UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES OF MEDIA ETHICS BY BROADCAST JOURNALISTS: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED RADIO STATIONS IN CAPE COAST

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Mary Ama Manton declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, in either part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.
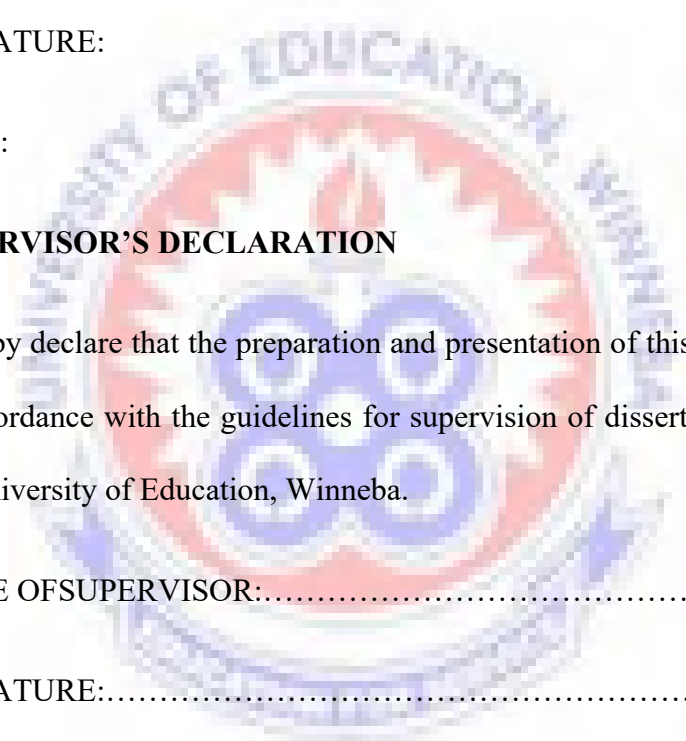
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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OFSUPERVISOR:……………………………………………

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To the 2018-2019 CoMMSA group, cheers to hard work and comradeship.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to Salifu Bawa, my dearest friend and husband, for your special interest and immense support in seeing me do this. And to my Soldiers who kept watch until I got home from school, thank you for giving me the space to work. Nabie, Ansomgwine and Dellenmwine, I look forward to your ground-breaking exploits. To my mother, for the heroic role you played and continue to play. And to my adopted children, I'm grateful for the challenge.

To the late Richard John Butt;
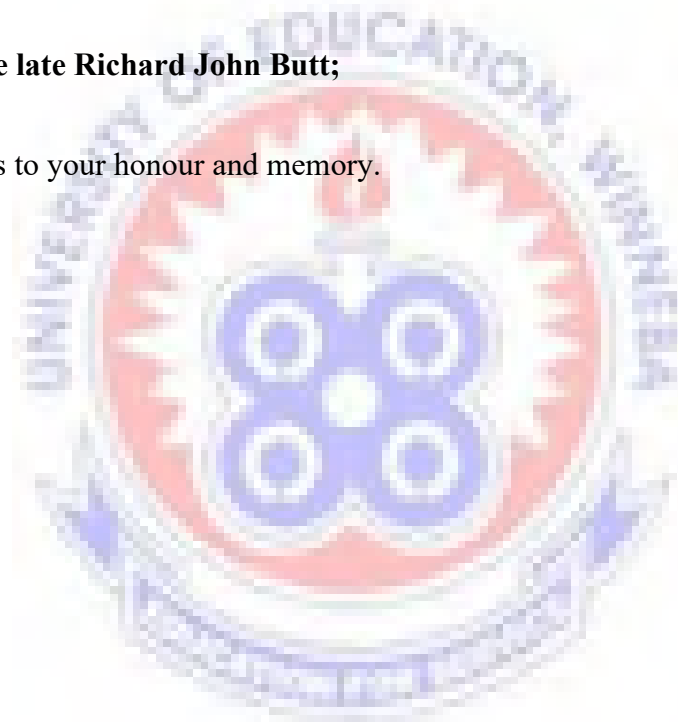
This is to your honour and memory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATL   Atlantic

BBC   British Broadcasting Corporation

GBC   Ghana Broadcasting Corporation

GCRN   Ghana Community Radio Network

GIBA   Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association

GJA   Ghana Journalist Association

GNA   Ghana News Agency

MFWA   Media Foundation for West Africa

NMC   National Media Commission

NUJ   Nigerian Union of Journalists

PNDC   Provisional National Defense Council

RIB   Republic Of Iran Broadcasting

RTP   Radio and Television Personality

UCC   University of Cape Coast

UNESCO   United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

WJEC   World Journalism Education Congress

ABSRACT

The broadcast media occupy a significant place in developed and growing democracies worldwide, providing media consumers with diverse entertainment and information products, impacting culture and helping define social reality. There is an increasing global demand for broadcast media. As the use of radio broadcast media increases in Ghana, the concern about the standard of journalistic practice has become a problem. The study investigated the knowledge and practice of media ethics by broadcast journalists in three radio stations in the Cape Coast Metropolis. A qualitative case study, using key informant interviews, observation and focus group discussions was adopted. The study was hinged on the principles of media ethics namely; Utilitarianism, Golden Mean principle, Categorical Imperative and the Pluralistic theory of Value. It was found that though journalists were highly aware of the ethical principles that guide the practice of journalism, their practice do not reflect their knowledge. Also, radio presenters who worked in national and international media houses had a huge influence on the presentation styles of the stations that syndicated their news and programmes. It was revealed that media managers had an undue influence on media content, and that the stations served as the mouthpiece of the institutions that operated them. It recommended that media regulators should ensure that continuous training in ethics is complimented by provision of job and personal security of journalists by media owners and government.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The media occupy a very strategic position in every civilized society. As an influential instrument of education, its nature and diversity significantly shape the collective values of society (Anderson & Gabszewicz, 2005). According to Mohd, Hamdan and Adnan (2003), the media is critically important due to the plethora of functions it performs. The hours of media consumption for many have been overwhelming, and the trend appears to be increasing. Society is indistinguishably hooked onto media, whether good or bad and people are now living in a media culture whose influence continues to be ubiquitous.

The contribution of the media to growing democracies, provision of entertainment and information can therefore not be overemphasized (McQuail, 1994). The broadcast media pervade society with very strategic contents that appeal to people of all age brackets. As consumers continue to exhibit an insatiable appetite for information and entertainment, ethical issues have become a concern. According to Albaran (2010), television viewing, radio listening and internet surfing dominate leisure activity in United States and many developing countries across the world.

There is an increasing global demand for broadcast media-especially radio and social media. As the use of broadcast media increases, the concern about the standard of journalistic practice has become a worldwide problem (Albaran, 2010).

According to the Academy of Finland (2018), the advent of social media and news glut has also created a huge challenge for traditional media that sometimes depends on such unconventional sources for news. This has presented a challenge as unprofessional and untrained all have the same opportunities as learned professional to produce and publish content to try to persuade their audience. The Academy of Finland (2018), holds the view that bypassing journalistic gatekeepers for news satisfaction creates amateurs who are not bound by professional journalistic ethics or codes of conduct, such as the pursuit of truth, impartiality, objectivity, balance and responsible data acquisition.

In Africa, the situation is not any different. With mobile phone use and increase in internet penetration, many Africans have growing access to smartphones and internet. The Academy asserts that news production, which traditionally happened to be the preserve of journalists, is no more so. Social media has made it easy for citizen journalists to be sources of information. Live events are captured by social media users and bloggers who have access to smart phones. The development gives society all the satisfaction of timely news from such sources. This has somehow had adverse effect on traditional media that is sometimes tempted or lured into such a competition with social media to produce news that is not factual, objective or true. Since every thriving democracy depends on a free and independent media, the credibility of news is paramount to the growth of Ghana's fledgling democracy.

1.1.1 The Opportunities with Broadcast Media

Radio as a medium of broadcast continues to play a dynamic role in generating a stage for imagination. The reach of radio, according to Wilson (2005), is not only limited to urban areas but it has covered a wide range even to the remotest areas of human habitation thereby giving people living in the rural parts of the country enormous benefits with new strategies on how to explore their environment and giving them the added advantage of following development in urban areas. The programmes on radio cater the interest of rural communities which constitute small-scale industries, farming, forestry, and fisheries, which have helped rural people in their day to day activities.

Ghana is a country of rich ethnic and linguistic diversity among its population of over 29 million people according to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS 2018). With the over fifty languages and hundreds of dialects, radio as a medium of information dissemination is able to penetrate into these communities as they are uniquely served in their local languages.

 In common with most African countries, Ghana has a long-established publicly-owned and financed broadcaster, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) which provides national and regional radio services and a national television service. GBC has played a major role in engendering national identity and development throughout the country's history. Over the last thirteen years, Ghana's cultural heritage has begun to find new forms of expression in the media through the growth of private commercial and community radio broadcasting. According to the Ghana Broadcasting Study Report (2005), the liberalisation of broadcasting has brought a new pluralism in the media that has enabled different voices and opinions to be

aired and heard. The report captures that this development has however not produced the expected quality of service. The code of ethics of journalists is therefore the sure guarantee for media practitioners to stay true to their profession.

1.1.2 Historical perspective of media in Ghana

Broadcasting and broadcast regulation in Ghana is first understood in the context of the colonial and post-independence political history. Before the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution, the mass media; broadcast and print, were dominated by the State through the operations of the Ghana Broadcasting Corperation. After independence, the service remained under government control and its programming policies continued to be closely linked to the priorities of the State where it served as an instrument of propaganda and control Karikari, (2000). In 1957, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana became the first modern African country to achieve independence from colonial rule. In the account of Jones-Quartey, (1974), as cited by Owusu (2012), Ghana was legally a one-party state by 1964. Public gatherings were strictly controlled, press censorship was extensive and the state broadcaster was reduced to little more than a government mouthpiece. The 1966 coup placed the country under military rule until 1969. It was during this first period of military rule, in 1968, that the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Decree was adopted.

The journey to the present system of governance has been characterized by different periods of instability and diverse intermittent political cultures. Between the periods 1957-1966, 1969-1972 and 1979-1981, Ghana experimented with three different civilian governments amidst military regimes Afrimap, (2007) and

Rockson, (1990). Since the overthrow of Ghana's first President- Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah in1966, Ghana had been ruled by nine governments; five military and four democratic administrations.

The promulgation of the 1992 constitution ushered the country into her forth republic and this era is quite significant as far as the development of the media in Ghana is concerned.

1.1.3 Implications of political instability on the media

The change in the political structure under the pre-constitutional rule had diverse repercussions for the state-owned media. According to Hasty (2005) (cited in Gadzekpo, 2008), each time a new faction assumed power, the editorial staff of the state newspapers were either reshuffled or replaced, and the editorial positions of the papers were transformed to mirror the personal and ideological commitments of the new government. In those dispensations, the capture of political power was strengthened and affirmed by the control of the state media. The media was needed in disseminating information to the citizens and announcing the takeover of a new government. When this ritual was performed by the media, state apparatus conformed accordingly regarding functions and chain of command. This era was described as the dark days of the media.

1.1.4 The fourth republic

The Fourth Republic marks the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and it was led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. Before

this, Gadzekpo (1997) recounts that the wind of democracy swept across the African continent, and with the enhancement of communication as a result of advancement in technology, it became practically unacceptable to stifle freedom of expression in the 1990s. Immense pressure from both domestic entities and the international community subsequently propelled several measures, leading to the beginning of the Fourth Republic. Finally, in April 1992, the manuscript of the new Constitution was voted upon in a referendum and consequently adopted in January 1993. (Afrimap, 2007). Under this republic, Mr. Rawlings abrogated most of the repressive decrees that characterized the activities of the media. In place of that, his administration emphasized the imperatives of having an objective and responsible press as part of Ghana's political libralisation. The era ushered in a profound sense of independence for both state and private newspapers.

In a similar vein, it is observed that as far as the press is concerned, the Fourth Republican Constitution presented some of the most liberalised media policies throughout the history of Ghana (Gadzekpo, 1997). The Constitution was promulgated along with the Criminal Libel Law that suppressed press freedom and expression until its abolition by parliament on 27th July, 2001.

In the views of Gadzekpo (2002) and Kumado (1999), the last two decades and over have been the best for the media in Ghana in terms of favourable political conditions in playing their watchdog role over governments and other powerful interests in society. This positive development is as a result of the return to democratic rule in Ghana, after so many years of authoritarian rule that had

negatively impacted on the growth of independent democratic institutions, including the media (Ninsin, 1998).

1.1.5 Understanding the Media Landscape

The operations of Ghana's media is comprehensively understood when one considers historical antecedent and the happenings of the pre-constitutional period. Like the chronicles of many African countries, the media in Ghana has travelled far. The case of Ghana is unique, particularly because, as Anoka (1997) notes, Ghana, then the Gold Coast has had a long and active history of newspapers beginning in the nineteenth century that mainly served as propaganda tool for governments.

The period from the 1960s to the 1990s was critical in establishing professional standards of journalism in the country. At these periods, a number of institutions of the nation were being established, and the press, both government and private, was emerging as an important actor in establishing patterns of governance (Diedong, 2008). Between 1992 and 1993, Anoka (1997) recounts that opposition political parties boycotted national elections and this meant that the press became the informal voice of resistance defining the kind of democratic governance Ghanaians wanted. The lifting of the ban against private media in 1992 permitted the emergence of dozens of small newspapers which also abused their new found freedom (Koomson, 1996).

However, in granting the media's freedom, the 1992 constitution is clearly explicit in demanding responsible reportage from the media by holding on to some level of

power to enable government check those who were unethical in the performance of their duties. This explains the presence of the Criminal Libel Law in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

1.1.6 National Media Policy

Six years after the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the National Media Commission (NMC) advanced a National Media Policy with a group of media operators and experts. The policy outlines a guide for the operation and enhancement of all the various mass media. The principal focus of the policy was to set standards and provide benchmarks for measuring media performance. The policy sets out ethical concerns that should guide the development of the media in the country. It defines guidelines for programme content and for the operations of the media. An essential aim of the policy was for the media to serve the well-being of all Ghanaians, especially the disadvantaged. (GBS, 2005). It regards all media and services as a public trust and therefore holds that the public interest shall be paramount in the operation of all media. The policy again aims at promoting and ensuring a free, independent, dynamic and public spirited media that will provide access for all to participate freely, fully and creatively at the community, national and global levels. (GBS, 2005).

1.1.7 Ethical concerns in the Ghanaian media

Media is the reflection of society and it depicts what and how society works. Media is the only medium which helps in making people informed. It also helps in entertaining the public, educate and make people aware of the current happenings. Media has today become the voice of our entire society. There is a variety of media platform that has stimulated the thoughts of the young generation and other sections of society more eloquently. The growing numbers of radio stations in every corner of the country have also awakened discussions about ethical breaches in the media industry.

Currently, in almost every district, there is a local radio station. According to the National Communication Authority (2017), there are about 392 radio stations in Ghana. The Afrobarometer report of 2018 has also captured 471 radio stations operating in the country. Newspapers with national reach are also available in a number of communities. With active internet connectivity, online portals also provide ready news just by the click of a button. There is easy access to television in virtually every home. From the fore-going, the influence and contribution of media in the country can therefore not be overemphasized.

Ghana's media has been described as one of the most independent and finest entity in the West African sub region. In March 2010, the country was ranked first in press freedom among the 54 countries on the African content, placing the 27th position in the world. At the 2018 GJA awards, the President of the Ghana Journalist Association, Mr Affail Monny noted that over the years, Ghana has documented an impressive record regarding press freedom and had moved from a second place to

first in Africa. However in the 2019 media ranking by Reporters Without Borders, Ghana plummeted from its enviable position. The country lost its status as Africa's best-ranked country in the World Press Freedom Index 2018, from 23rd to 27th position.

This development is a concern to both local and international media watchers who have attributed the drop to excesses of politicians and unethical practices by journalists. The murder of Ahmed Suale, an investigative journalists working for the Tiger PI group which happened in 2019 has been cited as a major concern in Ghana's media landscape that demand attention.

Aside this, there are also apprehensions about journalists not observing their own standards of practice. Quoting the GJA and NMC, Owusu (2012) says unethical journalism and corruption in the media is posing a danger to Ghana's democracy. The National Media Commission, (NMC), the constitutionally mandated body that regulates media activities in the country contends that the public is becoming disenchanted with the rate at which journalists are abusing the powers given them under the 1992 Constitution. The two media bodies acknowledge that unethical journalistic practices are undermining progress in the media landscape in Ghana (Owusu, 2012). Diedong, (2008) further enumerates that ethical breaches that have been identified among journalism include presenting promotional materials as news, deceptive stories, fabrications, plagiarism, secret recordings of people's private lives and others.

The issues of ethics have been raised on countless platforms especially because some media practitioners have lowered the standards of the profession drastically

in the Fourth Republic in terms of following regulations to the practice of journalism. To an end, some sections of the Ghanaian public are beginning to raise concerns about the abuse of the freedom given to journalists in the country. Others have doubted the media's ability to promote good governance, democracy and to uphold the rule of law.

For example, during the regime of Ghana's former President Rawlings, some media houses turned against each other arguing on ethics of their practices. These concerns brought the editors of the Ghanaian Chronicle and the Free Press on a collision course, according to Dzisah (2010). The story was about the President's wife's use of an expensive Jacuzzi bath tub and alleged sex pleasures she derives from it. The contents of that article left all decent people livid and utterly insulted.

Another significant event that happened in the Fourth Republic which sparked national debate includes that of the Montie FM saga under the Mahama administration. According to news reports, the radio host with the Accra based Montie FM, Salifu Maase and two panelists, Alistair Nelson and Godwin Ako-Gunn made derogatory and treasonable remarks about the courts and that of the Chief Justice, Georgina Theodore Wood. In a transcription, the host and the panelist made the following remarks:

You judges sit in your offices and use your left hand to show people what

they should do. We know your houses. I can tell you instantaneously about

where all the high court judges reside. The houses of the influential ones are

not far-fetched. Nash, at Mataheko, says I should tell you, Georgina Wood,

that if you give yourself the chance for the country to end up in war, he will marry you. He will marry you during the time of the war. You think you are safe in your offices. The police should seize the passports of the leaders before the election so that none can escape when the country is turned upside down.myjoyonline.com

These comments were roundly condemned by all, leading to the three, together with the owners of the media house, pleading guilty to the charges of contempt and were sentenced on July 27, 2016. Upon the presidential pardon granted them, President Mahama said in a statement that:

"I remind all Ghanaians of the need to respect the institutions of state and exercise freedom of speech responsibly, mindful of the need to preserve peace and national unity." citinews.com.

According to the NMC, "the greatest threat to press freedom and Ghana's democracy is media irresponsibility and the refusal by journalists to abide by the code of ethics of the profession." (GNA, March 2011).

The comment by the Commission gives credence to the perception that ethical breaches still exist in the media and it has dire consequences on the country's flourishing democracy.

In her keynote address at the 23rd Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) Awards ceremony 2018, the Chief Justice of Ghana, Justice Sophia Akuffo, asked media practitioners to exercise discernment, responsibility and strike a balance in determining public interest over the breach of individual privacy during their

investigations. She said the act of breaching privacy should only be used as the last resort after all ethical methods in getting a story had been exhausted, stressing that in breaching the privacy of individuals, relevant security agencies should be involved and such an action must be carried out within the confines of the law.

According to Justice Akuffo; "You cannot break into somebody's house and install cameras, claiming you are conducting investigation in the interest of the public". citinews.com.

The observation by the Chief Justice goes to buttress the worrying perception that unethical practices are still prevalent in the media and must be given attention by all well-meaning Ghanaians. It again reinforces the understanding that in as much as such information obtained in a questionable manner is to serve public interest, it should not also hurt the interest of same. A 2018 investigative piece by Anas Aremeyaw Anas dubbed 'Number 12', in which he employed subterfuge to collect video recorded evidence of corruption involving officials that oversee the game of football, opened the debate further on the issues of observance of media ethics.

In Owusu (2012), the antagonistic relationship between the media in Ghana as a result of political expediency was also noted as an issue that bothers on ethics. The author explains that some journalists worked according to the dictates and pace of politicians and political parties, instead of the general public good.

The issue of unprofessionalism has therefore been identified as a major constraint for the African media. Unprofessionalism that characterises the media on the continent is likened to that of America in the 1940s which necessitated the setting up of the Commission on Freedom of the Press (Tettey, 2006).

