their opponents' posters during campaign seasons	1.5
Desist from using political power and state institutions to persecute political opponents	0.4
Total	100.0

Suggestions on how to improve media practice in Ghana

Respondents took a keen interest in the professional training of media practitioners which was the leading suggestion representing 27.9% of responses on how to improve media practice in Ghana. 17.9% of responses suggested that the National Media Commission and other regulatory bodies should be more efficient and 13.7% of responses suggested that the laws and ethics guiding media practice should be strictly adhered to.

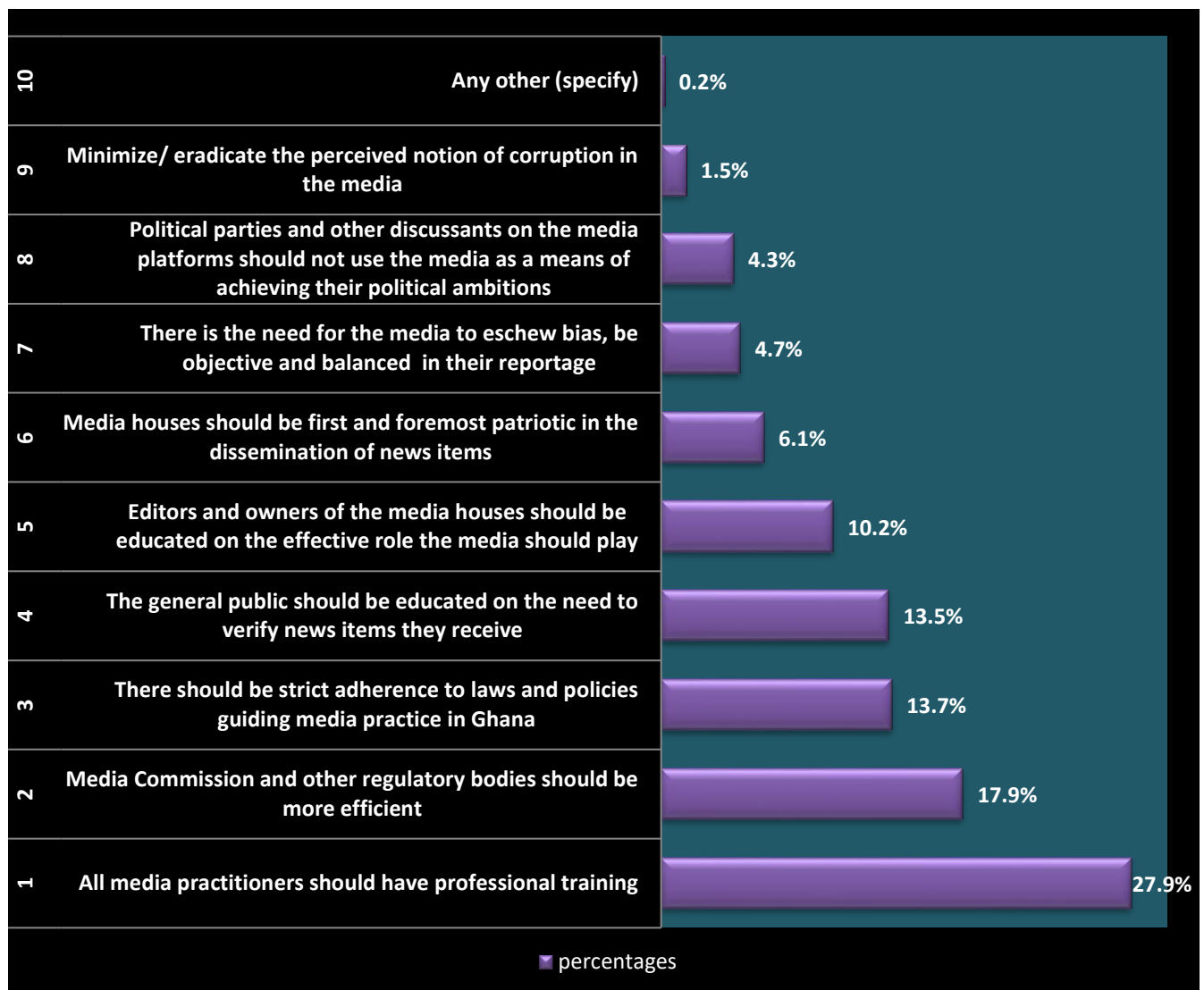
Other responses were as follows:

- the general public should be educated on the need to verify news they receive;
- editors and owners of media houses should be educated on the effective role the media should play;

- media houses should be first and foremost patriotic in the dissemination of news items;
- the need for the media to eschew bias, be objective and balanced in their reportage;
- media platforms should not be used by politicians and other discussants as a means of achieving their political ambitions; and
- the media should minimize or eradicate the perceived notion of corruption in the media.