Media practitioners have been accused of professional recklessness such as misleading front page headlines, inaccurate news articles and untruthful reports (Gadzekpo, 2008). The problem has been attributed to the euphoria over the new-found freedom in Africa, following the return to multiparty rule (Tettey, 2006). This euphoria implanted in the journalists and media personnel a false impression that they could write and say anything, without recourse to ethical principles of fairness, accuracy, and truth. Kasoma, (1997) and Tettey, (2006) identified other practices as journalists wrongly perceiving themselves as opposition elements to the ruling government, thus undermining journalistic ethics. Such situations portray journalists as irresponsible, self-serving, unaccountable and a threat to the credibility and sustenance of the democratic process. According to Mupfurutsa (1999), "the media has become the object of public and government outrage. Journalism has been equated with uncivilized political propaganda and criticized for its bias, irresponsible and unethical behavior." (as cited in Tettey, (2006).

1.1.8 Defining the ethics of journalism

The concept of ethics comes from the Greek tradition or philosophy, which is the study of what is good, both for the individual and for society. Patterson and Wilkins, (2007) posit that ethics is about learning to make rational choices between what is morally justifiable action and what is not. The definition can also be extended to mean distinguishing among choices, all of which may be morally justifiable, but

some more justifiable than others. The affirmation is that people should be able to explain their ethical decisions to others and that the ability to explain ethical choices is an important skill for journalists, who in the course of reporting a single story, are faced with making several ethical decisions. Ethics is defined, first of all, as standards of conduct that distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, and so on. It is also an academic discipline that is concerned with questions about duty, honor, integrity, virtue, justice, and the good life (Ulman, 2015).

The BBC Ethics Guide 25, defines ethics as a system of moral principles and a branch of philosophy which defines what is good for individuals and society. At its simplest, it says ethics is a system of moral principles. They affect how individuals make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy.

At the 2010 World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC, 2010) at Grahamstown, South Africa, 26 participants defined journalism ethics as incorporation of normative rules such as accuracy, objectivity, balance, dignity, public interest, among others. Ethical questions tie into the core of the practice of journalism itself where journalists make the critical decisions of what must be published and what must not be. It is therefore expected that one's knowledge of ethics will guide and affect his or her practice of journalism.

1.1.8.1 Ethical principles of journalism

The content of this research is based on the acceptance of the five core principles of media ethics by WJEC, (2010). The five core principles are explained as follows:

➢ Truth and Accuracy: According to this principle, Journalists cannot always guarantee truth, but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of the profession. The principle advocates that Journalists should always strive for accuracy, give all the relevant facts, and ensure that facts have been checked.

➢ Independence: Journalists must be independent voices; should not act formally or informally on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural.

➢ Justice: While there is no obligation to present every side of a story in every piece, stories should be balanced and add context. Objectivity is not always possible, and may not always be desirable, but impartial and just reporting builds trust and confidence. Justice means to treat people fairly. This might entail treating equals equally whenever possible. However, it might also mean treating some people differently when their differences are relevant. For instance, the choice to provide more health care to low-income areas where health problems are often greater and healthcare is traditionally less accessible. Some philosophers believe justice means equality of distribution of resources, while others claim it requires only equality of access (Schwartz et al. 2002). A person has been treated justly if treated according to what is fair, due, or owed. For example, if equal political rights are due to all citizens, then justice is done when those rights are accorded (Beauchamp, 2008). The terms fairness, (what is deserved), and entitlement have been used by various philosophers, in attempts to explain justice. These accounts interpret justice as fair, equitable, and appropriate treatment in light of what is due or owed to persons. An

injustice involves a wrongful act or omission that denies people resources or protections to which they have a right (Beauchamp & Childress, 2009).

➢ Humanity: Journalists should do no harm. What is published or broadcast may be hurtful, but journalists should be aware of the impact of words and images on the lives of others.

➢ Accountability: A sign of professionalism and responsible journalism is the ability to be held accountable.

The above principles are corroborated by the 5 basic ethical values of journalism by the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) which places accuracy above speed in all forms of publications. The code also differentiates between fact, opinion and commentary such that news is presented objectively without embellishments. It puts greater emphasis on obtaining information, videos, data, photographs and illustrations only by honest, straightforward, fair and open means—unless otherwise tampered by public interest considerations. The GJA code of ethics enlists media practitioners to respects embargoes from news sources and cautions media persons from intruding into people's private lives, unless justified by overriding consideration of public interest.

1.2   Problem statement

The role of the media in establishing and strengthening governance and social discourse cannot be over emphasized. In Ghana for instance, the media since 1992 has been seen to facilitate participatory democracy, and journalism has played

significant roles in safeguarding Ghana's constitution and other democratic effort. Karikari, (2000) and Owusu (2012). The importance of the media and the benefits of its practice to any growing society is crucial.

Hasty (2005), has however documented that Ghana allows a relatively high degree of media freedom which opens a space for what many consider a disreputable, irresponsible and the multiplication of tabloid newspapers and magazines. The study observed, that in Ghana, journalism is basically the right to free expression and this right should not be the preserve of a few in society. Attempts by professionals to stick to the code of ethics will mean excluding a larger part of the population from freedom of expression. This assertion goes to buttress a fundamental problem that the field should be left open to those who are ready to violate codes of ethics in the name of freedom of expression.

Diedong (2008) raises concerns about journalists not observing their own standards of practice, with widespread reports of unethical and irresponsible journalism. Hasty (2005) and Owusu (2012) hold the view that the expanding media industry has seen a significant number of untrained practitioners who have consistently disregarded the ethics that guide the profession. It is believed that the quality of journalism is affected by the knowledge of media ethics. In the Philippines for example, available literature has shown that awareness affect practice. A study conducted by Daganato et al (2016) concluded that there is a significant relationship between the awareness of ethics and practices of print journalists in Cagayan de Oro City in the Philippines.

.Diedong (2008) studied the operations of Ghana's media and considered the coverage of political party stories by the print media and how such skewed reportage affects standards and practice. However, fewer studies have been done in media ethics in broadcast journalism in Ghana. Though prevailing literature such as Daganato et al (2016), Diedong (2008) and Owusu (2012), shed light on the subject of media ethics, attention is yet to be given to broadcast journalism, specifically, radio, and whether journalist's knowledge of media ethics affect practices.

This study therefore seeks to assess the knowledge of media ethics and practice among journalists in selected radio stations in Cape Coast.

1.3   Specific objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess the knowledge of broadcast journalists on media ethics

2. Investigate the factors that affect the practice of media ethics.

3. Determine the importance of media ethics among broadcast journalists.

1.4   Research questions

The study intends to provide insight to the following questions;

1. What do broadcast journalists know about media ethics?

2. What factors influence the practice of media ethics?

3. What is the importance of media ethics among broadcast journalists?

1.5   Significance

The study is significant considering Ghana's enviable position in Africa's political freedom as the beacon of hope. The monumental role played by the media in the achievement of the country's political independence cannot be discounted. Gadzekpo (2002). The media must therefore be kept on its toes to play the role that will foster the democratic credentials of the country. Adherence to ethical standards in the media landscape is crucial in the way journalists shape content particularly (Esser, 1999), hence the need to critically explore the knowledge of journalists in the practice of ethics. The study is crucially needed because numerous concerns have been raised over fallen standards in the media profession (Nyabuga, 2012; Mbeke, Okello & Ugangu, 2010), prompting the need for regulatory bodies and professional associations such as the NMC and GJA to give a level of attention to these apprehensions. This study provides insight on the knowledge of media ethics and practice among journalists in selected radio stations in Cape Coast. The information gotten from this study could inform further studies at national level and help to improve training of journalists, and journalistic practices in the region and the country at large.

1.6   Scope of the study

This study is qualitative and its objective is to explore journalists' knowledge and practice of media ethics . It sampled broadcast journalists from three selected radio

stations in Ghana. It is a case study and the concentration is Cape Coast, in the Central Region of Ghana. By using the post positivist approach, it employed focus group discussions, interviews and observation in order to determine the knowledge of ethics and practice by journalists. Eleven participants were drawn from three radio stations in Cape Coast namely; *Radio Central, ATL FM* and *Okokroko fm.*

1.7   Organisation of the study

This work is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is mainly concerned with the introduction and general overview of the subject under investigation. This chapter also contains the statement of the problem, the research questions, specific objectives, significance of the study and the scope or delimitation of the study.

Chapter two follows with the review of related literature and theories. Chapter three examines the methodological approach used in this study, which include; study design, sampling method, study area, data collection design, data processing, data analysis, ethical considerations and justification of designs.

Chapter four focused on data analysis, discussions and findings while chapter five contains summary and conclusion, as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study explored the knowledge and media ethics practices of broadcast journalists. The theories and principles that underpin this study have been reviewed in this chapter. There is also the review of articles that are related to the topic.

2.2 Ethics

Day (2006) defines ethics as a branch of philosophy that deals with the moral aspects of life. Ethics redirects a society's norms about what is regarded morally right and wrong. On an individual level, ethics provides one's own understanding of proper conduct based on principles and rules that one consider important. Many laws in a society are derived from ethics and ethical values regarding acceptable behaviour (Limburg, 1989).

Codes of ethics are written statements, which are often presented as creeds of conduct for an organization and its members to regulate their activities. Scholars such as Black and Barney (1986) and Vivian (2005) advance the argument that codes of ethics avoid the glitches of individual interpretations of issues of moral judgments.

Ethics applies to the conduct of individuals, groups, institutions, professions, and countries. Ward (2015) describes ethics as a social activity that is fashioned to regulate conduct. It is both the study and practice of what establishes the regulation

of human behavior; individually and socially. Ward (2015) identifies three major intertwining themes of ethics to include "the good, the right, and the virtuous."

From this standpoint, Ward (2011, 2015) and Searle, (2010) establish that ethics is thus concerned with appropriate ethical beliefs, correct application, and the disposition to act ethically.

Issues regarding ethics are inevitable in almost every situation. Principles of ethics that guide the conduct of professionals are, therefore, expedient tools for encouraging ethical behavior at work. Since ethics cannot address every issue in many circumstances, Collins, (2009) advocates that professionals must respond instantaneously to ethical issues and contingency factors as they arise. The importance of media ethics in this discussion is, therefore, paramount.

Media ethics in any period or time frame is the responsible use of the freedom to publish, irrespective of who develops the content or who owns the channel of publication. Underscoring the importance of ethics in broadcast media, Ward (2015) impresses that journalism and all forms of public communication can do great good or great harm. Journalists can inform or misinform citizens; they can scrutinize government wrong-doing or they can pursue celebrities; they can rigorously verify their stories or they can ruin reputations by peddling falsehood or indulging in rumour mongering. Journalists can encourage understanding among cultural groups, or they can ignite tensions. This perspective by the author reinforces an already established premise that the relevance of media to the society is as a result of their adherence to the ethics of the profession.

Making this point strongly, Ward (2015) and Ridge (2010) express the views that a rejection of ethics is to ignore a crucial link between media and democracy, stressing that the health of every democratic community depends, largely, on a vibrant and responsible media system that encourages coherent and educated inquiry of critical issues. The authors agree that though societies have an interest in the trusted and ethical character of the media system in general, informed public discourse involves responsible media practitioners. To ensure this, they call on societies to engage in debates focusing on ethics of the media, appreciating that media ethics does not belong to media associations, media professionals or to the owners of the press; it belongs, first and foremost, to citizens.

This section of the chapter accordingly reviews literature related to the issues of media ethics with an emphasis on works that have been done globally. Though global perspectives of media ethics have been raised in this work, discussions will be confined to the Ghanaian context of media ethics with a special reference to the five main principles of media ethics and the GJA code of ethics.

2.1.1 Media ethics of decision making

All across the world, the media is regulated by universal principles which determine the boundary of the media. These principles guide and explain behaviours and decisions made daily by journalists in the production of news and media contents. Kitchener (1984) identifies five media ethics that guide the operations of media practitioners.

One of the key principles is the ethics of justice. According to the author, in dealing with others, one needs to assume the position of equality and operate on a level playing field in order to afford and accord each individual their due share, and in general, to observe the Golden Rule. On this premise, creating equal opportunities in systems that enhance the realization of individual potential is deemed an attempt at fostering a just society where people can thrive and perform to the highest standard.

Another crucial principle is the ethics of truth. Bonhoeffer (1995) describes the best journalist as the one who weaves a textile of truth from within the character, culture, and the native language of the societies and occasions they are reporting. According to Pippert (1989), all codes of ethics commence with the journalist's obligation to tell the truth regardless of the cost. Critical to truth reportage in the media industry is credible language– precision in news, and other content devoid of deception reveals the dependability of the profession. Media professionals have tended to agree with Jaspers (1955) who asserts that in communication, what the audience deserves is the search and preservation of truth. Bonhoeffer (1995) actually sums it up that truth telling is offering a form of an imagery or illustration that encourages participatory democracy. Truth is the foundation that holds the pillar of media. This is so because, it is generally believed by consumers of media products that any information emanating from the quarters of media should not necessarily represent the interest of any party. To Kitchener (1984), the duty of keeping promises, telling the truth, loyalty and maintaining respect and civility in

human discourse is paramount in every human institution and concludes that faithfulness can be sustained if individuals make it a goal to be seen as trust worthy. Kitchener (1984) observes that ethical principles are commonly in conflict with each other in their application to life ethical dilemmas because there are no absolutes. Absolute in this sense means no principle is greater or lesser than the other. Since no one principle is a foundation in itself, there may be moments when a higher standard of ethical conduct might require breaching one or more of the principles. It must, however, be understood from Kitchener's perspective that defying any principle, because they are in variance with each other, should rather serve a higher duty.

Another significant ethical principle is also the ethics of objectivity. Carey (1997) observes that the obligation to objectivism was rooted in both academia and the journalism profession and emphasizes that in journalism especially, impartiality developed out of the struggle within the press for a legitimate place to stand within the complexities of rapid industrialization. In his book "The invention of journalism ethics: the path to objectivity and beyond", Ward (2004) makes a clarion call for a reformulation of objectivity with its tolerance towards interpretation and value judgments. The author makes the argument that the traditional notion of journalistic objectivity, propounded about a century ago is philosophically indefensible because it has been attacked and weakened by countless criticism inside and outside of journalism. He further explains that what is being practiced is an age-old, cherished tradition that is part of a continuing struggle to discern significant, well-grounded truths and to make fair decisions.

The author contends that in practice, more and more newsrooms adopt a journalistic style that includes perspective and interpretation, making traditional objectivity a less viable ethical guide. Ward again discounts the tenets of traditional objectivity because according to him, it will not satisfy the extreme viewpoints that fuel the debate surrounding objectivity. Ward's theory of pragmatic objectivity has been shot down by adherents of traditional objectivity as appearing to be an abandonment of objectivity. But he asserts that journalists continue to need a clear, vigorous norm of objectivity to guide their practice.

The best option is to reform objectivity to meet valid criticisms and preserve important practices of objective reporting. In failing to do this, Ward foresees a society that risks losing a much-needed ethical restraint on today's news media. He therefore advocates a 'progressive and philosophically sophisticated notion of objectivity that corrects persistent misconstructions that have deep historical roots'. The ideal of objectivity, properly understood, is vital not only for responsible journalism but for responsible scientific inquiry, informed public deliberations, and fair ethical and legal judgments (Ward, 2004).

On this premise, both Carey (1997) and Ward (2004) agree that one of the ultimate pillars that holds the foundation of journalism is the principle of objectivism, an ethical principle which makes the society develop the trust that the media is interested in all, with no particular interest or stake in the other.

 The ethics of nonviolence is also a pivotal media principle that finds expression in this study. The obligation to avoid inflicting any form of harm on others is a prime ethical principle.

Levinas (1985) reveals that Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Junior advanced this principle away from an assertive approach into a belief of life itself. The author explains further that the divine command which prohibited people from killing their kind must be respected as such. In every day news reports, the public's general expression of repulsion and anger against the manifestation of abuse in any setting are reflections of hope, emphasizing the validity of nonviolence.

Battles (1996) further states that the golden rule is the ethical principle for dealing nonviolently with unrest, protest, and civil disobedience, emphasizing the universal perspective that all people are equal and must be treated with dignity. For media institutions, for example, the golden rule leads away from hostile actions and verbal abuse toward respect and goodwill.

The principle of human dignity and privacy is also of a huge importance to media ethics across the globe. Different cultural traditions affirm human dignity in a variety of ways, with a unanimous voice that all human beings have sacred status without exception. From this viewpoint, one understands the verve of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. As the preamble states: "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1988). Every child, woman, and man has sacred status, with no exceptions for religion, class, gender, age, or ethnicity. The common sacredness of all human beings regardless of merit or achievement is not only considered a fact but a shared commitment. Demonstrating the principle of human dignity, Entman and Rojecki

(2000) specify how the race dimension of cultural pluralism must move forward in the media. In Entman and Rojecki's interviews, personal experiences of Black effort and achievement tend to be discounted "in favor of television images, often vague, of welfare cheats and Black violence". They state that the habits of local news – for example, the rituals in covering crime – facilitate the construction of menacing imagery. Rather than actively following human dignity and enhancing racial understanding among those most open to it, the media tend to tip "the balance toward suspicion and even animosity among the ambivalent majority of audience.

Entman and Rojecki (2000) accordingly suggest that when the normative principle of human dignity becomes a priority in the media, this important swing group would be enabled to move forward and cultural pluralism would be enhanced. On privacy, Kitchener (1984) considers that every individual has the right to decide how they live their lives, as long as their actions do not interfere with the welfare of others and the media must accept this fact and treat people as free agent with freedom of thought and choice.

2.2 Literature review

Ethics is a very significant guiding principle in every profession. Professional ethical principles set the boundaries within which practitioners must operate. Code of ethics is a set of principles based on an organization's core values and standards. Media ethics in this discussion is a guide of principles designed to help journalists conduct news honestly and accurately and these are primarily aimed at ensuring a quality social service. All over the world, codes of conduct have been proposed for

journalists because the practice of journalism is centred on a set of essential ethical concepts such as freedom, democracy, truth, objectivity, honesty, privacy (Lyotard, (2013); Ridge, (2010)). This section of the study reviews literature related to media ethics.

The media remain critical stakeholders in fostering good governance and ensuring that duty-bearers are accountable to their respective constituencies. This makes media freedom, credibility and survival crucial for democracy and development. However, according to the Media Foundation for West Africa, (2014), evidence available suggests that even when the media are free, not every media is able to contribute positively due to professional misconduct.

In Ghana, media freedom is largely guaranteed in the 1992 Constitution. However, the freedom, credibility and survival of the media face a potential threat as a result of unprofessionalism in a number of Ghanaian media. The Media Foundation for West Africa reports that Ghanaians are raising concerns about frequent professional lapses among the media and some are calling for the repealed criminal libel to be reintroduced (MFWA 2014).

The Foundation undertook a monitoring exercise prior to the 2016 parliamentary and presidential elections that aimed at improving the professional standards of the media in Ghana. The component of the project that focused on enhancing professional standards of the media involved the monitoring and reporting of ethical violations from 40 selected media outlets, namely: 25 radio stations, 10 newspapers and 5 news websites. Radio stations constituted the largest proportion of all the media outlets monitored because they are the most patronised among the three

media platforms monitored. The principles that served as bench marks for the monitoring exercise were mainly derived from the Ghana Journalist Association's (GJA) Code of Ethics. Cumulatively, indecency in language recorded more than a third (43%) of all the infractions recorded.

The study noted that not every radio station monitored registered an ethical violation and for some of those cited for ethical misconduct, there was a gradual reduction in the incidence of ethical violations at some point. The findings show that even though ethical infractions were quite prevalent in the media when the monitoring began, there has been a significant improvement resulting in a 75 percent reduction by the end of the exercise.

The Foundation, accordingly, recommended that editors and journalists should continue to insist and adhere to the ethical principles of the profession as espoused in the GJA Code of Ethics at all times. It also proposed that local language broadcast outlets in particular, should work according to the Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting by the NMC. It again called on media groups and associations to introduce effective self-regulatory mechanisms that promote adherence to ethical standards among journalists. The study suggested that Journalism training schools should balance theory with practice and endeavour to nurture a culture of adherence to professional ethics among students.

Daganato et al (2016) conducted a descriptive research in the Philippines to evaluate the awareness of the code of ethics for journalists and how they practice these ethics. It was directed at print media based on the authoritarian theory of the

press, the free press theory and the social responsibility theory. The socio-demographic profiles of journalists and students journalists were identified, levels of awareness and practice determined, the level of awareness and correspondence to practice measured and compared. The research covered journalists from four newspaper companies in the Cagayan de Oro City and students writers from a student publication of Mindanao University of Science and Technology.

A three part survey questionnaire culled from the Philippine Journalist code of ethics and that of UNESCO were used. In all, thirty participants were studied and data collected were assessed using ANOVA, Excel and SPSS. Most of the respondents were degree holders and three were Master holders. The findings revealed that journalists were highly aware of the code of ethics and they applied these to the practice of their profession. In terms of perception and practice of media ethics, results showed no significant difference between the student writers and the professional journalists sampled.

This study established a strong correlation between awareness and practice. The significant point is that all respondents sampled had a professional certificate in journalism or communication which is the normal practice in the Philippines. The assumptions of the free press or the libertarian and social responsibility theories were validated by the study and these were also useful in my study with the justification that the media landscape in Ghana is a liberalized one, resulting in the proliferation of media houses. In as much as the media is to operate without fear or favour according to the free press, the balance of this freedom and responsible journalism is crucial to the social responsibility theory. Daganato et al (2016)

observed that the high level of awareness and its correlation to practice is as a result of the socio-demographic background of respondents.

In as much as Daganato et al (2016) have established a strong link between awareness and practice of media ethics, it makes my study the more relevant. The point of interrogation here is whether similar findings can be discovered in broadcast media which is the focus of this study. The central theme in Daganato et al (2016) is that increase of awareness entails increase in practice of it. This study seeks to establish whether this is so in broadcast media in Ghana. The structured questionnaire used in data collection could limit the depth of data collected on awareness and perception. My study uses a less structured data collection tool to explore the subject in-depth.

Dunu and Ugbo (2014) undertook an assessment of the Nigerian journalists' knowledge, perception and use of the Freedom of Information Law (FOI) in the discharge of their responsibility to the public. Respondents were drawn from four Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) chapels. The social responsibility theory undergirded the study and the methodology employed was survey questionnaire. In- depth interview was conducted. The study found that the FOI law is still not symmetrical or proportional to pragmatic access to information. It again discovered that all respondents were aware of the law; however. a greater majority of respondents have never made use of the law in the discharge of their journalistic responsibilities. The researchers called for urgent training of journalists on the use of the FOI Act and education for institutions to make information available.

Epistemologically, the researchers failed in linking the findings to their recommendations. The study did not suggest that journalists are unaware or are untrained so the recommendation to train seems misplaced. The point is also made that a greater majority of awareness is not influencing practice which is a contrast finding in Daganato et al (2016). It must, however, be observed that these studies were conducted in different countries with different variables for measurements. Again, while Daganato et al (2016) evaluated the awareness of the code of ethics for print journalists, Dunu and Ugbo (2014) did an assessment of the Nigerian journalists' knowledge, perception and use of the Freedom of Information Law in the discharge of their responsibility to the public without any background information of the respondents. The mention of journalist unions can only go to assume that these were a mixture of either print, broadcast or online. The study also failed in validating the social responsibility theory upon which it was anchored. For example, the social roles of the press - of enlightening the people, promoting the democratic process were not satisfied in the study by the respondents sampled. The theory that could have driven this kind of study would have been the authoritarian theory of the press where state institutions and other social factors impede the media from living up to their ethical social responsibilities.

Linde (2010) also looked at the necessity of a media literacy module within journalism in South Africa, making the strong argument that unless students are specifically taught about the basic rights of free speech and free press in the context of their media literacy courses, they may become more cynical and disengaged about their social institutions, including the government and media. The researcher

posits that there is no global issue, no political arena, no academic discipline in which the statement of problems and the framing of possible solutions are not influenced by media coverage, yet, most people are not acutely aware of how much media they are exposed to because exposure to media message is not planned by people. The researcher, therefore, argues that media literacy skills are essential in terms of educating people to become more critically aware of the media they consume so that they can protect themselves from unsuitable media content. The theories underpinning this article are the diffusion of innovation and media literacy. The study concludes that exposure will lead to improved ability to decode a message and lead to a heightened understanding of media content.

The study has affirmed that awareness will have a significant impact on practice thereby corroborating the findings of Daganato et al (2016). The argument by Linde (2010) would have been better placed if the work had also considered training for practicing journalists. The logic here is that since journalists keep the gate of information, they must be trained to know what content to expose people to. The point is that, the new crop of students to receive the training would be working in a system that is media illiterate and the impact of the new crop of journalists will not be felt much if effort is not tailored to changing the whole media landscape. Additionally, the researcher makes a categorical argument that consumers of media content are gullible beings who do not seem to have any control whatsoever over what they consume. This position is supported by the social responsibility theory on its core assumption that the media are seen by the society as an authority so the continuous exhibition of certain content by the media is gradually or progressively

accepted by the society. This is in no way to disprove the validity of the theories used in this study. In fact the theoretical frameworks which underpin the article are in twofold with regards to the media – either the media themselves can be considered an innovation, or the media assist with creating awareness of an innovation. Due to technology, the media are also constantly experiencing innovation and these new media need to be introduced to society, and subsequently, a diffusion campaign must be created to increase media literacy awareness. The conclusion drawn by Van Der (2010) affirms the findings of Daganato on the score that awareness will ultimately affect practice.

Ahadzadeh and Babran (2010) considered audiences' perception of media ethics with a focus on two media principles; freedom of expression and objectivism, with the hypothesis that Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Corporation (RIB) does not observe these principles in news coverage. The researchers contended that because advanced technologies, specifically new media, are owned by wealthy and powerful nations, and employed for expansionist goals around the globe, the healthy atmosphere of media and communication has been badly polluted. When confronted with such a poisonous atmosphere, ethics can no longer be referred to as a basic and fundamental concept of culture in a community and its mass media. The researchers contended that by mere law, the media cannot guarantee to act correctly versus the community and the individuals and proposed that media should observe not only the law, but ethics as well.

The study outlines how the Islamic Consultative Assembly imposed some prohibitions on RIB Six years after victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The study was also silent on whether RIB is the only TV channel in Tehran. Again, the study could have achieved a lot if it had done a comparative study on what RIB does and what others do. This would have given readers a deeper insight into how other TV stations manage the ethical principles that were studied.

Sa (2016) similarly examines the perception of South Korean Journalists on truth in reporting by the media and media Ethics. The aim of the study was to analyze (from the perspectives of journalists) the relationship between truth in media reporting and media ethics and this was hinged on the premise that truth in media reporting could begin with journalists.

The study observed that to be perceived as credible, the media must deliver truth and admits that the environments in South Korea are not conducive for delivering truth. It argues that major conservative media have not played the role of journalism properly because they have colluded with the rule of the day to produce news that reflects the needs and opinions of the political party in power.

The survey method was used and questionnaires were circulated. The researcher sampled Korean news journalists in national news companies such as daily newspapers, broadcasting, news agencies and internet news media in Korea. The mixed approaches of qualitative and quantitative methods were incorporated into the survey questionnaires to strengthen the study. The study revealed that truth in reporting by the media relates to journalists' ethics. Journalists with fewer years of experience felt more strongly about this issue than the group with more experience. The finding is inconsistent with that of Daganato (2016) where those who have

practiced for many years and student writers had the same inclination to the ethical principles of journalism.

The study again found out that the general lack of awareness about ethical issues in Korea can be attributed to long periods of authoritarian rule and corrupt military regimes. The implication is that lack of awareness affects practice negatively as supported by Daganato (2016) and Ahadzadeh and Babran (2010) who studied print media in the Philippines and state media in Tehran respectively. The coverage of journalists of diverse background further makes the study quite representative of the entire media in South Korea. The mixed approach also gives the study a strong and credible footing. The study is also silent on the kind of theoretical framework upon which it was conducted. However, the ensuing argument goes to affirm the assumptions of the authoritarian theory.

This study generally challenges the social responsibility theory in the sense that it admits that a journalist who adheres to ethical practices is tended to be overlooked in Korean society. The society sees nothing wrong with twisted truth and bribing journalists to shelve stories that are detrimental to the image of certain bureaucrats in society. The quest for adherence is, therefore, nonexistent. This study partially affirms the findings of Dunu and Ugbo (2014) that carried out an assessment of the Nigerian journalists' knowledge, perception and use of the Freedom of Information Law. In both studies, bureaucratic institutions hindered the dissemination of the 'truth' to the detriment of society.

Azman and Salleh (2013) explored the level of knowledge, the attitude and acceptance of journalism ethics among Malaysian journalists, using the Codes of

Ethics by the Communication and Multimedia Content Forum in Malaysia and whether the principles that were outlined were being practiced by the journalists. The study adopted survey with a sample size of 50 journalists. Theories that underpinned the study were the authoritarian and social responsibility theories.

The study found that respondents level of education have significant relationship towards their level of knowledge, attitude and acceptance of the importance of journalism ethics in their working environment. Journalists agree that they should be truthful in their reporting regardless on which party they are aligned with. However, due to the restraint and law prohibiting them from writing against the government, the journalist can only tell the good side of the ruling party.

This study has corroborated the findings of Dunu and Ugbo (2014) and Sa (2016) that awareness does not necessarily affect practice as a result of dictatorial tendencies of government.

Diedong (2008) conducted a narrative study in establishing journalistic standards in the Ghanaian press. The premise of this article is that improvement of ethical standards of journalists begins with the decisions of committed journalists in the daily routine of the newsroom to make the press a support of democratic governance and defense of human rights. The foundation of the study is that establishing a journalistic culture must begin with the decisions and actions based on the values and character of individual journalists. The norms come out of the preferences in selecting news stories, defending personal convictions, calculating the possibilities of reprisals from the powerful and writing in a way that will

mobilize public opinion in support of one's news values. The researcher focused on the life histories and practices of four journalists considered leaders in setting standards by many journalists in Ghana.

It adopted observation and in-depth interviews and sampled journalists who have a reputation of journalistic leadership in order to discover how they established what they considered important standards of good journalistic practice. The study found out that journalistic standards are brought out by responding with unpremeditated idealism to immediate work demands in the newsroom context. For virtually all those interviewed, the major context was the repressive use of power in politics, superstition rites, economic greed and other areas of Ghanaian life. It concluded that journalists must not only be independent politically, but it is necessary to avoid close ties with social groups of the civil society because sometimes they do stories of interest to members of the organization.

Diedong's (2008) study also confirmed the findings by Sa (2016) that truth in media reporting could begin with journalists. Though the latter study did not cite any theory as its framework, the assumptions of the social responsibility theory would have been validated in the sense that under repressive governments, the respondent saw the need to disseminate credible information to the society. The findings of this study also challenge the conclusion by Dunu and Ugbo(2014) and Sa (2016) where journalists failed to meet the information need of society because of bureaucratic bottlenecks.

2.2.1 Media Responsibility and accountability

The subjects of media responsibility and accountability, according to Gauthier (1999), are always hooked on to ethical considerations in the practice of journalism. The reason is that hours of media consumption for many people have been overwhelming and the trend appears to be increasing. Many people in the world today are hooked onto media whose cultural influence continues to pervade people's daily choices. Gauthier (1999) observes that the autonomy of the media to form and influence the character of public discourse through the dissemination of the 'choice' of information and its presentation gives journalists an immeasurable task. The media, more than any other public institution, define not only the content but also the quality of public discourse. When the media set an agenda that is what the society runs with. This implies that having been entrusted with so much power, the media has an inherent element of answerability to society. While the media serve as independent agents of accountability, Tettey (2006) observes, that it is imperative the media is made answerable to the different publics they serve, and to face sanctions if they deviate in the execution of their responsibilities. An important question in the responsibility and accountability discourse is the consideration of who the media should be accountable to. In responding to this Merrill, (1989) affirms that the people are a social entity to whom the media remains accountable. This position is again supported by McQuail (2003) that the people are the target audience who consume media content and give feedback based on what the media produces. With this understanding, Cohen-Almagor, (2006) postulates that the

media, in its reportage, has the ethical responsibility to defend the basic principles of journalism, such as honesty, fairness, balance and accuracy.

The responsibility is, therefore, placed on every journalist to maintain high journalistic conduct without which the public loses confidence in the media. In the context of media accountability is the "process whereby media practitioners take responsibility for the consequences of their publications, and become responsive to the needs of the public and the expectations of society" (McQuail, 2003).

Adnan (2003) observed that at the societal level, the media exist to serve very critical roles. The researcher identifies these functions to be as follows;

(1) They serve an information function.

(2) They serve an agenda-setting and interpretation function.

(3) They help individuals to create and maintain connections with various groups in society.

(4) They help in the education and socialization of individuals.

(5) They serve an entertainment purpose (cited in Sani, 2004).

The media occupy a very considerable position and as an influential instrument of education and advocacy, its nature and diversity significantly shape the collective values of society (Anderson and Gabszewicz, 2005; Adnan, 2003)

2.2.2 Media Professionalism

The basic parameter of a profession entails a career that qualifies someone to be part of a specific society or group. A professional is the one who is competently

trained in a chosen sector and who maintains skills through continuous professional development.

Professional work, therefore, is seen as comprising certain conventions and norms that enable people to do their career, and media professionals are not different (Williams, 2003). The researcher's stance is that the position of journalists has been subject to speculations regarding whether there is a set of ethics or rules associated with being a professional journalist. Williams (2003) therefore concludes that Professionalism is concerned with freedom and responsibility. From the fore-going, the understanding is that journalism is a profession that has been entrusted to practitioners by the society within which they operate. While there have been debates on whether journalism meets certain objective requirements to be a profession, studies and scholarly discourses on media professionalism and ethics in a number of African countries reveal various shortcomings. To Kasoma (1993), the journalism profession throughout Africa needs to advance an ethical basis to put to an end the controversy of journalists being labeled bootlickers and finger-puppets of the state. He calls for the accordance of due respect for journalists in Africa like their contemporaries everywhere.

Kasoma (1996) subsequently advocated what he referred to as 'Afriethics' or African ethics to help address the ills bedeviling the media profession. He puts prominence on societal norms and values, and challenges journalists to go back to the ethical checks and balances that have always existed in the African society to ensure professionalism in media practice. In the Afriethics assumption, Kasoma (1996) cautions journalists not to get preoccupied with western standards of

journalism, but rather regard the societal mores. Another assumption in Kasoma's afriethics proposition is the homogeneity of African communities. On this premise, Kasoma (1996) assumes that the whole continent is a community, because even at country levels, homogeneity does not exist. Countries are made up of different communities with different dialects, languages and contrasting social norms.

Okigbo (1994) argues against this assumption by pointing out that in addressing for instance the problem of indecency in story reports, the mistake should not be made as if all African reporters think alike on all issues. Again, Kasoma's view is not in tandem with modern trends in journalism that view the profession as a universal occupation. For example, Spichal and Sparks (1994) did a study in media practice in 22 countries and observed similar professional values despite differences in national culture, educational qualifications and training, social background and political orientation.

Mfumbusa (2008) also observes that the world conjured up by Kasoma may no longer be consistent with the African newsroom realties. He argues that it is difficult to see how a mere return to the African ethical roots would improve media performance.

Christians, Rao, Ward and Wasserman (2008, P: 136) suggest that African journalists need to consider the ethical framework that reinforces their work and the fact that such underpinnings are influenced by globalization. Moreover, Sawant (2003) has observed that on all media platforms, the necessity for ethics has become essential, thus increasing the need for a machinery to implement ethical standards on the basis that the world has become a global village.

2.3 Theoretical framework

This study is hinged on four fundamental principles of media ethics namely; Utilitarianism (consequential or teleological theory), Golden Mean (virtue ethics), Categorical Imperative (deontological ethics) and the Pluralistic Theory of Value.

These principles are quite instructive because they help give a broader explanation of the ethical dimensions of decision makers. Specifically, the above are to aid in understanding what goes into journalistic decisions and considerations as far as ethics are involved.

2.3.1 The theory of Utilitarianism

The original articulation of utilitarianism by Jeremy Bentham and later John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century introduced what was then a novel notion into ethics discussions: *The consequences of actions are important in deciding whether they are ethical.* In the utilitarian view, it may be considered ethical harm one person for the benefit of the larger group. In the views of Dyck (1977), the appeal of utilitarianism is the apparent advantages that accrue from identifying a moral principle. The principle makes provision for the identification of both right and wrong actions. The consequential ethics says that the morality of an action is contingent on the outcome of that action. This is to assert that the morally right action would automatically produce the right result whereas the ethically wrong action would result in a bad outcome. Nazakat (2016). Constructed on this outcome,

there are several theories such as utilitarianism, hedonism, egoism, altruism and others. The central meaning of consequentialism or the teleological theory is that "the ends justify the means". For instance, the concept of Utilitarianism states that the consequences of actions are important in deciding whether they are ethical. In the utilitarian view, it may be considered ethical if one person is harmed for the benefit of the larger group. Patterson and Wilkins (2007) have advocated this theory as the ethical justification for investigative reporting and explained that though such exploratory reports may harm individuals, there is always the hope that it provides a greater societal good when culprits of social ills are exposed by such journalistic works. A Utilitarian presumes there is one domain that determines what one ought to do morally. The theory takes the philosophical ethical stance of "the greatest good for the greatest number" of people. While categorical imperative focused on the action of a person, the utilitarian philosophy focused on the outcome.

The position by this model has been critiqued by a number of scholars, including Patterson and Wilkins (2007), who contend that the precision of this one factor is typically appealing, but gains its strength and soundness by excluding whatever cannot be measured or premeditated.

Though the theory has been criticized on the grounds of being mechanistic in it application, Patterson and Wilkins (2007) have again argued that, the theory must be understood within a historical context, emphasizing that the theory was propounded following the changes of the enlightenment, when the principle of democracy was fresh and untried, and the thought that the average person should be able to speak his mind to those in power was novel.

2.3.2 Golden mean theory

Aristotle's Golden Mean theory, also known as the virtue ethics, which believes that 'happiness' or 'flourishing' was the ultimate human good is useful in this study. According to Aristotle, the highest virtue was citizenship which was exemplified by the statesman who exercised practical wisdom daily. The exercise of practical wisdom on daily basis can be found among journalists, poets and politicians among many others. These are people who flourish in their professional performance, thereby extending our own vision of what is possible.

Patterson and Wilkins, (2007) explain that by flourishing, Aristotle meant to exercise "practical reason" in the conduct of any particular activity through the setting of high standards. Aristotle believed that practical reason was exercised by individuals, and that a person of practical wisdom, was that human being who demonstrated ethical excellence through daily activity. Patterson and Wilkins, (2007). This philosophy asserts that virtue lies at the mean between two extremes of excess and deficiency. Courage, for example, is a mean between foolhardiness on one hand and cowardice on the other. But to determine that mean, one has to exercise practical wisdom, and act in accordance with firm and continuing character traits.

The concept asserts that people and their acts, not particular sets of rules, are the moral basis of activity. This theory is based on the assumptions that to be ethical;

- One must have knowledge of what is being done through the exercise of practical reasoning

- An individual must select the act for its own sake in order to flourish

- The act itself must spring from a firm and unchanging character.

  The theory stipulates that to be true to self, one has to acknowledge the authority of the moral demand the community instills into the individual. The virtue ethics of Aristotle and Confucius both assumed that moral obligations have authority from the community where individuals trace their roots.

2.3.3 Pluralistic theory of value

The third framework is the Pluralistic Theory of Value by Ross (1930). The theorist based his ethical theory on the belief that there is often more than one ethical value simultaneously competing for preeminence in ethical decision. Ross distinguished between the right and the good, where the latter refer to an objective quality present in all acts. The theory posits that a right action is something undertaken by persons motivated by correct reasons and on careful reflections. Ross's pluralistic theory of values reflects the way people make ethical choices and helps explain why even the good consequences that might come from a failure to tell the truth or keep a promise do not always seem to justify the breach of confidence.

2.3.4 Categorical Imperative

Deontological ethics or duty ethics focuses on the rightness and wrongness of the actions rather than the consequences of those actions. There are different deontological theories such as categorical imperative, moral absolutism, and divine command theory etc.

A famous model under the deontological perspective is the categorical imperative by Kant. According to the theorist, mankind takes a prominent space in creation and there is universal order or commandment from which all duties and obligations are derived, Nazakat (2016). The moral principles of universality and reciprocity must govern the activities of man. In this context, universality means that an ethical or right action must be possible to apply it to all people. According to this theory, an individual should act on the premise that the choices one makes for oneself could become universal law. The principle of reciprocity which has its premise of morality in all religious systems follows that "do as you would be done by". The theory of categorical imperative is similar (in the focus on duty) to the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you". This ethical theory is based on the idea that it is the act itself that moral force resides, rather than the person who acts. . In Battles (1996), the theory thrives on the fundamental principle that one should act so that humanity is always treated as an end and never as means only. The theory mentions two duties; negative and positive. The logic here is that as long as you perform the right act based on what duty demand, the consequences

of that act are not important. There have been a number of scholars that have reacted diversely to this theoretical position.