The ‘any other’ responses gathered include the media should broadcast more educative programmes, the media should not allow insults on their platforms and the media should not exaggerate issues. (See figure 5.1 below)

Fig 5.1: Suggestions on how to improve media practice in Ghana



CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The media in Ghana has had different phases over the years from its use as an instrument to proclaim independence from colonial rule to its use as an instrument of state authority to promote political ideas in post independent Ghana. In the fourth Republican era it is a constitutionally mandated institution for disseminating information as well as ensuring responsibility and accountability of government. The Constitution of Ghana, 1992 guarantees the freedom and independence of the media. Freedom and independence of the media implies the absence of interference in the activities of the media by either an individual or state which is also vital for democracy.

The findings of the research appear to suggest that notable roles of the media as perceived by the respondents are disseminating information, educating the public and providing entertainment aimed at the general welfare of the society. Majority of respondents were of the view that the media is promoting democratic stability and success because they are objective and factual in discussing issues of national interest. Respondents affirmed that media freedom has helped Ghana's democracy.

Responses gathered suggest that the public desires curbs on media freedom and the control of certain media outlets in the dissemination of news and information for various reasons. Pertinent among them was to prevent use of insults and vulgar language in media outlets; prevent certain news from coming into the public domain; prevent inappropriate use of media outlets by owners to broadcast speculative allegations and therefore not upholding the portions of Art 164 and to protect state secret.

More than half of respondents consider media practitioners of the various media houses to exhibit competence and professionalism in their duty because of the regularity with which information is disseminated and the provision of information on global issues. However a significant number do not agree. For them, some media practitioners are politically biased in handling media issues and also hold the view that news is not accurately verified before broadcast. Although interest in political activities by the media has increased in Ghana over the years, the media should present issues objectively to avoid being perceived by the public as biased.

Respondents suggested that some media practitioners often exaggerate news and /or issues which misinforms rather than informs. Majority held the view that there should be professional training for media practitioners which suggests that respondents are not satisfied with the level of information delivery. Media institutions should endeavor to provide full, fair and balanced reports of events by reporting the facts within the context in which they occurred and must use headlines that depict events fairly and without distortions.

The findings also indicated that, through media reportage politicians are viewed by the public as managing the affairs of the country well and developing the nation. A sharp contrast to that opinion by respondents was that, politicians make empty promises and act selfishly. Political leaders should use the media as a medium to distill the negative notion the public has and build public confidence in their activities.

This report is expected to inform the general public about the impact of the media in Ghana's democracy, and direct NCCE's public education and sensitization on the issues raised in the report as well as guide civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations in their line of duty.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

**TITLE: ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STATE INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA'S
DEMOCRACY: MEDIA, DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES, AND PARLIAMENT**

**(PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED WITH UTMOST
CONFIDENTIALITY. CONSEQUENTLY YOU NEED NOT PROVIDE YOUR NAME)**

NAME OF INTERVIEWER.....

PLACE OF INTERVIEW

REGION.....

DISTRICT

CONSTITUENCY

DATE OF INTERVIEW.....

SECTION A - SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

1. Sex

i. Male.....

ii. Female.....

2. Age:

i. 18- 20.....

ii. 21-30.....

iii. 31-40.....

iv. 41-50.....

v. 51-60.....

vi. Over 60.....

3. Educational background: (highest attainment)

i. No formal education

ii. No formal education (but can speak/write in English and/or vernacular).....

iii. Basic (primary, middle, JHS, etc.)

iv. Secondary (SHS, Trg. Col., Voc. Etc.).....

v. Tertiary institution (Poly, Univ. Etc.).....

vi. Any other (please specify).....

4. Occupation:

i. Student

ii. Farmer/ fisherman.....

iii. Teacher/lecturer

iv. Civil/Public servant...

v. Entrepreneur/Industrialist.....

vi. Trader

vii. Unemployed

viii. Artisan (specify).....

ix. Any other (specify).....

5. Marital Status

i. Single

ii. Married

iii. Separated

iv. Divorced

v. Widowed

vi. Any other (specify).....

6. Religious affiliation

i. Christian.....

ii. Moslem.....

iii. Traditionalist.....

iv. Any other (specify).....