Patterson and Wilkins, (2007) argue that while this theory considers that the moral worth of an action does not depend on its consequences, those consequences are not irrelevant. They cite an example of a surgeon who exhibit moral virtue in attempting to save a patient through an experimental procedure, but the decision about whether to undertake that procedure requires taking into account the probability of a cure. To them, the act is as relevant as the consequences. Under Kant's categorical imperative, journalist can claim few special privileges, such as the right to lie or the right to invade privacy in order to get a story.

Second famous deontological theory is Moral absolutism. It believes that there are absolute standards against which moral questions can be judged. Against these standards, certain actions are right while others are wrong regardless of the context of the act. For example, theft is wrong, regardless of context in which theft was carried out. It ignores that sometimes wrong act is done to reach out to right consequence.

The third deontological model is Divine command concept. It says that an action is right if God has decreed it to be right. As per this theory, the rightness of any action depends upon that action being performed because it is a duty, not because of any good consequences arising from that action.

2.3.5 Social Responsibility Theory

The social responsibility theory of the press popularised by Siebert et al (1956) will also find expression in this study. By adopting this theory, the study argues that an independent media is that which is also responsible to the society is more likely to adhere to the basic tenets of professional requirements, as outlined in the GJA code of ethics. The theory is based on the premise that it is obligatory for the media to serve the public in the good interest of the society, rather than the interests of owners or funders (Picard, 1985; Nerone, 1995). According to Purvis (2001), the fundamental position of the theory remains that "media has a responsibility to society to help preserve democracy by properly informing the public and by responding to society's needs". The connotation is that the media must have its 'senses' at all sectors within a particular space to ensure that society is properly and correctly informed. In the views of Tankard (2001), the social responsibility theory maintains that anyone who has something of significance to say should be offered a forum and that if the media reneges on it duty, then another force must ensure that the media lives up to its responsibility.

Under this theory, the media is controlled by community opinion, consumer action and professional ethics. In this regard, Karikari (1999) advocates that, editorial content of the media under this theory must necessarily be of the public interest. Additionally, the theory champions that the media becomes financially self-sufficient so as to be free from pressures of special interests. Gunarante and Hasim, (1996). This observation is crucial because the control of the media, among other factors, is basically financial, when the media is therefore financially independent,

every form of external monetary inducement may not be very significant. The social responsibility theory again recognizes freedom of expression as a "moral right" rather than an absolute "natural right" and, therefore, places an obligation on the media to help society by watching over prevailing social standards of morality, which is the cultural and identity back-bone of every society.

The theory as expounded by Gunarante and Hasim (1996) does not regard the government as an adversary of the media; but rather recognizes the role of the state in the performance of media activity. In explaining the role of the state as far as the theory is concerned, the researchers affirm that the state has an obligation to help prevent abuse of power by the media. The means of ensuring compliance with this obligation by the media can either be through professional self-regulation or public intervention or both. For instance, the theory holds that the media are free but have an obligation to serve the public good, and that the State has a responsibility to protect the interest of the public.

2.4 Summary

This chapter of the study has reviewed theories and principles that find expression in this research. It also reviewed related articles and linked them to the study. The chapter has reflected in detail the five main principles of the media namely; justice, truth, objectivity, non-violence and human dignity with relevant examples. This section of the study has also reviewed significant literature in the Social Sciences and teased out the point of differences and similarities to this research.

Literatures were reviewed under the following sub-topics; media responsibility and accountability and media professionalism. The chapter has also given significant attention to four major moral principles in media and these were utilitarianism, golden mean, categorical imperative and the pluralistic theory of value and how these principles find expression in the daily activities of media practitioners.

This chapter has detailed the significant areas in media ethics and the need to give attention to this critical subject. The chapter did not engage in rigorous definitions of terms because according to Ward (2015), such strict definitions in journalism and related social practices may not entirely be necessary we are in a time of rapid change where terms and principles are being subjected to constant modification. I have however provided a scheme that gives thick descriptions to some of the terms that have been used in this section.

Sufficient evidence from literature have variously identified the importance of objective and responsible journalism and the obvious challenge of unethical professional conduct that must be nipped in the bud to safeguard the sanctity of the profession and the society at large.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents approaches and procedures employed in the collection and analysis of data. The section elabotaes the study's sampling and strategy, approach, design, data collection methods and the techniques used for data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research Approach

Taking a cue from Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), regarding the importance of a qualitative approach, this study accordingly uses the qualitative research approach to investigate ethical issues in the media. In as much as the above view is a factor for the justification of this model, the pressing reason is explained further by Creswell (2013) that the model makes room for a richer comprehension of the participants by emphasizing an understanding and interpretation of the individual experiences of the participants who are involved in the study. From the perspective of Muijs (2011: p. 8), qualitative research refers to "the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things, which give detailed consideration to human expression. The choice for the qualitative approach is therefore as a result of it being a preferable model in matters where an examination of the meaning of specific events or circumstances is required in a study". In this study for example, ethics is what participants observed as a result of

the demands or requirement of their unique profession and the particular culture or work environment that they found themselves.

In arguing for this approach, Muijs (2011) contends that qualitative method is an 'umbrella term' because it covers an extensive number of diverse methods such as participant observation, ethnographic research and interviews with experts of different views. With respect to this research, all the above except ethnography, were adopted, which makes this enquiry a very rich study. This is further buttressed by Strauss and Corbin, (1998) who look at the methods of data collection for this approach. The authors mention interviews, observations, documents and artifacts.

In a qualitative research, Punch (2005) observes that a wider range of empirical data is possible for the researcher. On this established premise, the researcher engaged the methods of data collection such as interviews, observation and focus group from participants. The data was subsequently analysed and built into the themes of media ethics such as justice, objectivity, truth, non-violence and respect for humanity as have been spelt out in the chapter two of this study.

Furthermore, Lindlof and Taylor, (2002) perceive the qualitative approach as a method that seeks to explore, identify and explain attitudes, perceptions and actions of people within a social setting and the meanings they make of their actions without subjecting it to rigorous mathematical computations. This study, accordingly, seeks to investigate knowledge of media practice among broadcast journalists in Ghana, which makes this approach crucial.

Creswell (2014) prescribes, that the collection of data should be within a unique setting that the participants are familiar with. Data collected was subsequently

analysed thoroughly from the broader to specific themes that enabled the researcher to make interpretations and meanings.

3.2 Study design

Research design entails the actions and techniques employed to achieve the objectives of a research work (Mutai, 2001). Selltiz (1962) describes research design as the organization of conditions for the assembling and analysis of data in a manner that aims to corroborate the relevance to the purpose of the research. Thomas (2010) opines that the design of a study demonstrates how the salient parts of the project such as the instruments, samples and data collection methods weave and thread in a uniform way to speak to the research questions. The understanding is that the design serves as a guide that directs how the work will be conducted. According to Polit and Hunglar (1996), the research design is an entire plan for gathering and analyzing research information comprising data analysis. Amedahe (2000) delves deeper to look at a study design as a blueprint that describes and details how a specific data to a related problem should be collected and analysed. The aforementioned authorities reinforce the understanding that a design is a blueprint or the master plan upon which research activities are anchored. According to Gay (1992), a design indicates the fundamental structures of a scientific study, the nature of propositions and variables involved in a study. With this background in mind, a study design assembles a framework for planning, gathering and analyzing data and subsequently directs the applicable research methodology to be used.

Kuranchie (2016) opines that the problem that precipitates a research directs the design to be adopted. The author argues that the type of research design adopted for a study depends on the research questions and objectives of that particular scientific enquiry. Kuranchie's argument is based on the fact that every design adopted for a study has an implication for the quality of data that is collected and analyzed. In a nutshell, the design must be appropriate to aid the enquirer to carry out the study to answer the research questions. It is, therefore, understood that the researcher has to consider the design that is best in addressing research questions; this is because a wrong choice of design has the propensity of misleading the study results.

Importantly, Creswell (2014) makes the contribution that the selection of a suitable design hinges on the experiences of the researcher, the type of audience selected for the study, the type of research that is being conducted, the research problem and the research questions. In the domain of qualitative studies, popular study designs include grounded theory, narrative study, ethnography, phenomenology and case study. This research will adopt the case study design.

3.2.1 Case Study

The study is qualitative, using a bounded case study design. In this type of design, Creswell (2007) explains that the researcher explores factual or tangible existing case or cases through detailed, in-depth data collection that involves multiple sources of data collection instruments such as observations, interviews, documents, audio visual material, etc. and reports a case description and themes. Creswell

(2007), asserts that a good qualitative case study presents an in-depth understanding of the case, and therefore depending on one source of data is typically not adequate to develop the expected depth, hence the choice of multiple sources of data collection. It must however be understood that a case study is essentially one of the numerous ways of conducting qualitative studies and its prime focus is to have a depth of understanding of human experiences in a social setting by making interpretations of their actions individually and as a community (Creswell, 2014).

From this background, the study attempted to explore the extent to which knowledge of media ethics affect or find expression in the practices of broadcast journalists. A case study research involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting, (Yin 2009). In this study for example, the cases were the experiences of respondents who participated in the research. On the principle of this perspective, this study investigates the knowledge of media ethics practices of broadcast journalists as an activity that occurs in real life, in the daily operations of journalists. Again, a case study investigates in detail, a bounded system within a time frame and this is done by engaging multiple sources of data available in the setting of study. After this, data was collated and analysed to respond to research questions as posited by McMillan and Schumacher (2001). This is important because the process helps the researcher to gain insight into connections between cases or a phenomenon and the need to consider such links in subsequent research works. Subsequently, this study investigates the depth of radio broadcasters' knowledge of media ethics and examines whether or not the knowledge affect how they practice journalism. The study situates its boundaries

in Cape Coast and looks at ethical practice in three radio stations; *ATL fm, Radio Central* and *Okokroko fm.* Through focus group discussions and observation, the study examined the journalists' level of understanding of media ethics and the ethical practices. The research sought to find out how the journalists acquired the knowledge of media ethics and whether or not they practice these ethical principles that underpin the journalism profession. The discussion again tried to understand the factors that promoted or hindered the practice of ethics by broadcast journalists. Participants expressed the importance of these ethics and shared views on how these ethics can be improved. Yin (2009) identifies a number of cases that can be studied and these include multiple cases, single cases and single cases with embedded units. The different types of case studies are distinguished by the dimension of the case, that is; whether the case to be studied involves one or several individuals, a group, an entire programme or an activity (Creswell 2013). The author mentions the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case studies and the intrinsic case study. This research was conducted using the collective case study, also known as multiple case study.

3.2.2   Multiple Case Study

In a collective case study, the enquirer focuses on an issue or problem and selects multiple case studies to demonstrate or illustrate the concern (Stake 1995). Creswell (2013) asserts that this type of study is purposefully done by the researcher to exhibit the diverse perspectives on the issue. In conducting such a study, Yin (2009) proposes that the collective case study design adopts the logic of replication in

which the researcher replicates the procedure for each case. The proposal extends to the researcher investigating numerous cases or concerns to comprehend the resemblances and differences between the issues being studied. This study for instance explores the knowledge of media ethics practices among broadcast journalists. It then adopts the multiple case study to examine how the case is demonstrated by using three radio stations (*Okokroko fm, ATL fm* and *Radio Central*) in Cape Coast. The study again employed the multiple data collection method to guarantee data reliability and accuracy as the different kinds of data serve as self-validating.

3.3   Sampling Strategy

A sample is defined as a cautiously selected fragment of a research population (Kruranchie, 2016). The author explains that when reasons such as cost, energy and time make it practically impossible to use all members of a population in a study, part of the population is used as a sample. Since this study is a qualitative enquiry that does not aim to generalize its findings, representation of sample will not feature. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), a clever sampling technique permits the investigator or researcher to make efficient connection with communicative phenomena with a minimum wasted effort. The assertions by the authors specifically target the definiteness of the sample to ease the burden on the researcher in this process. The sampling method or strategy aids the researcher to select a part of the population to represent the entire population Kuranchie, (2016) and Polit & Hungler, (1999).

The sampling procedure is, therefore, the method through which a sample is selected from a population. The two categories through which this procedure can be used are probability and nonprobability sampling (Kuranchie, 2016), Singh & Mangat, 1996). Nonprobability sampling involves, according to Meadows (2003), choosing samples not so much to be representative of the target population, but rather, samples that bear the characteristics of the target population. Kuranchie (2016) further notes that the technique involves a process whereby samples are chosen purposively or by non-random means. The researcher maintains that by this technique, all members of a particular group of research interest do not have the opportunity of being selected to partake in a study.

 This study therefore sampled three major radio stations out of the twelve that broadcast in the Cape Coast metropolitan area in the Central Region of Ghana and non-representative sampling technique was adopted. Schwandt (1997) cited in Lindlof and Taylor (2002) explains purposive sampling as an approach where cases, sites and units are selected because there is an educated understanding that what prevails or the happenings at such sites may be critical in understanding some concepts. For the purposes of this study, *ATL fm, Okokroko fm* and *Radio Central* were purposefully chosen because they have a strong community presence or listenership as a result of strategic programming and language policies. *Radio Central* and *Okokroko* operate on the language policy of 80/20 for local languages and English respectively while *ATL fm* operates on a policy of 70/30 for English and local languages. The programming of these stations has a direct correlation

with the experiences and activities of their audiences who are predominantly fishers, farmers, civil servants and students.

 Radio Central is the only public media in the region that fronts the agenda of the state and community simultaneously and has received a number of national and local awards for its journalistic works. The station has also been in operation for over two decades, giving it the opportunity to train a number of seasoned journalists who are currently working on national media platforms. *Okokroko* is also the only commercial radio station that has been in operation for only three years yet gained national attention as a result of good strategic programming. The station has also received local recognition for the prominence its gives to local issues and the desire to demand accountability from stakeholders.

ATL fm on the other hand serves as a community and institutional radio station in the region. The station serves as a training platform for the students of the Communication Studies Department of the University of Cape Coast before they graduate. It has also received international awards for quality and excellent programming. Though other radio stations in the metropolis possess some of these qualities, Jack and Baxter (2008) contend that the issue of convenience must be a paramount consideration of any qualitative study. The reason is that the availability of participants to provide information for the research should be the driving force in deciding on purposive sampling. On that establishment, participants from the selected radio stations availed themselves willingly to partake in the research.

It must be noted that sample size selected by means of non-probability sampling is not statistically determined. The implication is that since a qualitative study does

not make generalization of findings to a population, it does not again consider a proportionate figure or number that can represent the whole population. However, Kuranchie (2016) makes an emphatic clarification that this type of study requires that the researcher samples to the extent of saturation. The nonprobability sampling has under its domain the quota sampling, snowball sampling convenience and purposive types of sampling techniques (Singh and Mangat, 1996, Kuranchie 2016).

Accordingly, this study used purposive sampling method to select broadcast journalists from three major radio stations which broadcast in the Cape Coast metropolis to participate in the study. The researcher conducted a focus group discussion among 11 participants, four from *Okokroko fm,* four from *Radio Central* and 3 from *ATL FM*. The participants included 3 news editors, 2 reporters, 3 news anchors and 3 programme hosts. The researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the regional chair of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) and a former Chair of the National Media Commission (NMC). The selection for the focus group discussions (FG), interviews and observation is supported by the perception that sample sizes are generally not material or very significant in a qualitative study. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) assert that such studies do not generate data that can be imperiled or subjected to laborious statistical and numerical processes and do not also permit generalization to a population. Again, qualitative studies give attention to social practices or occurrences in a specific cultural setting and that the case of whether they are typically circulated or distributed in a given situation is inconsequential. Despite these exceptions, Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007)

support the fact that sample size should be adequate to allow for copious descriptions and analysis.

3.3.1 Profiles of Media Houses

Four main media ownership structures have been identified in literature. These are commercial, non-profit, public and community media (McQuail, 2005;Rennie, 2006).

Commercial media refers to those media that are independently owned, for-profit, and funded mostly from advertising and sales. They range in size from international conglomerates to small local outlets. According to McQuail (2005), commercial media could be public or private, a large media chain or conglomerate or a small independent body. With respect to this work, *Okokroko fm* is a commercial radio station.

The second category found literature is public media. This ownership type comes in various forms ranging from direct state administration to elaborate and diversified constructions designed to maximize the independence of decision-making about content (McQuail, 2005). Two types of ownership of public media exist in the literature. They are the public service media model and the state-owned model. Radio Central falls within this category. A fourth media ownership touted by some theorists as suitable for developing countries is the community media. Scholars such as Rennie (2006) have isolated this as another form of media ownership. In Ghana, the NMC identifies it as the third type of media ownership. The community media is supposed to be maintained by the community and funded

by their contribution either through cash or, expertise. According to (Alhassan, 2005), this type of media ownership is not common in the world. However, in Ghana, there are a number of rural and community radio stations. The few community radio stations are grouped together under the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN). *ATL FM,* which is a community/campus radio station fall within this category.

3.3.2   *Radio Central (GBC)*

Radio Central is a Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) radio station in the Central Region based in Cape Coast. It was inaugurated on 6th November, 1996 by Ghana's former president Jerry John Rawlings. The station was established to champion the development and growth of the region and its people through its programming. Currently, the station operates on two frequencies 92.5 and 91.3. With this, most part of the region as well as parts of western, Ashanti, and Eastern regions receive radio central signals and participate in their programmes.

The audience of *Radio Central* are predominantly farmers and fishers with some doing commerce. In line with the occupational background of its publics, the station educates and informs audience about the changes in their respective sectors and contemporary ways and methods of farming and fishing. Minority voices such as the youth, women and children are also catered for in the station's programming. *Radio Central* creates strategic platforms to address the challenges of these groups. In this regard, the station makes itself relevant to the entire community. As the

cradle of Education and the hub of tourism, *Radio Central* also promotes tourism in the region as well as education through its informative programmes in these sectors in order to satisfy the category of audience in the commercial sectors. The station predominantly broadcasts in the Fante language in order to attract the listenership of the indigenes of the land who are Fantes. Radio Central broadcasts on a five kilowatts (5 kw) transmitter, and receives news feed from the National GBC. By this, communities that patronize their services get the opportunity to receive information and education from the national sources aside the community educational platforms.

Radio Central has over the years lived up to its mandate and has been recognised in many ways by various institutions, organizations and other stakeholders with numerous citations and awards. The station has recently been awarded by the Ghana Journalists Association during its 23rd 2018 Awards ceremony as the best regional radio station in the country. The station has again been named the 2018 best radio station that promoted Sanitation in the central region by the Central Regional Coordinating Council. The station has seasoned journalists who have been trained by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and are therefore noted for quality journalism. *Radio Central* continues to produce some of the best journalists for other radio stations in the region and other parts of the country.

3.3.3   *ATL FM*

ATL fm is an institutional radio station for the University of Cape Coast which started operation in the early 1989 (atlfmonline.com). It began as an entertainment radio station for Atlantic hall and the students' community. It was consequently adopted by the University of Cape Coast (UCC) as a section under the Directorate of Public Affairs upon the directive of the National Communications Authority (NCA) in 2008. The station serves the central region of Ghana in news broadcast, talk shows and music in several languages including English, Fante, Twi, French and Ewe. Additionally, the radio station serves as an internship platform for students of Communication Studies Department at the University of Cape and other educational Institutions like the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ). *ATL FM* has again been recognized on a number of international stages and has won global awards for quality and excellent programmes. A number of Journalists at the *ATL fm* have also won Radio and TV Personality (RTP) awards. The station attracts a greater listenership as a result of its preference for the English language on prime programmes like Atlantic Wave, Cross Current, You and the Law and Love Reasons. Aside these, the Local programmes which give prominence to the activities of fishers and other artisanal occupations draw community presence to the station. Additionally, *ATL fm* is the regional affiliate of Joy fm and transmit the prime news bulletins of Joy fm. It also broadcast news and African music from international channels like the BBC, CNN and Radio France. Moreover, the station has a huge social media presence that engages its audience on tunein and the World Wide Web (www) as it streams its programmes on facebook, thereby giving their audience the opportunity to watch activities live at the studio.

It has also been recognized and awarded for the significant role it plays in ensuring a sanitized region and a clean metropolis. The station provides a programming perspective that emphasizes the need to develop the human resource in listeners. The programme schedule of *ATL FM* includes news and current affairs in English and Fante, as well as educational and informative programmes such as Atlantic Wave, a Week on Campus, Agyanom Afarifo (Our Fishermen) and Mantem Nsem(Community Issues). 'A Week on Campus' is a magazine programme that discusses issues about student life on campus. The language used on this programme is English (atlfmonline.com Feb 2014).

3.3.4   *Okokroko FM*

Okokroko fm which operates on the frequency modulation 96.9MHZ is one of the thriving commercial radio stations in the Central region. The Station was established in 2016 by Mr Joanthan Kwami Amiga, a Ghanaian businessman based in Accra. The station operates a language policy of eighty percent (80%) local, and twenty percent (20%) English. By this, *Okokroko fm* gives prominence to the majority of indigenes of the region to consume contents from their platform. Accordingly, *Okokroko fm* targets about 70% and 30% adults and youth audience respectively from both Central and Western regions. Aside the capacity of their transmission, the station has a huge social media presence that engages its audience on Facebook, tunein and the World Wide Web. It also broadcast news from Accra fm and a sister station; Kingdom fm in Accra.

In terms of programming, *Okokroko* Sports show was adjudged the best in forklex media award in 2017. Journalists at the station have also received nominations in both forklex and Radio and TV Personality (RTP) awards. Four programme presenters have been nominated for the 2019 forklex media awards in political, social and community development issues. Some of their flagship programmes are the Morning bell (magazine talk-show), Adwumamer3(Entertainment, social and community development), Final whistle (Sport news) and Mmofra mofra (Children's Educative show). The station also engages in social intervention programmes such as blood donations and community outreaches. Thus the station's credentials as a niche commercial radio station with a wide community presence puts it in a position to be studied in terms of how journalists at the station are applying the ethics of the profession in their daily operations.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Data collection methods are primarily the mechanisms used in gathering data for a study. Kuranchie (2016) argues that an appropriate device or instrument is key in conducting a study, implying that suitable instrument contributes to the quality of data collected. A number of studies have used a combination of interviews, observations and sometimes documents to achieve the objectives of their studies. For example, Zakaria (2017) used interviews and document analysis to examine social media and radio news production by radio stations in Ghana. Dunu and Ugbo (2014) used in-depth interviews to assess the knowledge, perception and use of the

Freedom of Information Law (FOI) Law by Nigerian journalists in the discharge of their responsibility to the public. Ahadzadeh and Babran (2010) used focus group in studying audiences' perception of media ethics by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Corporation (RIB TV). This study will therefore engage focus group discussion, interviews and observation as data collection methods.

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are means of generating data from respondents through dialogue and they are a primary characteristic of qualitative studies as they assist in comprehending the social actor's perspective through accounts and explanations (Kuranchie, 2016: Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). On this premise, the researcher interviewed two seasoned media practitioners in the country who serve on the National Media Commission and the Ghana Journalist Association. The understanding was that these two bodies (among others) superintend over media content, their contribution was essential in measuring the boundaries of the principles of media ethics in addition to the boundaries of ethics as explained by WJEC (2010). This section of the study served as an anchor for the recommendations of the study. The engagement was dialogic as the researcher intermittently sought for clarifications and made some interventions at some point of the interview session. The researcher again negotiated for meaning by asking probing questions. Interviews represent direct attempt at obtaining reliable and valid measures of characteristics, behaviours, feelings and attitudes in the form of verbal responses from respondents (Kuranchie, 2016:p.107) and it involves posing

questions to interviewees for responses or answers in a face to face position, telephone or by using advanced technological media such as Skype, Facebook, etc. This study adopted both the face to face and telephone interview. The researcher interviewed senior journalists who are leaders of journalist associations such as GJA and regulatory bodies such as NMC. These participants served as experts or key informants who provided reliable information that served as measurement for ethical journalistic practices in the country. Moreover, interviews are usually a part of research that is case based (Yin, 2014). By definition, interviewing is the means by which one gets to know other people's beliefs, attitudes and expectations and to gain understanding into the cognitive models that shape their views of a particular subject (Kripendorff, 2004). This foundation is crucial to this study as interviewees chronicled the history of Ghana's media and the reasons for certain conducts of journalists as it is seen today. As a result of this unique media background, key informants communicated their expectations of the media in Ghana.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), researchers usually choose persons for interviews only if their experiences are central to the research problem as a result of their wealth of knowledge on the issue at stake. Again, this point is significant, as this study sampled the views of the leadership of NMC and the GJA. As the NMC is constitutionally mandated to regulate contents produced by media houses, it also holds an individual journalist to account in the case of misconduct or ethical violation. In a similar vein, the GJA, though an association also monitors the conduct of its members to ensure that they operate within the sphere of its code of conducts.

3.4.1.1 Interview Protocol

This study seeks to examine the knowledge of media ethics practices among broadcast journalists. In lieu of that, senior journalists, who are also serving in the GJA and NMC were interviewed on the knowledge of journalists in practicing the ethics of the profession. These respondents were identified before the interview and telephone calls placed to them. Due to their busy schedules, introduction of the researcher and the subject of interest were made on telephone and emails and letters from the researcher's department. Subsequently, the researcher booked a face –to-face interview appointment with the regional chair of the GJA. Together, the participant and the researcher finally agreed on a scheduled date, time and location which were all suitable to the participant.

Kuranchie (2016) categorizes interviews into structured, unstructured and semi-structured. This study adopted the unstructured interview approach as it sought to get a detailed and clearer understanding of the subject from the participants. Kuranchie refers to this type as in-depth interview as it interrogates issues into details. In an unstructured interview, Ary et al (2002) posit that questions mostly arise during the communication process and since the interview is not structured beforehand, the researcher asks the questions as and when the opportunity arises; the researcher 'listens carefully and uses the subjects responses to decide the next question' (p. 434). Reflecting on this, Walliman (2006) adds that the interview

allows the process to stroll in order to get insights into the attitude of the interviewee. In this interview category, there is absolute flexibility in the wording and order of questions which also allows for probes and prompts to be utilized and this in effect elicit significant unanticipated data which are essential for the study (Kuranchie 2016). The implication is that the interviewer listens to the participant with rapt attention and asks follow-up questions and record responses. According to the author, this type of interview is appropriate for studies that seek to generate data on participants' personal experiences and opinion of an issue. Therefore, since this study sought to explore the subject of ethics practices among broadcast journalists, the researcher decided on this approach to understand the subject from the perspectives of the constitutionally mandated body and association that regulate the activities of journalists. The approach adopted by the researcher allowed participants the luxury of time and space to provide comprehensive responses to questions in almost all instances. In the interview process, the GJA participant made references to documents that guide journalists in their operations and made comments that affirmed that that they were supposed to abide by such ethics. Odum- Sackey (2015) used this data collection method to examine celebrity construction on social media as the constant references to such materials helped to illustrate what the participant wanted to bring to the fore. In recording interviews, Kuranchie identifies making mental notes, written notes, tape or video recording. The author, however, notes that it is ethically appropriate for interviews to be electronically recorded with the consent of respondents and to ensure credibility of data for the same ethical consideration; recorded data needs to be played back to

respondents to corroborate what they have said. Accordingly, an audio recorder was used in this instance as a primary data collection tool. The researcher played back the interview to the participant who in turn made some additions. The recorded interview was transcribed into themes and coded for data analysis. The researcher conducted two interviews and the duration for each interview was between 20 to 35 minutes.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion

The study also employed focus group (FG) discussion as a data collection method. Underhill and Olmsted (2003) are of the view that focus group discussions are an excellent method if a researcher wants to elicit a wide range of views, perspectives or understanding of an issue. This implies that in FG, there is a free range of information from respondents as they are given unhindered platform to speak on the subject of investigation. On the established premise, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion with broadcast journalists at *ATL fm, Okokroko fm* and *Radio Central*. The FG was conducted to have detailed and primary information from the journalists on their knowledge of ethics, the importance of media ethical guide and the extent to which they put the ethics into practice.

This method also gives the opportunity for participants to openly agree and disagree on an issue and establish different levels of understandings. The method also has the potential to access forms of knowledge that other methods cannot (Wellings et

al, 2000) and generate completely unexpected or novel knowledge. For example, due to its conversational nature, participants raise issues that give the study a new direction and bring innovative ideas on board the study. Again, as a result of the unstructured nature of FG, it gives the researcher prospect to probe for detailed revelation of issues when respondents give pointers. As stated above, the researcher's skill in identifying these indicators and further questioning, led to unraveling new information that was not anticipated in the initial stages of the discussion. This unique feature of FG can also be classified as a disadvantage as it makes it difficult for the researcher to keep to the time allotted for the discussion as a result of the extensive nature of the discussion. In respect to this study, a case in point was when a participant shared an experience concerning the coverage of a story that nearly cost him his job. This testimony animated other participants who had similar encounters and were all willing to share. Such scenarios made it quite difficult for the researcher to keep to time as was agreed upon at the commencement of the discussion.

FGs can provide an open, supportive environment in which participants talk in-depth on often quite sensitive issues (Wilkinson 1998) and the interaction between participants can results in elaborated and detailed accounts. As has been stated above with the "near job loss encounter", this is one of the few methods that motivate discussants to unravel hidden issues that could be salient for the study. In this particular case, the researcher probed further to find out whether the participant backed off the story to gain his job or went ahead to see to the completion of the story in order to stay true to professional standard of journalism.

Because FG mimic real life, with people talking to each other in an informal setting rather than to a researcher, they encourage the use of participant's real vocabularies and ways of talking about the topic (Kitzinger, 1994). In this study, participants already knew each other and so from the onset of the discussion, a familial bond existed. This was quite advantageous as participants used slogans and certain terms that they best understood. The disadvantage was that, at every point in time where such slogans and phrases were used, the researcher had to interrupt to seek for meaning. Under such circumstances, participants sometimes forgot momentarily that they were participating in a study and therefore their level of enthusiasm occasionally tipped the discussion off balance. This is more so when the discussion is conducted in a very relaxed environment with like-minded participants who are usually not intimidated by the presence of other colleagues or superiors.

Regarding this research, the FG was conducted at venues decided by the participants and were therefore at ease to share their hearts out. Each session hosted journalists from a particular radio station and this was done to ensure a very relaxed environment where journalists felt the easiness to speak in the presence of their own colleagues and to share their lived experiences. In FG, participants might not feel the need or pressure to use the correct terms of the subject being investigated.

3.4.3 Observation

Angrosino (2007) notes that in qualitative research, observation is known to be one of the key methods or tools for data collection. According to the author, observation

is the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting via the senses of the observer, or with an instrument and recording it for the purposes of a scientific enquiry. From this perspective, it is understood that in observing a phenomenon, the observer must be alert to take note of what a recording instrument such as audio or video cannot capture. This means that during this process, the five senses of the observer must actively be engaged in the whole activity to ensure that nothing salient is taken for granted.

The process of observation is informed by the researcher's study purpose and research questions which may not be answered completely if the researcher limits data collection methods to only interviews and FGs. In this regard, since the subject of enquiry was to examine the knowledge of media ethics practices by broadcast journalists, this process of observation was key in determining the aspect of practice of ethics. For the purposes of this work, the researcher observed some of the participants at the studio as they hosted programmes and anchored news. Others were observed at the newsroom as they gathered news stories. The process involved watching physical settings, observing participants and activities, interactions and conversations.

Since writing down all the activities at a particular setting may not be entirely possible, Creswell (2013) suggests that researchers do broad observation and subsequently focus on specific activities that will answer research questions.

Under the process of observation, Creswell identifies four different kinds or stages of reflections. These are complete participation, participant as an observer, complete observer and observer as participant. In relation to this work, the

researcher assumed the observer as participant role throughout the entire process of observation. Under this kind of observation, the researcher watches and takes notes from a distance or close to the people who are being studied but the observer or the researcher sees him/herself as an outsider. The work of the researcher can be accomplished without any direct involvement with the people or activity under observation.

Accordingly, the researcher took notes of the activities of two participants who played their roles as host of a talk show and a producer.

Creswell acknowledges a number of steps that must be followed;

Selecting a site to be observed and obtaining the necessary permission to have access to the site.

Identifying who, when and what to observe, design an observational protocol as a method for recording notes in the field, record aspects such as particular events and activities (Bogdan &Biklen, 1992). Describe what happened and reflect on these aspects, including personal reflections, insights, ideas, confusions, initial interpretations and breakthroughs.

Taking cues from the above, the researcher selected *ATL fm and Okokroko fm* as sites for this procedure. The journalists involved in the observation process were part of the participants who were purposively sampled for the FG engagement. At *Okokroko fm and ATL fm*, the researcher observed ethical practices on the morning programme of the station and the newsroom respectively. Since the researcher was already known by the journalists, appointments for observation were booked via telephone. At the time of arrival, the receptionist ushered the researcher to the

studio to join the team that was already on programme. During the period of observation, the researcher observed a number of ethical infractions that have been discussed in the chapter four of this work. The entire observation period at *Okokroko fm* lasted for one hour, twenty minutes; from 8:40am to 10am. *At ATL fm*, the duration was seven hours; from 7am to 2pm. During the process of observation, the researcher noted both the verbal and non-verbal interaction between the host and the team, the hosts and the studio guests and the host and the audience. The subject of study in the observation process was the host of the programme.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

3.5.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. The encoding process demands an explicit code that may be a list of themes; a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are casually related; or something in between these forms. Boyatzis (1998) observes that a theme is a pattern found in information that at the minimum describes and organises possible observation or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, a theme captures something important about a data set in relation to the research

question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006, p. 4) describe thematic analysis as "a form of recognising patterns with data so that identified themes become categories

for analysis". The introduction of thematic analysis into this work was necessary to serve as the foundation upon which coded data from both interviews, observation and focus group processes were extracted and thematically arranged for analysis, discussion and presentation.

3.5.2 Thematic Procedure

Six stages were followed in the process of thematic analysis. These steps were similarly observed by Indimuli (2006) in analyzing ethical conduct of broadcast media in Kenya. Firstly, recorded audio data taken during the focus group discussion were transported from the voice recorder onto a laptop. The researcher transcribed the audio to text and formatted to ensure uniformity of font size, colour and alignment. This was necessary to ensure that the text was legible to encourage easy reading. The use of the recorder ensured that moods and emotions of participants were tapped. An assistant was employed to transcribe the audio into text. However, the researcher double cross-checked the transcript with the recorded audio and this was achieved by comparing the text with the raw audio to ensure that all the details by respondents were captured by the transcriber. This stage of data processing is quite significant because according to Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong (2007), transcription is a tasking process which can hardly be free from errors and may pose ethical challenges particularly when transcribers are recruited. To overcome this challenge, the researcher read the transcribed piece and listened to the recorded interview concurrently to capture facts that were glossed over by the transcriber.

The text was subsequently printed as hard copy for the researcher to read it slowly and repetitively in order to absorb the facts. This enabled the researcher to get acquainted with the ideas espoused by respondents in the FG in the context of the study. Because the setting of the FG was very informal and conversational, it was observed that some participants made incomplete statement in order to give other respondents the chance to make inputs. For the purposes of reliability and validity, the researcher made a second approach to these respondents in such instances to have a better idea of what they wanted to convey.

In the second stage of the data processes, initial markers or codes were produced manually from the printed piece. Since the themes were all captured from the data, the preliminary coding was carried out around sequences of apparent questions that were related to the study. This stage

organized the data into meaningful and manageable sections through the assignment of codes to identified portions of the data. At this stage, the researcher comprehensively read every part of the transcript, identified various patterns and used coloured markers to tag likely patterns. Codes identified were matched with data extracts and finally collated within each case.

At the third stage, codes that have been identified were employed to search for themes in the data. This required assembling the different codes and their extracts groups to form the broader main themes and sub-themes. To achieve this, the researcher opened the soft copy of the text on the lap top whose hardcopy was coded manually with different colour markers. Using the "copy and paste" strategy, codes that speak to specific subject were categorised appropriately under various themes

using the printed data (transcript) as a guide because it is exactly the same as the softcopy in terms of structure (format). Themes were generated around the research questions of the study but whereas some of the codes easily fitted the themes, others appear to fall outside the domain of all the themes at this stage. These codes, along with their data extracts were captured under a temporary theme for further synthesisation.

At fourth stage, the themes that the researcher developed from stage three were reviewed.

The researcher further synthesized the existing themes together with their extracts. All themes were rationalized and classified such that those without sufficient data slipped into related subjects as main and sub-themes. Bigger themes were broken down to have sub-themes. Finally, the temporary themes were revisited and those that fitted existing themes and sub-themes were sorted and included.

At stage five, the researcher redefined themes and sub-themes in relation to the objectives, research questions and the underlying principles of the study. After gathering raw data, results were computed and interpreted at the final stage.

3.6 Study Reliability

For every scientific enquiry, Kuranchie (2016) posits that the process should be both valid and reliable. The author presents the argument that researchers have the responsibility of outlining steps 'to ensure methodical soundness and integrity of the research results' (p. 138). The author provides the guidelines that a researcher must be clear on the questions they set out to study and what they intend to study

and that study results ought to be dependable. Qualitative validity is defined as the degree to which the researcher measures the accuracy of the findings engaging specific methods. Additionally, reliability calls on the researcher to use consistent approach at the different stages of the study (Gibbs 2007 cited by Creswell 2014). Gibbs (2007) supports the validation techniques such as transcripts checking, employing inter-coder reliability, avoid code redefinition; coordination among coders (in a situation where the researcher is being aided by another person during the coding process)

Consequently, for every qualitative study Creswell (2014) suggests that eight reliability techniques and four validation tools must be employed.

The use of multiple sources of data, clarification of researcher biases, presentation of negative evidence, spending prolonged time on the field, the use of thick and rich descriptions to convey findings, the use of member checking, the use of peer briefing to enhance accuracy of account and finally, the use of eternal auditor to review the project as the steps in checking reliability of a study.

Taking a cue from the above in ensuring reliability, interview transcripts were re-checked and mistakes corrected.

Embracing the above premise in the area of validity, the researcher played back audio recording to participants to ensure that what has been captured was valid. Additionally, the researcher employed triangulation to explore the knowledge and media ethics practices among broadcast journalists by using focus group discussions, interviews and document analysis. At the analysis stage of the study, thick and rich descriptions were used to present data result. Towards the end of the

study, the researcher used peer briefing to ensure accuracy and spot mistakes for corrections. Aside the above, coders were also used in the FG stage. The researcher also employed the services of a trained researcher to assist in the coding stage of the work and frequently cross-checked data with the assistant to ensure agreement with the laid down guidelines of the coding process and the set objectives of the study.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

In every research, ethical issues can arise at any stage of the study and a number of works including Creswell (2013) propose that researchers plan for these ethical concerns from the onset of the study in order to appropriately address them when they arise. Hatch (2002) cautions researchers to be sensitive to vulnerable populations and manage imbalance power relations that seem to put participants at risk in the course of the study. Being mindful of this, the researcher ensured that the problem of power-play does not arise where participants will be intimidated to conceal information as a result of the presence of a superior or a subordinate. Again, it is advised that prior to the study, the researcher obtains the consent of potential participants and gatekeepers who will eventually assist in the data collection processes stage Creswell (2013). This is necessary to avoid the problem of participants pulling out of a study at the last minutes when their inputs are needed. In this current study, though participants were not contacted at the beginning of the study, the researcher involved interested parties early enough and sought their permission that they will be needed to provide relevant information before reaching

the data collection stage. Prior to the collection of data, the researcher obtained a letter from the department that further explained the aim of the research and the expectation from participants. In as much as this was done, some participants that were penciled for data collection requested to pull out of the study as a result of their unavailability. The researcher did a full disclosure of the intents and purposes of the study to participants which Creswell (2013) admonishes investigators to do. At this stage, the researcher issued a consent form to each participant, to which they fully consented to the terms after a thorough reading and further explanation by the researcher had been done. Participants were duly informed that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that they were not under any compulsion to provide information which they wouldn't want to. They were fully assured of confidentiality of information and that nothing they said would be traced to them or used against them. In accordance with this caution by Creswell (2013), the researcher did not assign names or tags to responses by participants in order to conceal their identity. To operationalize this, specific codes such as 1RO (First respondent, *Okokroko fm*) were used to identify and to protect respondents' identities. Prior to the interviews and focus group discussions, participants were informed that the proceedings will be recorded for the purposes of the study. The researcher again ensured to playback the recording to participants to assure them that what they wanted to volunteer was what had exactly been captured on record.