SECTION B - THE MEDIA

I) SOURCES OF MEDIA

7. What is your primary source of news and information in general? **(ss)**

- i. Radio..... ii. Television..... iii. Newspaper
iv. Internet and social Media v. Family and Friends...
vi. Any other (Specify).....

8. How often do you have access to this form of media? **(ss)**

- i. Daily... ii. Weekly..... iii. Monthly...
iv. Any other (specify).....

9. Do you think that the news you receive from the media is; **(ss)**

- i. Credible ii. Neutral iii. Partisan
iv. Any other (specify).....

II) HISTORY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

10. In your opinion should there be curbs on media freedom? **(ss)**

- i. Yes.... ii. No iii. Don't know...

11. In your opinion has the media in Ghana improved over the last twenty years? **(ss)**

- i. Yes... ii. No... iii. Don't know.....

12. In your opinion must certain media outlets be controlled in their dissemination of news and information? **(ss)**

- i. Yes.... ii. No iii. Don't know.....

12b. Give reasons for your answer? (ms)

Yes

To:

- i. Prevent certain news from coming into the public domain.....
ii. Prevent use of insults and vulgar languages in media outlets.....
iii. Protecting state secret.....
iv. Prevent inappropriate use of media outlets by owners.....
v. Any other (specify).....

No

- i. The freedom of the media must be upheld.....
- ii. To avoid political and government interference in media activities.....
- iii. To allow freedom of expression of the media.....
- iv. To ensure transparency and accountability of other institutions.....
- v. So they can hold government and public office holders accountable.....
- vi. So as to ensure agenda setting and developmental roles of the media.....
- vii. Any other (specify).....

III) ROLE OF THE MEDIA

13. How well is the media doing? (ss)

- i) Excellent
- ii) Very Good
- iii) Good
- iv) Poor
- v) Very Poor

14. In your opinion what do you think the major roles of the media are? (ms)

To:

- i. Disseminate information.....
- ii. Provide entertainment.....
- iii. Educate the public.....
- iv. Ensure that as the fourth organ of government, they act as watchdogs on activities other institutions.....
- v. Offer platform for political participation, peace and religious messages.....
- vi. Any other (specify).....

15. How well is the media performing this role? (ss)

- i) Excellent
- ii) Very Good
- iii) Good
- iv) Poor
- v) Very Poor

16. In your opinion do you think that the media practitioners of the various media houses exhibit competence and professionalism in their day to day handling of media issues? (ss)

- i. Yes.....
- ii. No.....
- iii. Any other (specify).....

16b. Please explain your answer. (ms)

Yes

They:

- i. Have been regular in transmitting news to the public.....
- ii. Provide up-to-date issues in the global world.....
- iii. Do not take sides in discussing issues.....
- iv. Offer equal platforms on political issues.....
- v. Provide information on social issues such as education, health, employment, disaster, electricity and water.....
- vi. Any other (specify).....

No

- i. They do not offer equal platforms on political issues.....
- ii. Some media practitioners are politically biased in handling media issues.....
- iii. Some news items are not verified before reaching the public.....
- iv. Some media practitioners exaggerate in their reportage.....
- v. Some media practitioners are ethnocentric and religiously biased in their reportage.....
- vi. Any other (specify).....

IV) MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

17. In your opinion is the media working towards Ghana's democratic stability and success?

(ss)

- i. Yes..... ii. No iii. Don't know.....

18. Do you think that media freedom has helped this country's democracy? **(ss)**

- i. Yes..... ii. No iii. Don't know.....

19. Are you happy with the current state of the media and how it portrays both the opposition and ruling parties? **(ss)**

- i. Yes..... ii. No

19b. Please explain your answer. **(ms)**

Yes

- i. There is a balance in their reportage.....
- ii. They give equal platforms to both the opposition and the ruling government.....
- iii. They verify properly their news items before publication.....
- iv. They are factual and objective in the discussion of issues concerning both the opposition and ruling government.....
- v. Any other (specify).....

No

- i. They overly criticize the ruling government.....
- ii. They are imbed with the ruling government.....
- iii. They do not verify properly their news item concerning the ruling party or the opposition before publication depending on their political affiliations.....
- iv. There is no balance in their reportage.....
- v. They are not factual in their reportage.....
- vi. Any other (specify).....