3.8 Summary

The chapter three of the study has detailed the processes and procedures of data collection and analysis. It initially justified the use of the qualitative approach for this study by reflecting on the advantages of the approach to a study of this nature that sought to make room for a richer comprehension of participants' experiences by emphasizing an understanding and interpretation of the individual practices. This section provided a thick description to methods of data collection such as focus group, interviews and observation that were adopted to collect data. It again made argument for engaging such methods in the study. The study explored the knowledge and ethics practice by broadcast journalists through multiple sources of data collection such as observation, interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis of data collected was done using thematic analysis. This chapter has presented the approaches and procedures that were used in the data collection and analysis stages. In furthering this goal, the section examined the study's sampling size and strategy, approaches, design, data collection methods, and the techniques used for data collection and analysis. The above steps provided insight into how the researcher collected data from the field and the ethical principles that guided this crucial academic activity.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This research set out to explore the knowledge and practice of media ethics among broadcast journalists. The study examined the issues that emerged from the field and appropriately applied the theories that anchored the research. This chapter therefore discusses the findings or outcomes by employing the methods of analysis that have already been articulated in the chapter three of the study. The research questions posed at the commencement of the study in chapter one are responded to in this chapter and this was achieved by reducing data collected into themes and subjected to analysis using the established theories and literature in chapter two of the study. For ethical and confidentiality purposes and in the interest of protecting the identity of participants, the researcher adopted unique codes to represent respondents. The codes below represent each participant who was involved in the study. P1A (Participant 1, *ATL FM);* P2A (Participant 2, *ATL FM*); P3A (Participant 3, *ATL FM*); P1O (Participant 1, *Okokroko fm*); P2O (Participant 2, *Okokroko FM*); P3O (Participant 3, *Okokroko FM*); P4O (Participant 4, *Okokroko FM*); P1R (Participant 1, *Radio Central*); P2R (Participant 2, *Radio Central*); P3R (Participant 3, *Radio Central*); and P4R (Participant 4, *Radio Central*).

4.2 Knowledge of broadcast journalists on media ethics

Christians, Rotzoll, Tackler, McKee, and Woods (2005) identify five ethical duties of mass media employees, three are critical to this work;

Duty to self. They advocate that media professionals need individual integrity and the strength to follow their conscience.

Duty to the audience. When a journalist is deciding on a particular course of action, the audience must be considered first. Christians et al (2005) propose that a media practitioner must be able to ascertain how a journalistic decision will affect the audience.

Duty to society. In news gathering, for instance, individual rights to privacy and confidentiality often arise. Media content that contains scenes of sex and violence also directly concerns society. In this instance, journalists must determine the extent to which duty to society affect other professional duties and loyalties.

The above duties feature prominently in this work as every decision made by a media practitioner is predominantly anchored on at least one of the above.

Ward (2015) and Searle, (2010) establish that ethics is concerned with appropriate proper beliefs, correct application and the disposition to act ethically. Making this point strongly, Ward (2015) and Ridge (2010) express the views that a rejection of ethics is to ignore a crucial link between media ethics and democracy, stressing that the health of every democratic communal domain depends, largely on a vigorous but responsible media system that encourages coherent and educated inquiry of critical issues. By this, the authors create a direct link between a healthy democracy

and its dependence on media ethical practice. Critically, this means the failure of the media in abiding by its own ethics has dire consequences on participatory democracy. This is because it is the media that give voice to both minority and majority interest where each concern reflects the interest of the larger society.

The study revealed that broadcast journalists at *ATL FM, Okokroko FM* and *Radio Central* generally have some knowledge about media ethics. It was discovered that participants were aware of the universal code of ethics that regulate media activities across the world. Media ethics was expressed by the participants as what was professionally acceptable, objective, truth, accuracy in news reportage and avoiding prejudice. According to the participants, every news item that is covered and disseminated to the larger society mirrors assumptions of either of these principles and that if a journalist overlooks these ethical demands, journalistic decisions end up hurting society in an unimaginable way. They assert that when truth is forsaken, the reverse is vice, which is a foundation that a society cannot build its principles on.

4.2.1 General, Institutional, and Specific Ethics

Participants established their knowledge that beyond the general code of ethics that are globally acknowledged and practiced, the various institutions they work with have in-house ethics that guide their practice. They explained that ethical practices must be defined and practiced appropriately within certain cultural context. Respondents note that since media houses have different agenda and serve different purposes, interest and target audiences, it was imperative for them to fashion out

ethical requirements that foster the realization of these goals without necessarily breaching the core assumptions of general media ethics.

For example, P1A was of the view that "ethics is not a global commandment that must be adhered to by all cultures because there are general, institutional and specific ethical guide in a number of media houses". This is to say that, at the participant's establishment, there is a code of ethics that regulates the behaviour of staff and in as much as there may be points of variation, this is not deemed as a breach by the media fraternity because the understanding already exist that media ethics are not sacred rules or commandments that must rigidly be followed.

This position was affirmed by P4O and P2A that aside these institutional codes of practice, "ethical practice could be personal depending on the upbringing" of the individual journalist in a decision making process. These participants moved from the realm of institutional code of ethics to individual beliefs and practices that must reflect in the professional conduct of the practitioner. The observation was that at each point in time, decisions and judgments made by the journalist should reflect personal values and philosophies independent of general and institutional demands. Albaran (2010) makes similar observation that 'there is no universally accepted code of ethics in the electronic media, which is rather revealing. The assertion is that an organization may adopt its own code of ethics, which may be written or simply implied. What this means that the character and behaviour of journalists regarding their professional duty could be as a result of shared values which may not necessarily be written codes but ingrained attitude that have been imbibed by staff of a media institution that manifest outwardly by those who are part of that

particular system. Albaran (2010) however admits that wherever group or organizational ethics codes exist, conflicts may arise between the organization's approach and the individual's moral beliefs. The assertion by the author is also of a great concern to the journalist who is at the centre of the decision making process. In solving this seeming conflict, the implication is that some level of sacrifices will have to be made by the practitioner, in this sense; it is either the institutional or personal ethics that will suffer.

In any of the case, it is important to reflect on the ethical duties by Christians et al (2005). The course of action must therefore be to adhere to the duty to self which follows the conviction of the conscience or duty to the audience, which places a demand on the journalist to consider the audience first. As Christians et al (2005) propose, a media practitioner must be able to ascertain how a journalistic decision will affect the audience and decide accordingly.

If ethical decisions can stage this level of tension and confusion within the individual as a result of different systems of believe, then Albaran (2010) is of the believe, that same can happen within the various departments in an organization, with the believe that the types of ethical situations may vary by departments. If such a scenario can occur in a department, then there is no way all media houses can behave the same way on an ethical principle. However, in the absence of common agreement, ethical violation must not be the norm.

4.2.2 Formal and Informal Ethical Training

The participants established that there are journalists who may not have any educated foundation of the principles of ethics and added that these are individuals who learn on the job without professional qualification. In such instances, the environment that nurtured the individual and the moral upbringing will find major expressions in the daily decisions of the journalists. The implication is that there are journalists who make appropriate ethical decisions without recourse to or knowledge of the general or institutional ethical guide. P2A explained that such individuals draw from within them what has been bequeathed to them by the society. This understanding of ethics is in concert with Ward (2015) who describes ethics as a social activity that is fashioned to regulate conduct. It is what establishes the paramount regulation of human behavior, individually and socially. In peculiar cases such as this, P1A insists that the internal checks to abide by the moral ethics is stronger and firmer than people who solely depend on professional ethical guide without the inner conviction to do what is right. People with a background as this are people of conviction who serve the dictates of their conscience. In this case, Christians et al (2005) categorization of duties will see the duty to self predominantly being exercised here above all else. Aristotle's golden mean theory which believes that "happiness" was the ultimate human good finds a better expression particularly in this discussion. Patterson and Wilkins, (2007) explain that by happiness, Aristotle meant to exercise practical reason in the conduct of any particular activity through the setting of high standards. Aristotle believed that practical reason was exercised by individuals, and that a person of practical wisdom, was that human being who demonstrated ethical excellence through daily

activity. The concept asserts that people and their acts are the moral basis of activity. One of the core assumptions of this theory is that the act itself must spring from a firm and unchanging character. The theory therefore dwells on the strength of character or virtues of the individual journalist who takes the decision and this is the belief the participants sought to express. The theory stipulates that to be true to self, one has to acknowledge the authority of the moral demand the community instills into the individual. The virtue ethics of Aristotle and Confucius both assume that moral obligations have authority from the community where individuals trace their roots.

However, P1R notes that there are rather "a greater number of practitioners with weak character who are morally bankrupt, have been left to exercise this important duty with no restraint". In as much as participants appreciate that an allowance be given to the journalist to exercise right ethical decisions, the majority of the respondents expressed the concern that the absence of a guide can also be a threat as society cannot trust the individual journalist to make appropriate ethical decisions that will inure to the benefit of the society without the intrusion of personal interest. This observation further reinforces the need for ethical guidelines for media practitioners.

4.2.3 Boundary of the GJA Code of ethics

The participants' understanding of media ethics is also informed by the presence and the operation of the GJA code of ethics. The GJA is an association that has documented an ethical guide to regulate the activities of its members. Among the respondents who participated in the study, the agreement was that though not all journalists are members of the association, the code the association operates with is a summary or a reflection of international standard of journalistic practice and must therefore be respected. They made a specific mention to article 8 of the GJA code which states that "under no circumstance should news be suppressed unless it bothers on national security or it is at the best interest of the society". The three participants from *ATL FM* concurred, that as far as the media profession was concerned, the GJA code of ethics gives formidable directives for journalists in Ghana to operate responsibly. Journalists from *Radio Central and Okokroko* were however of the view that though some of them are members of the association, there is no form of formal or informal orientation regarding the GJA code of ethics.

According to P2R;

They just assume that we know these rules and that we just want to become members so that we will be recognized nationally. I only pay the dues every year and I get informed when colleagues in Accra commit infractions. When we get the opportunity to meet the national executives, they only give

advice. Advice is not education. Though I'm a member, I am as ignorant as those who are not.

According to them, the only time the association becomes active is when it is mobilizing support for a programme such as national awards. The information from P2R is crucial to this discussion in the sense that in as much as all the participants claimed their institutions had code of ethics, only two of them were members of a regional/national association whose activities ensured the adherence of the media code of ethics. The assertion by the participants that they were ignorant about the code of ethics is disturbing.

In the opinion of P4R,

> In as much as the code is self-explanatory, the essence of joining an association is to be indoctrinated, it is to be saturated with the group's doctrine until you start acting it. The code of ethics has never been an issue unless someone falls into trouble then our executives will make references to some of the articles. It's a shame but I even find it difficult to exercise the demands of the articles, I don't know them.

The narratives by the participants regarding their knowledge of the GJA code of ethics raise a critical concern that media practitioners may rattle and recite media ethics, however, it may not reflect entirely in what they do at their various institutions. A point worthy of note is that change only takes place when people act on the script, otherwise, media ethics becomes just an ordinary cliché that exist

in name to satisfy the conscience of people that something is there to represent something. In this fast moving information age, the only clock of restraint for any professional journalist is the knowledge and practice of media ethics

4.2.4 Knowledge of Ethics as a Restraining Factor in a Competitive Media Field

According to the participants, the journalism field is a very tempting arena where one is capable of letting go all moral and integrity. They advance the argument that journalists cover real life stories about people who are very much active in society. In the interpretation of P3O, "if you are not mindful of the trust that the society has invested in you, you will let a lot of people off the hook and chase irrelevant news". He notes that "the pressure to either drop or cover a story is not just coming from without, but within, from your own colleagues who are to know better". The participant observed that being aware of the expectation of society from the media serves a greater purpose than being oblivious.

P2A also perceives that in an information age that has also witnessed the soaring state of media houses in the country, there is always the temptation for "us to report first and provide details that may not be ethically acceptable but may be appealing to the public". In a situation such as this;

> The restraining factor becomes the ethics of the profession that cautions us to exhibit a high level of sensitivity by avoiding gory images and biases, the need for us to always have adequate information, reporting fact and truth and constantly have the interest of the larger community in mind.

The stance by P2A is affirmed by the golden mean theory that in any decision, the individual must have knowledge of what is being done through the exercise of practical reasoning. Albaran (2010, p. 52) is of the view that "news reporters overstep their bounds in a rush to get a story and report inaccurate information. The person impacted suffers undeserved humiliation." This is a very critical piece of information that must guide the practice of journalism in the country. The harm caused as a result of the haste to be first to report cannot be quantified and it might possibly outweigh the gains of giving information to society. Eventually, society is numbed as a result of the repetitive blunders that are committed by the media. If the society, whose interest is championed by the media is unable to vouch for the integrity of the media as a result of constant ethical breaches, then media loses its mandate to serve the same.

Reflecting on the principle of media ethics, Jaska and Pritchard (1994) observe that the basic ethical questions are concerned with "the character and conduct of the individuals and institutions". Contributing to this position, Day (2006) defines ethics as a way of life that deals with the moral aspects of life. In this sense, ethics reflects societal norms about what is morally right and wrong. On the premise set, ethics provides one's own understanding of proper conduct based on principles and rules that one consider important.

4.2.5 Knowledge on truth and objectivity

Ward (2015) and Searle, (2010) agree that though societies have an interest in the trusted and ethical character of the media system in general, informed media encourages responsible media practice. The emphasis on the knowledge of broadcasters regarding truth is crucial to the discussion. As a result, the research question above sought to examine the depth of knowledge of broadcast journalists in the area of media ethics, with special emphasis on the principle of truth and objectivity. The researcher achieved this goal by observing the behavior of participants on duty. Their reactions and responses to the demand of the job were recorded and analyzed accordingly. The researcher additionally conducted a focus group discussion with participants who freely responded to questions and shared their professional experiences with the researcher. Again, the behaviour, reactions and responses of participants were recorded and grouped into themes based on the five media principles as categorized by Carey (1997), Kitchener (1984) and Pippert, (1989). The study revealed that participants had an ideal understanding of the principle of truth. They acknowledged the importance of truth in the work of the media and asserted that the principal mandate of the media is to sift information and get to the level of truth and offer this truth to society. To them, truth can only be achieved when media ask tough questions, engage in rigorous research and fact-check its findings. However, participants conceded that the media in Ghana operate within a society that makes it nearly impossible for them to achieve truth. They mentioned factors such as the bureaucratic nature of public institutions, undue interference of superiors and paymasters, unhealthy competition among media houses, lack of research, allegiance to colleagues and certain influential people in

society as impeding the media from achieving truth. The participants observed that to be perceived as credible, the media must deliver truth and admitted that the environments in Ghana are not conducive for delivering truth. The argument raised supposed that major conservative media have not played the role of journalism properly because they have colluded with the rule of the day to produce news that reflects the needs and opinions of the political party in power. For instance, PO4 is of the view that politicians have succeeded in creating a society that makes it extremely challenging to verify and fact-check any information. The contention is that civil servants and bureaucrats who are experts in their fields will rather choose to keep quiet than to risk losing a job or being transferred. Under such circumstances, the respondent argues that;

> All you will ever hear in the media are either speculations and assumptions or pure lies. But, remember, that this is a strategy that is working for us, at least for now. Because immediately you go on air to say something which is not true, the person or institution that is affected will quickly call to react and by that, you eventually arrive at the truth. For me, in as much as I don't subscribe to such rumour mongering and peddling of lies in the media, it's better to spew lies and get the truth than keeping totally silent, and waiting for something you know you will never get.

But according to Jaspers (1955), what the audience deserve in communication is the search and preservation of truth. It is the media's obligation to search and preserve the truth by defending it with all the armory at its disposal. With this,

society can afford to swallow what the media provides, without doubting the credibility of information. This position is corroborated by Bonhoeffer (1995) that truth is the foundation that holds the pillar of media. This is so because, it is generally believed by consumers of media products that any information emanating from the quarters of media should not necessarily represent the interest of any party. The ideal of objectivity, as asserts by Ward (2004), properly understood, is vital not only for responsible journalism but for responsible scientific inquiry, informed public deliberations, and fair ethical and legal judgments. On this premise, both Carey (1997) and Ward (2004) agree that one of the ultimate pillars that holds the foundation of journalism is the principle of objectivism, an ethical principle which makes the society develop the trust that the media is interested in all, with no particular interest or stake in the other.

The instance above, where the media would have to put out a lie to achieve the truth is worrying. By this, the media also create a platform for not just politicians, but for society to be making allegations against certain people, and another opportunity is created for defenses and explanations. The media therefore become like the court that tries people and if one is unable to defend an allegation, it hangs on ones' neck that a wrong was perpetuated, even though it may be a baseless allegation. Again, when the media make allegation, people mistaken that to be the truth and ran with it. In instances where apologies or explanations have been offered to ameliorate earlier positions, the audience at that material moment consuming media content may not be the same as the earlier audience who were fed with falsehood.

4.2.6 Truth, Common Sense and Ethics

Regarding the principle of truth, P1A finds expression in the use of "common sense" when telling the truth. Though truth is a cardinal media principle, the concern of the respondent was that "sometimes telling the truth may turn the country upside down, it may be the truth but it doesn't mean it must be told. Some truths must be kept. Participant explains that there have been situations where both internal instincts and external senses conspire to deny the public the truth because;

> The time may not just be right and the truth cannot be handled by the hearers. Under such circumstances when silence is not an option, journalists water down the issue which may not be the truth in its entirety. However, when silence is wisdom, then the journalist is better found in that arena.

In this assertion, the journalist assumes the role of defining what truth is and making that critical decision whether truth must be told the people or shielded. The nagging concern is whether the journalist can independently be left with such privileges knowing that there are both internal and external influences that will wish to direct affairs regarding news and who it concerns.

P3A, P1O and P4O are of the view that, there is no quarters to fact-check a story, and they all affirm that "if you always choose to be cross-checking before broadcast, you will end up broadcasting dead news every day".

This is a disturbing development in the country's media landscape because, the position of the journalist is a trusted one and it reliably depended upon by the citizenry for credible information. What then happens to a broadcast piece that is

bereft of truth and credibility as a result of unchecked background? When such an unhealthy happening becomes the normal practice, it undermines all the pillars of media practice. For example, when a journalist fails to fact check a story before publication, it explicitly defies the principles of objectivity and truth. A published piece which is based on either rumour or hearsay has the propensity of damaging the dignity of the affected individual(s) or causing harm because the media practitioner ignored to verify the source of the story. In an era where majority of people depend on radio as their source of news, as advanced by Mohd (2003), the negligence of journalists to authenticate the source of a story before feeding it to the general public is chilling. This laxity by some radio journalists makes it paramount for media regulators and the media themselves to reflect on the positions of Ward (2015) and Ridge (2010) regarding the importance of media ethics; that a rejection of ethics is to ignore a crucial link between media ethics and democracy. They posit that no democracy can thrive healthily in the midst of irresponsible media system that discourages coherent and educated inquiry of critical issues such as corroborating news source. In such an enterprise, the driving force for news is no more for the benefit of society, news with questionable sources become detrimental to the society.

It must be admitted that respondents were not unanimous regarding this position though. Some were of the view that journalists who indulge in such practices were damaging the integrity of the profession.

For example, P2A and P4R made an argument to differentiate between a professional journalist and a social media commentator or a blogger.

It is bloggers who are always looking for readership and attention who do that. They sit in the comfort of their homes to concoct stories and dump it on social media for the affected party to respond to it. I admit that getting the truth is difficult but some of us are still digging for it and we are getting result.

P2A and P4R affirmed that such irresponsible conduct by some journalists in the country has grave consequences on the profession and must not be allowed to see the light of day.

4.2.7 Truth and Objectivity on Utilitarianism.

The understanding from respondents, though not unanimous, has implications on how a utilitarian will judge actions of a journalist. According to this perspective, the morality of an action is contingent on the outcome of that action. This is to assert that the morally right action would automatically produce the right result whereas the ethically wrong action would result in a bad outcome Nazakat (2016). For example, the position of a respondent that it is right for the media to engage in speculations and assumption in order to get the truth has dire ethical concerns. This is because, in the process of unraveling the truth, innocent people may be affected and irreparable damage done to hard earned reputations; this must also be a concern for the media. Though this theoretical position by utilitarianism has been criticized on the basis that it is not always the case that a morally right action yields the desired result, the principle affirms the stance of the respondents that peddling

falsehood in the media produces an outcome that is judged right. The central meaning of consequentialism or the teleological theory is that "the ends justify the means".

An area worthy of note is that this theory operates with a double-edged sword in it analysis of ethical decisions. For instance, the concept of Utilitarianism states that the consequences of actions are important in deciding whether they are ethical. This means that the utilitarian is interested in the process, in the kind of speculation that is done by the media in arriving at the truth. The theory therefore cautions that the whole process must be ethical. In the utilitarian view, it may be considered ethical if one person is harmed for the benefit of the larger group. Though such media trials may harm individuals, there is always the hope that it provides a greater societal good when culprits of social ills are exposed by such journalistic works. The theory takes the philosophical ethical stance of "the greatest good for the greatest number" of people. In effect, if one person's reputation is damaged in search of truth, it is good for the larger society.

4.2.8 Truth and Objectivity on Categorical Imperative

This is where Kant's categorical imperative, which focuses on the rightness and wrongness of an action, conflicts with utilitarianism. The view by a participant that the strategy of engaging in assumptions eventually produces the desired or expected outcome is debatable on the platform of categorical imperative. Embedded in this theory are the moral principles of reciprocity and universality which follow that

"do as you would be done by" and universality means that an ethical or right action must be possible to apply it to all people. According to this theory, an individual should act on the premise that the choices one makes for oneself could become universal law. This theoretical stance precipitates a crucial question; is the media adopting a mantra, that it is ethically correct to make allegations on the basis of assumptions? Would the media accept or avail itself to be tried on such a platform? The perspective of the duty theory is that, the end should not determine the means and that if an action is wrong, then it is wrong, the end is inconsequential. If the media is speculating, there must be a solid foundation, a certain string of truth that the media can hold on to unravel other perspectives that subsequently leads to the bigger plot. Based on this premise, one can therefore condemn, in no uncertain terms, the behavior of journalists who smoke out people to appear in the public sphere to explain issues based on lies manufactured by the same enterprise that preaches truth.

4.2.9 Knowledge on Non-Violence, Human Dignity and Privacy

The ethics of nonviolence is also a pivotal media principle that places the obligation on the media to avoid inflicting any form of harm.

Levinas (1985) reveals that Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Junior advanced this principle away from an assertive approach into a belief of life itself. The author explains further that the divine command which prohibited people from killing their kind must be respected as such. The principle of human dignity and privacy is also of a huge importance to media ethics across the globe. Different

cultural traditions affirm human dignity in a variety of ways, with a unanimous voice that all human beings have sacred status without exception. Since this work involved radio journalists, the principle of non-violence and human dignity found very few expressions. Unlike TV and print journalists that make predominant use of extensive images and other visuals, radio journalists produce a lot of scripts and audio content that use fewer or no visual images. There are however instances where broadcast journalists have disclosed the identity of victims of circumstances or over-indulged in giving detailed description to how somebody was raped or even murdered. Such ethical infractions have had undesirable impact on such people.

In the opinion of P1O, PO3 and PO4, radio news anchors should be able to give very vivid description in such instances because journalists are supposed to offer words to audience to help them have an idea of what is being reported.
According to P4O,

> If you fail to help your listeners create this imagery, they will not enjoy your story. See how newscasters at Peace and Adom do news, people think they are sensational but they are always listening to them. Since your audience are not watching TV, you have to use words to describe how the act was done, and give a detailed description to the people involved.

The understanding of this principle has possibly been thwarted because people normally show a lot of repulsion for detailed description in cases of accidents that maim or claim human lives, rape, murder and other gruesome activities. The

penchant of the broadcast media in sensationalizing such unfortunate incidents leaves much to be desired.

In the views of P2R, there is nothing wrong with disclosing the identity of minors and victims, if the intention is to court public sympathy.

Sometimes rape victims need support or sympathy from our listeners. If you don't tell the listeners who these people are so that they can receive the necessary support, then there is no sense in covering the story in the first place. In such times, victims need their neighbours and other well-meaning people to let them know what to do.

Though the intention by these journalists may be right, the practice is ethically wrong as this exposes victims to further harm, discrimination or ridicule by society. The media can garner support without essentially disclosing the identity of people who have been affected by the action of another.

Participants also shared the insights that when print media splashes gory images as banner headlines, they are left off the hook. P1R laments that "no one punishes them, we only hear the expression of repulsion and disgust, but because no one does anything drastic, they are still doing it. If what print does is ethically wrong, then punish so you can do same to the other. If you just talk, the practice won't stop.

On human dignity, Battles (1996) emphasizes the universal perspective that all people are equal and must be treated with dignity. For media institutions, for example, the golden rule leads away from hostile actions and verbal abuse toward respect and goodwill for all men. Though respondents had reasonable knowledge

in this area, focus group discussions and observations centered on the habits of local news – for example, the rituals in covering crime and the descriptions that journalists give facilitate the construction of menacing imagery and a media that is very insensitive. Rather than actively following human dignity and the quest for justice for the affected party, the media tend to tip the balance toward mockery, suspicion and sometimes animosity among the majority of audience. Entman and Rojecki (2000) accordingly suggest that when the normative principle of human dignity becomes a priority in the media, this important swing group would be enabled to move forward and demand for justice. Respondents agreed that the media is charting a very unhealthy path by giving so much attention to very unimportant issues whiles the weightier matters are left to rot.

On privacy, Kitchener (1984) considers that every individual has the right to decide how they live their lives, as long as their actions do not interfere with the welfare of others and the media must accept this fact and treat people as free agent with freedom of thought and choice. According to the key informant of GJA, the media should be able to differentiate between news and gossip so that society will be served with only that which is healthy.

> The lives of prominent people and celebrities must not always be in the news if they have not done anything that warrant such unnecessary publicity. A major news by popular radio stations waste precious time to talk about the marriage of a celebrity and how money was extravagantly dissipated. Meanwhile, there is a

> community right where the media operates that needs water; we
> refuse to talk about that.

The informant disclosed that the media must not deceive itself to think that such gossips get them listenership; "You may get the listenership but you are not serving society's fundamental interest".

However, all the respondents admitted to secretly recording people for a number of reasons

This practice has received greater condemnation from all sectors of society. In spite of the public disapproval, journalists in all the three radio stations that participated in the research were of the view that the practice can only stop when information is readily available for journalists.

4.3 Factors Affecting the Practice of Truth and Objectivity

This section of the research sought to examine the factors that affect the practice of the principles of truth and objectivity. The interaction with participants through focus group, observation and interviews revealed that though they expressed the importance of knowing and operating within the ambit of the principles of media ethics, they are unable to do so for a number of reasons.

4.3.1 Media owners

One major factor that dominated the discussion was the interference of media owners. Some scholars argue that media independence, or the free hand for journalists to operate independently can be influenced by media owners who resource or finance the media directly (Herman & Chomsky 2006; McQuail, 2005 and Netanel, 2001). In a study on the relationship between media ownership and editorial content in Kenya, Okech (2008) found a strong correlation between editorial lines of the two major daily newspapers in the country and to ownership influences in most cases.

Participants in this current study also confessed that aside such occasional scenarios, there are countless times that they had to conceal information from the public because the institutions they work for called the shot and they had to compromise both internal instincts and code of ethics to either save their jobs or the face of their organizations and paymasters. They explained that the Ghanaian culture, like any other society, encourages a very cordial relationship among people. These relationships grow and become a big family that protects its interest from external threat such as the intrusion of the media. Under such instances, when news reports seem to pose a threat to the activities of a group or entity that is directly or indirectly affiliated to the owner of the media, such a story cannot be aired.

According to P1O, the manager quelled a story that a reporter investigated about a rape case. This story involved a very influential member of society who happened to be a senior high school mate of the radio owner. The manager convinced the reporter to hold on with the story until the alleged rapist tells his side of the story. Eventually, the story never saw the light of day.

During the observation process, an editor stopped a story from being aired because "a big man" called to make an appeal that he did not want the story to go on radio. The story was about a political figure who had displaced market women from their business site and was in the process of using the said site for his personal business. Due to his influence on either the editor or the media owner, he was able to stop the story from going on radio. In this instance, media failed in serving a greater interest for the greatest number of people as the utilitarian will explain.

Journalists who are constantly found at such work environment are gagged perpetually from making decisions that reflect their journalistic instinct or codes and this becomes a threat to the profession and the well-being of the society. Carey (1997) and Ward (2004) agree that one of the ultimate pillars that holds the foundation of journalism is the principle of objectivism, an ethical principle which makes the society develop the trust that the media is interested in all, with no particular interest or stake in the other. The reality as was expressed by respondents is that the media is seen to be serving the covert interest of paymasters and media owners. In this instance, objectivism is not just sold and bought; it is actually stolen from journalists and the society by the powerful. Media ownership is "public trust or stewardship"; rather than "unlimited private franchise", according to McQuail (2006, p.171) and importantly, having been vested with a degree of authority as the fourth estate, the media has an inherent element of answerability not to owners but the larger society. Journalists are aware that surrendering to such dictate also infringes on the guidelines of the GJA code which stipulate that a journalist at all times upholds and defends the principles of media freedom and independence,

reports the truth at all times and upholds the public interest and the right of the public to be informed.

4.3.2 Personal Safety and Security

Additionally, concealing the truth also received personal safety and security dimensions by P3A and P4R who said "If I have to be unethical to be safe, then I would do it than to be ethical and die and you wouldn't even get the story".

The implication of the above is that, awareness of truth and cross-checking facts about a story are not enough safety guidelines or guarantees for the journalists if there are no insurances and assurances of safety. In such instances, the truth is as good as dead especially when it affects the powerful in society. Every human instinct is to protect life before all other things. The concern of all the respondents was the absence of security for journalists. As a result, any story that has perceive interest of any influential member of society cannot be analyzed truthfully and objectively. The observation at one of the radio stations brought the problem much closer home as one angry man walked into the studio and demanded to see a particular lady who he claims misrepresented him in a story that was produced a day earlier. When those on duty at the studio asked him to leave the studio because there was a live programme, he became angrier and with a very aggressive demeanour, banged the studio door while raining invectives on the staff of the station. There was no security, except the receptionist who was probably unable to restrain the intruder. The GJA code of ethics gives attention to cases as this.

According to the guide, journalists must not "suppress news, information and materials on the basis of threats, inducements, and individual preferences or for personal gain". However, the explanation by P3A that "If I have to be unethical to be safe, then I would do it than to be ethical and die and you wouldn't even get the story" calls into question the foundation of the code of ethics especially of GJA. In truth telling, the decision maker has a choice based on prevailing conditions and in this instance, it is personal security. The implication is that in as much as truth must be told, discretion must be exercised by the journalist. The assertion by Kitchener (1984) serves as a bridge for controversies such as this. The author observes that ethical principles are commonly in conflict with each other in their application to ethical dilemmas, because there are no absolutes. Absolute in this sense means no principle is greater or lesser than the other. Since no one principle is a foundation in itself, there may be moments when a higher standard of ethical conduct might require breaching one or more of the principles. It must, however, be understood from Kitchener's perspective that defying any principle, because they are in variance with each other should rather serve a higher duty. The primary duty the journalist chooses to abide by is the safety of life.

4.4 Factors Affecting Human Dignity and Privacy

In as much as they hailed the importance of the code of media ethics and the need for journalists to abide by these, the participants again admitted that ethics is occasionally thrown to the dogs depending on the salience of the issue at stake.

4.4.1 Secret Recording and Human dignity

Though respondents showed a level of knowledge regarding the ethics of human dignity and privacy, they defy these ethical principles in practice. According to them, "we live in a kind of society where people will not voluntarily give you information even when it is within their means to do so". Some of the reasons they gave for recording people secretly without the necessary permission were; "to protect the interest of the public, to expose corrupt activities, for personal interest," etc.

In the opinion of P3A, "if I'm to invade someone's privacy for the common good, it's of national interest, and I have to invade them, it is ethical, because I need it for the public good".

Some of the participants who confessed to secretly recording informant also gave the reason that "if the information in question was to serve a bigger interest and secret recording was the only window of opportunity left", then they will go for it. However, this position by P1A and P3A is criticized vehemently by the categorical imperative theory under the deontological model. Under this perspective, human beings take a prominent space in decisions and there is a universal order from which all duties are derived Nazakat (2016). This model places moral principles of universality and reciprocity at the centre of decisions and advocates that these two variables; universality and reciprocity, must govern the activities of man. In this discussion, universality means that an ethical or right action must be possible to apply it to all people and that an individual should act on the premise that the

choices one makes could become universal law. This ethical theory is based on the idea that it is the act itself that moral force resides, rather than the person who acts. In Battles (1996), the theory thrives on the fundamental principle that one should act so that humanity is always treated as an end and never as means only. In the perspective of this theory, journalist can claim few special privileges, such as the right to lie or the right to invade privacy in order to get a story. The implication is that the end does not justify the means, at least, not in this instance. P4O buttresses this perspective that "putting yourself in the shoes of your audience will make you strive to do the right thing as a journalist and avoid excesses". The principle of reciprocity which has its premise of morality in all religious systems follows that do unto others as you would have them do to you. The theory of categorical imperative therefore commands the media to carefully reflect on actions in order to make a particular decision with the welfare of another in mind. However, a critical analysis of the position of P4O and the assertion of categorical imperative are not in sync with the stance of the GJA code of ethics. What then becomes of the ethical guide that demands journalists to uphold the public interest and the right of the public to be informed? In such an instance, news is no more about public interest but individual choice. The challenge is that the assumption by categorical imperative becomes problematic when the decision maker is not religious and will not for a second assume the position of the victim where he/she may need to be shown mercy or treated likewise. Again, the extreme could also be the norm where a journalist will suppress news so that he/she does not put him/herself at that uncomfortable edge of the rope where his undesirable exploits will also be exposed.

The understanding is that one will want to treat others the way he want to be treated just like the popular saying; scratch my back, I scratch your back. Journalistic decisions that are primarily based on this principle will breed a league of journalists who are not accountable to anybody but themselves. Further, the practice will establish a journalistic culture that makes no contribution to the society, except towing the path of cronies and the powerful.

This hydra-headed analysis opens up a debate for the media to consider which side of the news they will report; the victim or the perpetrator because there is societal obligation on the media to serve the public good, rather than the interests of owners or funders (Nerone, 1995; Picard, 1985).

Invading the privacy of people by journalists has received public criticism and rage not just in Ghana, but the whole world. The consequentialist will explain that the morality of an action is contingent on the outcome of that action. This is to assert that the morally right action would automatically produce the right result whereas the ethically wrong action would result in a bad outcome. Nazakat (2016). A theory under the consequential model that explains the action of a journalist in this situation is utilitarianism. It states that the consequences of an action is important in deciding whether it is ethical. In the utilitarian view, it may be considered ethical if one person is harmed for the benefit of the larger group. If secretly recording an informant will destroy or harm the informant and save a whole nation or serve a greater interest, a utilitarian will go for it.

 P1A acknowledged occasionally, secret recordings are carried out by journalists not for public consumption but for personal reasons by the journalists. This is a

matter of concern because invasion of privacy bothers on the principle of human dignity. According to Kitchener (1984), every individual has the right to decide how they live their lives, as long as their actions do not interfere with the welfare of others and the media must accept this fact and treat people as free agent with freedom of thought and choice. The challenge is the ability of journalists to differentiate what activity constitutes a threat to the state. The GJA code of ethics makes provision for journalists to obtain information "only by honest, straightforward, fair and open means—unless otherwise tampered by public interest considerations". Furthermore, the Association cautions journalists not to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of public interest and to respects the individual's rights to privacy and human dignity.

The note of caution is that journalists identifying what information or activity threatens the state without taking undue personal advantage of people to obtain information that they do not have the right to and eventually, using such information to blackmail them.

4.5 Other Reasons for Unethical Practices

Citing reasons for the inability to always abide by the ethics of the profession, some of the participants disclosed that their allegiance to the principles of media ethics is sometimes "dependent on challenges faced at home, conditions at work place and who is involved in the news". These revelations raised critical questions about the

trust that the media demands from the society regarding news objectivity and fairness.

They again acknowledged that occasionally, unethical practices are not motivated by the urge to serve the public; such as secretly recording an informant, but the drive to be the preference of the public for selfish reasons. According to P2A, journalists are driven towards the path of unprofessional conduct to beat competition for listenership. Under such circumstances, journalists do not check fact and end up like social media amateurs who disseminate rumours that cannot be trusted. In essence, the information to be disseminated by media practitioners, especially in this context, should be trustworthy for public consumption and also justifiable. Montesquieu, the French Philosopher in dealing with publicity, noted that the "spread of appropriate and necessary information - is the cure for the abuse of power" (Holmes, 1990:27). By this, it is the responsibility of every journalist to ensure high journalistic conduct without which the media profession comes under threat because the trust of the very public it claims to represent wanes while its role in democratic development weakens (Berger, 2004, Wasserman & de Beer, 2005, p. 41).

4.5.1 Exposure and Language Competence

In mainstream media, NMC key informant holds the view that knowledge and practices of journalistic ethics must be viewed from the angles of exposure and competence of language use. "When you are not exposed, you don't have a teacher. It is the kind of exposure a journalist receives that will determine what he/she gives. Who are our journalists listening to? That is where the change comes from".

On that score, he observes that Ghanaian journalists are sometimes seen to be unethical because they lack exposure and the language to clearly express their thoughts and intentions. He notes that the opportunity to listen to the finest in the industry gives a whole new perspective to journalists to aspire to be the best and to maintain the highest ethical standards. This view is corroborated by P1A who acknowledged that he listens to the BBC because in his view, they set a higher standard for any local media. During the period of observation at *Okokroko fm*, the presenters exhibited a lot of mannerisms that were akin to their partner station in Accra. In effect, the radio station in Accra, whose programmes were being syndicated by *Okokroko fm* was directly influencing the delivery skills of on-air staff at *Okokroko fm*. What this means is that, Peace fm in Accra had set a standard (positive or negatively), and this standard was driving the ethical conduct of these presenters. In the same vein, presenters at *ATL fm* demonstrated similar characteristics and work ethics to that of *Joy fm* in Accra and the *BBC* in London because *Joy* and *BBC* are the partner stations of *ATL FM* in the Central Region. The exercise of caution, restraint and detailed attention to media principles were also observed at *Radio Central*, the regional branch or wing of *Radio Ghana* in Accra. The concern in all these examples is whether these radio stations in Accra who seem to be setting standards for local presenters are themselves ethical and professional in their dealings. For example, when P1O was asked why he frequently tunes in to listen to Peace fm whiles his programme was still running, he said;

I like the way Chairman handles his guests and disciplines them when they go off board. I'm always inspired and listening to him gives me more ideas as to how to manage my affairs here'. Look at the number of people who listen to him. Sometimes, my audience tells me I somehow sound like him."

The implication is that this presenter has already concluded that whatever is done at *Peace fm* on a specific programme that he listens to is good and must be replicated on his programmes. Eventually, the national media policy, the GJA code of ethics and that of the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) become of little or no significance as far as such media practitioners are concerned. However, if they have been exposed to some form of training that highlighted the ethics of the job, they will be critical in their listening and will be circumspect on how much to consume from the national stations. This is of a greater concern because of the wider implications such development has on the listeners as well.

As noted by Anderson and Gabszewicz, (2005) the hours of media consumption for many of the audience have been overwhelming and the trend appears to be increasing. Society is indistinguishably hooked onto media whether good or bad and we are now living in a media culture whose influence continues to be ubiquitous. In addition to providing media consumers with diverse entertainment and information products, the broadcast media impacts culture and help define social reality (McQuail, 1994). Media influences cultures across the world and sets standards for the society. And so, realistically, overt or covertly, society is being shaped and influenced by media practitioners who have either been misinformed

and are therefore misinforming their audience or who have been well baked and are therefore credible and ethical in their profession.

The overall impact of this change gives the opportunity for a deeper reflection into the perspectives of consequential ethics. The basic assumption of the consequentialists or the utilitarian (which is the focus of discussion) is that the morality of an action is contingent on the outcome of that action. This is to assert that the morally right action would automatically produce the right result whereas the ethically wrong action would result in a bad outcome. Nazakat (2016). The central meaning of this theory is that the ends justify the means. Considering the examples that have been cited, it will be extremely difficult to determine the immediate impact of the media content on audience. The reason is that the society is receptive to all kinds of media content, good and bad, from different channels, and so to apply this theory may rather take a longer period of time to ascertain the effect of media content on people. It may also therefore call for a kind of audience segmentation where a specific audience is continuously fed with a particular media content overtime and later assessed to determine what has happened to them as a result of what was given them.

However, Aristotle's golden mean theory offers some ground rules for journalists who make daily ethical decisions that affect their audiences believed that practical reason was exercised by individuals, and that a person of practical wisdom, was that human being who demonstrated ethical excellence through daily activity. Patterson and Wilkins, (2007).

The concept asserts that people and their acts are the moral basis of activity. One of the assumptions of this theory is that; to be ethical; one must have knowledge of what is being done through the exercise of practical reasoning. This preposition affirms the stance of both key informants that until the fundamental pillars of the profession are known by the decision maker, the practitioner cannot be ethical. The force of change in this regard is the professional training for journalists to have it right. The fundamental knowledge of the profession is needed if a journalist must excel in his/her endeavours.