20. Select three suggestions on what you think can be done to improve on the media in Ghana.

(select 3)

- i. Media Commission and other regulatory bodies should be more efficient....
- ii. The general public should be educated on the need to verify news items they receive.....
- iii. All media practitioners should have professional training.....
- iv. Editors and owners of the media houses should be educated on the effective role the media should play.....
- v. There should be strict adherence to laws and policies guiding media practice in Ghana.....
- vi. Media houses should be first and foremost patriotic in the dissemination of news items.....
- vii. Minimize/ eradicate the perceived notion of corruption in the media.....
- viii. There is the need for the media to eschew bias, be objective and balanced in their reportage.....
- ix. Political parties and other discussants on the media platforms should not use the media as a means of achieving their political ambitions.....
- x. Any other (specify).....

21. How do you feel about the current crop of politicians in government and opposition? **(ms)**

They:

- i. Manage the affairs of the country well/ develop the nation.....
- ii. Are patriotic and committed to the national interest.....
- iii. Fulfil campaign promises.....
- iv. Seek the welfare of the people/ improve their living conditions.....
- v. Educate the public on their political rights and civic responsibilities.....
- vi. Are corrupt.....
- vii. Mismanage and misappropriate state resources.....
- viii. Make empty promises.....
- ix. Are selfish.....
- x. Incite violence among the citizenry/trade insults and are guilty of character assassination.....
- xi. Are not objective in handling issues.....
- xii. Any other (specify).....

22. What do you understand by “politics of insults”? (ms)

- i. When political activists pass derogatory remarks against political opponents
- ii. Politicians casting insinuations and aspersions against one another.....
- iii. Attacking personalities instead of issues/ character assassination on media platforms.....
- iv. Any other (specify).....

23. In your opinion are the various political parties acting in the interest of Ghanaians? (ss)

- i. Yes....
- ii. No
- iii. Any other (specify).....

23b. If No please explain. (ms)

Political parties:

- i. Are corrupt.....
- ii. Amass wealth for their leaders and followers.....
- iii. Are more loyal to their party interest than that of the national interest.....
- iv. Embark on short term unsustainable projects to win political power.....
- v. Make promises they cannot fulfil in order to win power.....
- vi. Any other (specify).....

24. Please give two suggestions on how you would like the various political parties to treat each other. **(select 2)**

They should

- i. Tolerate each other.....
- ii. Accord respect to each other.....
- iii. Educate/ Sensitize supporters or followers to live at peace with their opponents....
- iv. Desist from trading insults on their opponents.....
- v. Not deface or tear their opponents' posters during campaign seasons.....
- vi. Talk more about national issues.....
- vii. They should desist from teasing and mocking of the losing parties after elections.
- viii. Not interrupt programs of their opponents.....
- ix. Desist from using political power and state institutions to persecute political opponents.....
- x. Any other (specify).....

APPENDIX B: SELECTED DISTRICTS

1. Ahafo Ano North
2. Ahafo Ano South
3. Amansie Central
4. Asante Akim North
5. Asante Akim South
6. Atwima Nwabiagya
7. Bosomtwe
8. Kumasi Metropolitan
9. Kumawu
10. Kwabre East
11. Obuasi
12. Sekyere East
13. Asunafo South
14. Asutifi South
15. Dormaa East
16. Jaman North
17. Nkoranza South
18. Pru
19. Sunyani Municipal
20. Abura/Asebu/Kwaman
nkese
21. Agona West
22. Ajumako/Enyan/Essia
m
23. Cape Coast
Metropolitan
24. Effutu Municipal
25. Ekumfi
26. Twifo/Heman/Lower
/Denkyira
27. Akwapim South
28. Atiwa
29. Birim Central
30. Kwaebibirem
31. Lower Manya Krobo
32. New Juaben
33. Suhum/Kraboah/Coalt
ar
34. Upper West Akim
35. West Akim
36. Accra Metropolitan
37. Ashaiman
38. Ga South
39. Kpone Katamanso
40. La Dade-Kotopon
41. Ledzokuku-Krowor
42. Shai-Osu Doku
43. Tema Metropolitan
44. Central Gonja
45. Chereponi
46. East Mamprusi
47. Gushiegu
48. Kumbungu
49. Sawla-Tuna-Kalba
50. Tamale Metropolitan
51. Zabzugu
52. Bawku Municipal
53. Bongo
54. Builsa South
55. Kassena Nankana East
56. Jirapa
57. Sissala West
58. Wa Municipal
59. Adaklu
60. Biakoye
61. Central Tongu
62. Ho Municipal
63. Ketu North
64. Kpando Municipal
65. Krachi Nchumuru
66. Bibiani/Anhwiaso/Be
kwai
67. Juaboso
68. Mpohor
69. Prestea-Huni Valley
70. Sekondi Takoradi
Metropolitan
71. Tarkwa-Nsuaem
Municipal
72. Wassa Amenfi East