The other assumption of the golden mean that needs mention in this work is that; the act itself must spring from a firm and unchanging character. A firm and unchanging character here refers to the performer of an action. One can only be firm on an action through conviction and self-belief. However because a number of these journalists have not received any form of professional training, they are blown off by any wind of doctrine or practice by their national partners.

 The ability of a journalist to decipher what to reject and what to gobble down comes about as a result of professional development. The issue of exposure and who journalists listen to was given prominence as a major factor to be considered by media watchers and a media owner if journalists must do what is right. The absence of both good role models and training opportunities is dangerous for the profession. For instance, a key informant from the NMC asserts that journalists must not always be left to depend on common sense when taking very critical decisions that border on ethics. The reason is that, common sense is subjective. In

the absence of any code of ethics or professional guidelines, any media practitioner will perform what will inure to his/her benefit.

> How do you employ a journalist and for more than five years, that person has not gotten the avenue to attend any workshop? How do you expect this person to grow and what kind of common sense must he depend on except the one he entered the field with? Dynamics are changing and if we want the media to help the society, we must call for their training.

This angle is strongly affirmed by a key informant from the GJA who also sees the practice of journalism without the necessary training as a threat to the profession.

They can speak the language and they just jump on radio. We hear them talk but most of them are very empty. They treat subject that they have little or no knowledge about and that's a worry. But continuous training is capable of curing these deficiencies. There should be in-service training to update and to remind journalists of the need to go by the ethics of the profession. If this is not done, journalists become like social media commentators.

By expansion, key informant from the NMC looks at the issue from a broader perspective of what is within the purview of journalists and can be handled at their level.

> There are some who also come on air and put up topics for discussion which they themselves might not have informed

themselves about. So when discussions are going on, people call in and say things unrelated to the topic, and yet these journalists are not in the position to bring them back to the discussion. So sometimes, for lack of research, some of them demonstrate a certain lack of objectivity in their presentation.

Identified by key informants as the core of the journalism work is the mandate placed on journalists to research in order to educate their audience. When research is absent in any journalistic piece, it is a major recipe for worry because of the people that depend on the media

The professional journalist operates within a certain parameter of ethics that is entirely different from anybody who develops content on social media. The concern that untrained journalists conduct themselves like social media commentators is ably advanced by the Academy of Finland (2018). According to the Academy, bypassing journalistic ethics creates amateur journalists who are not bound by professional journalistic ethics or codes of conduct, such as the pursuit of truth, impartiality, objectivity, balance and responsible data acquisition

The study again revealed that there are instances where trained journalists commit professional blunders and throw ethics to the dogs in spite of the exposure and the training they have received. The GJA key informant is of the view that unethical practices are not always the result of people lacking exposure, but;

They are failing to go by it to serve the interests of some people.
Take for example, the private broadcasting stations; it's a political

leader who sets up the station. So even if the journalist is a professional, he will have to adjust in order to tow the line of the owners of that station. These people are compelled by such circumstances to go against the ethics of the profession just to keep their jobs.

This point is not in isolation because some of the respondents cited instances where their superiors made certain statements that threatened their professional inclination. P2O disclosed that;

"My Boss told me that his station is not an appendage of GJA or NMC so if I'm going to stay on a story in the name of trying to verify the source, our competitors will go ahead and broadcast it. So I sanctioned the story for news. It eventually turned out to be a hoax."

The respondent explained that the story first popped up on social media by a blogger and it concerned a business competitor of the respondent's boss. The challenge is that at that material moment, the personal interest of both the boss and the anchor took precedence over professional judgment. Apart from the undue interference of the media owner, the desire for job protection by the respondent prevailed over the principle of truth.

Key informant of the NMC brings the discussion with the explanation that;

They are to know to educate people. The information they provide shape peoples' decisions. If the premise of the information is faulty, imagine the effect. In that instance, it becomes very necessary and

imperative for media to be well informed about any information they want to put out, especially radio. Broadcast journalists must be informed and conduct themselves with utmost decorum in whatever they do.

Jaspers (1955) asserts that in communication, what the audience deserves is the search and preservation of truth and this is described as the primary responsibility of the journalist. Bonhoeffer (1995) describes the best journalist as the one who weaves a textile of truth from within the character and report it to society. Furthermore, Pippert, (1989) strongly opines that all codes of ethics commence with the journalist's obligation to tell the truth regardless of the cost. This emphasizes the importance of this principle and the cardinal role it plays in media practice. However, the GJA code provides a way of escape if telling the truth will cost ones' life.
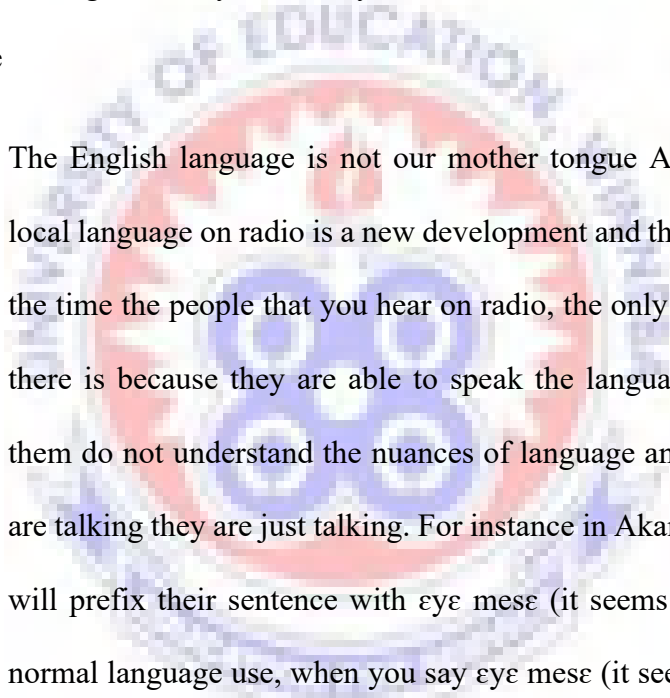
The scenario painted by P3A regarding truth telling is worth deliberation.

I have to be concerned about issues of safety and security. When you are doing a story and you receive a threat, you never can tell how far the person issuing the threat can go until they have implemented their agenda. If I have to be unethical to be safe, then I would do it than to be ethical and die and you wouldn't even get the story.

The understanding is that, as media shines light on the ills in society, perpetrators of such wrongs will always issue out threats or will want to bribe their way out. If

media practitioners are therefore not of a stronger conviction, then they will cower at the least threat or provocation.

The subject of exposure of journalists to best or worse practices was closely linked to language competence. In the views of the key informant, the ability of a journalist to be ethical depends on how much vocabulary is at their disposal. The understanding is that insufficient vocabulary could compel a media person to either make a wrong summary of a story or needless inferences that may land him in trouble

> The English language is not our mother tongue Again the use of local language on radio is a new development and therefore some of the time the people that you hear on radio, the only reason they are there is because they are able to speak the language but some of them do not understand the nuances of language and so when they are talking they are just talking. For instance in Akan, some of them will prefix their sentence with ɛyɛ mesɛ (it seems to me like). In normal language use, when you say ɛyɛ mesɛ (it seems to me like), it means you are in doubt.

> Unfortunately, broadcast media do this without any inhibition because they do not understand the nuances of the language and so for the language experts this kind of thing cannot put in a good stead and its part of the reasons for the ethical infractions. They must understand the language and the nuances of the language they use

because language then becomes very critical especially with radio broadcast'

The concern here is the rate at which almost all radio stations that broadcast in the local language seem to be towing a particular way of presentation without recourse to the language distinctiveness. This development has resulted in hyper-sensationalism on local radio stations especially. When a paragraph story in English is rendered or read in the local language, it could take more than enough time because anchors will have to embellish it with needless commentaries which eventually robe the story of its original meaning. In order to overcome this problem, news anchors, talk show hosts and presenters will have to acquire the rudiment of the language and be professional in their presentations.

Aside what has been discussed, respondents cited a number of reasons for the inability of journalists to abide by the ethics of the profession in spite of their knowledge. In the assessments of R3A, the truth is sometimes concealed by journalists not as a result of personal interest, but to protect the very society that demands it. The respondent observed that truth should always be in the bosom of people who can exercise common sense to know what must be told "because the truth may turn the country upside down, so instead of telling the whole truth, we water its down to minimize any damaging effect as a result. The role of common sense in truth telling is dependent on common sense, not mere code of ethics".

The point of controversy is the assertion of Ward (2015) and Ridge (2010) that a rejection of ethics is to ignore a crucial link between media ethics and democracy,

stressing that the health of every democratic community depends, largely, on a vigorous but responsible media system that encourages coherent and educated inquiry of critical issues. In the quest of keeping a job, a trained journalist ended up giving news that was not credible to the audience. As asserted by the authors, it is the implications of such happenings that must be interrogated. Such developments have the propensity of causing irreparable damage to persons and organisations who have earned good reputations by dint of hard work. Again, the interest of society in the media wanes when the people, on whose behalf the media holds trust, realize that they cannot depend on the very entity that is mandated to serve this purpose.

The Ghana Media Policy (2005) regards all media and media services as a public trust and therefore holds that the public interest shall be paramount in the operation of all media. The tipping point where the media begin to serve its interest and that of paymasters is a dangerous arena in every democratic endeavor.

The policy outlines a guide for the operation and improvement of all the various mass media, not just public or state media. The excuse that a commercial media house must not necessarily tow the path of public media in ethical practice is surely a tipping point that may compel media regulators to infringe on the freedom and independence of the media. This is because, the principal focus of the media policy was to set standards and provide benchmarks for measuring media performance by clearly setting out ethical concerns that should guide the development of the media in the country. Some scholars argue that media independence can be influenced by media owners who finance the media and thereby dictate the pace of affairs

(Herman and Chomsky 2006; McQuail, 2005 and Netanel, 2001). In a study on the relationship between media ownership and editorial content in Kenya, Okech (2008) found a strong correlation between editorial lines of the two major daily newspapers in the country and to ownership influences in most cases. In relation to this research, participants expressed the undue influence of their superiors who have their apron strings attached to either media owners or the influential in society. The discussion queries the social responsibility and accountability of the media. For instance Gauthier (1999) observes strongly, that the autonomy of the media to form and influence the character of public discourse through the dissemination of prime information and its presentation gives journalists an immeasurable task. The media define not only the content, but also the quality of public discourse, the panel to engage and sometimes the duration of the dialogue. When the media set an agenda, which is what the society runs with. This implies that having been entrusted with so much power, the media has an inherent element of answerability to society. On that score, Tettey (2006) argues that it is imperative the media is made answerable to the different publics they serve, and to face sanctions if they deviate in the execution of their responsibilities. The penchant of the media to serve its interest and maintain the authority of ensuring checks and balances in other sectors of society must be given attention. McQuail (2003) and Merrill (1989) support the argument that the people are a social entity to whom the media remains accountable and that the people are the target audience who consume media content and give feedback based on what the media produces. According to Cohen-Almagor, (2006), the media have the ethical responsibility to defend basic principles of journalism,

such as honesty, fairness, balance and accuracy. This is the hard truth- that every piece of information regarded as news must strive to achieve the characteristics of all the principles. The challenge is that, a development where media owners influence content, negatively or positively, deprives the story of credibility and trustworthiness. In as much as what is reported may be truthful, balance will not be achieved because content has been manipulated in favour of a party.

The question of what affect the knowledge and perspective of journalists also reveals the issue of language competence. A key informant from the NMC explains that "since English language is not our mother tongue, journalists must strive to acquire the rudiment of the language if they are to deliver excellently and ethically. In most instances, journalists do direct translation, which eventually distort the explicit meaning of a statement".

Sometimes in the attempt to disseminate information, newsmakers have countless times demanded for rejoinders from media houses because what they said was not what journalists conveyed to the public. According to the NMC key informant, language plays a significant factor in media delivery.

"The implication is that, as long as your command of a language is weak you may falter in your delivery and sometimes some of the mistakes we observe are not deliberate or intended. Some of them are unintentional, they don't have the language".

The demand for ethical adherence must therefore go hand in hand with the demand for people to be skillful in both their mother tongue and the English that serve as

the medium of expression and broader communication. "A proper command over any of the languages in which they are broadcasting must not be overlooked. They must subject themselves to rigorous learning process. Nobody knows more than anybody and the more we interact the better we become".

The knowledge of the boundaries of journalism becomes crucial so audience will be able to identify charlatans, repose confidence in the journalist and credibility in the station that abide by the tenets of the job and to sanitize airwaves for the good of the public and national democracy. The air wave is public property and it is expected to serve the highest and avowed good of the public. They maintain that the general public deserves an honest media that is brave enough to give a voice to the voiceless and to call public servants to order by cross-checking facts and statements from government functionaries and state agencies before broadcast. They intimated that when ethics is practiced, it gives a glimmer of hope to the society and inspires the faith in others to chart the path of integrity. The study discovered that Ghanaian journalists are also predominantly influenced and encouraged by the practices of other media houses (both local and international) that exhibit a high sense of professionalism and raise the ethical standards high. Beyond the above, the practice of journalists is also influenced by the significant role played by the public. P1A states that "the calibre of people who want to confirm a story from you shows that if you follow strictly by the ethics to the best of your abilities you become a source of information for your listeners. They tell me that if they hear it from my station, then it is true".

6.6 Importance of Media Ethics Practice

Media ethics in any period of time frame is the responsible use of the freedom to publish or broadcast, irrespective of who develops the content or who owns the channel of publication. Underscoring the importance of ethics in broadcast media, Ward (2015) impresses that journalism and all forms of public communication can do great good or great harm, depending on the kind of perspectives that are brought on board by journalists. In the view of the author, journalists can inform or misinform citizens; they can scrutinize government wrong-doing or they can pursue celebrities; they can rigorously verify their stories or they can ruin reputations by peddling falsehood or indulging in rumour mongering. Again, journalists can encourage understanding among cultural groups, or they can ignite tensions. However, this can only be achieved if the right knowledge is harnessed. This perspective by the author reinforces an already established premise that the relevance of media to the society is as a result of their adherence to the ethics of the profession.

In this regard, the study discovered that the knowledge of ethics mattered most to the journalists for diverse reasons. Participants unanimously agreed that the profession is under attack by amateurs who are pushing the agenda of minority groups and novices who utilize social media to push news from questionable sources into the mainstream. The respondents are of the view that if the development is not checked, media in Ghana stand the threat of imposition of undesirable policies and legislations.

4.6.1 The danger of ethical compromise

Ethical practice must therefore be ingrained in the journalist to the extent that when making such decisions, there must not be room for compromises that place innocent people on the radar of being disadvantaged or injured. The NMC key informant observed that though the media is generally doing well, "one bad nut spoils the soup", so in that regard even one incident of unethical conduct is unacceptable. The informant admits that though the media is a human institution like all other agencies;

The media are supposed to be superintendent over all the other sectors. If elected leaders make mistakes, the media point it out. It is therefore imperative that the media do not allow themselves to fall into that same trap; otherwise the media have no business commenting on any misconduct in the society since they are also human. That is the reason why we should not be very permissive on unethical conduct within our media environment.

Though the key informant hails the media for the giant strides made toward excellence and professionalism, there are pockets of unethical conduct that makes it rather difficult to exonerate the media from any blame. "Generally, if we are to measure, we will say that we have done better than we have done worse, but we are careful to say that because gross ethical infractions still prevail among a few of them". He notes that in as much as media struggle to live up to its mandates, the other sectors it seeks to check will also proof difficult and let the media feel that

they are not worthy to hold the other to account. He therefore challenges the media to live above reproach and set high standards for themselves and live by those standards.
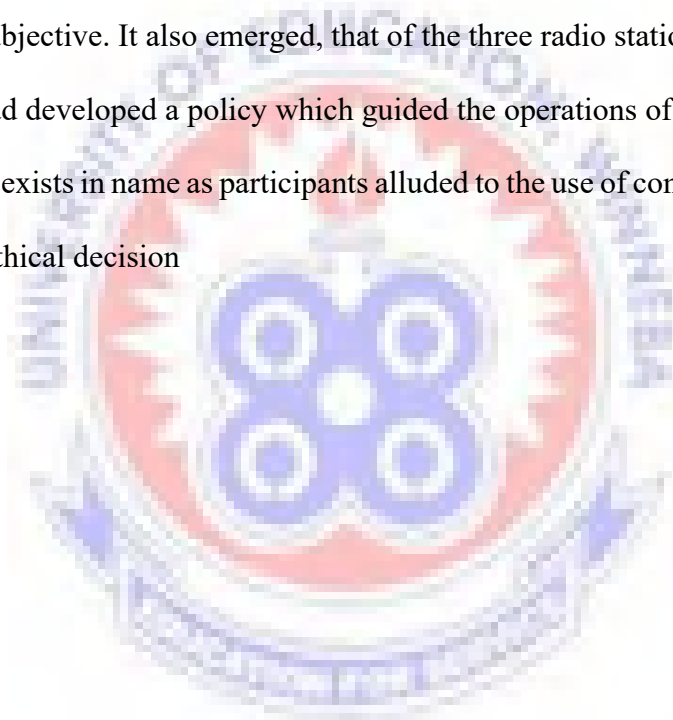
4.7 Summary

The goal of this research was out to explore the knowledge and practice of media ethics among broadcast journalists, with special reference to radio journalists in Cape Coast. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the knowledge of broadcast journalists on media ethics
2. To investigate the practice of media ethics among broadcast journalists
3. To examine the importance of media ethics practice among broadcast journalists.

This chapter has examined the issues that emerged from the field and appropriately applied the theories that anchored the research. Accordingly, the chapter has also discussed the findings of the study or outcomes by employing the methods of analysis that have already been articulated in the chapter three of the study. This chapter responded to all the research questions that guided the process of data collection. For ethical and confidentiality purposes and in the interest of protecting the identity of participants, the researcher adopted unique codes to represent respondents and their responses in this chapter.

The chapter presented the findings and discussions of the research questions. The study found out, that journalists at *ATL fm, Radio Central* and *Okokroko* had a very significant knowledge about media ethics. It again revealed that in spite of what

these journalists knew, in actual sense, the practice of these ethical principles were not adhered to. For instance, participants alluded to the fact that in practice, journalists must apply common sense instead of taking certain journalistic decisions because it was ethically right or wrong. In this instance, participants from *ATL fm* made special reference to truth telling and concluded that truth must only be told on the basis of safety, not ethics. However, a key informant with the NMC contended that the practice of ethics must not be left to common sense, since that was subjective. It also emerged, that of the three radio stations, it was only *ATL fm* that had developed a policy which guided the operations of its staff. However, this policy exists in name as participants alluded to the use of common sense when faced with ethical decision

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This study purposed to examine the knowledge and practice of broadcast journalists in selected radio stations in Cape Coast on media ethics. The research came out with the knowledge of journalists on media ethics, their practice of these ethics and the factors that affect media ethics practice. This chapter presents a summary of the key issues culminating from the study, and draws conclusions based on these issues and made appropriate recommendations. The recommendations are predominantly based on the importance of media ethics to journalist practices in the country and these are informed by the responses of key informants. The limitations of the study are also captured in this chapter with suggestions for future studies.

5.2 Summary

Data for this study were sought from journalists from three selected radio stations in Cape Coast. As has already been advanced, four main media ownership structures have been identified in literature; these are commercial, non-profit, public and community media (McQuail, 2005;Rennie, 2006). The operations of these radio stations mirror the different kinds of radio stations in the country.

As a means of ensuring data reliability and validity, the researcher did data triangulation by adopting three main procedures in the data gathering process.

There were key informant interviews of experts in the media industry with interest, expertise and experience in media ethics and media ethics practice. These experts serve on Commissions and Associations that work to ensure that the country's airwaves are sanitized. In achieving this, they collectively advocate for the adherence of media ethics by journalists in their practices in order to also defend the trust vested in the media by the society. The adoption of this procedure was significant as it afforded key informants the avenue to communicate their expectations of the media in Ghana.

An observation of journalists was carried out to investigate how journalists practice these ethics. This method of data collection was crucial as it gave the researcher an eagles' eye to see further, beyond what had been captured in the other data collection procedures. This method primarily helped to answer the research question on the practice of media ethics find expressions in the operations of journalists. During the process of observation, the researcher gave attention to both the verbal and non-verbal forms of communication that took place between the host and the team, the hosts and the studio guests and the host and the audience. The subject of study in the observation process was the host of the programme.

The study also adopted the focus group discussion method in generating data from participants. This is an excellent method that gave the researcher the opportunity to elicit a wide range of views and experiences of participants. The FG was conducted to have a detailed and the primary information from the journalists on their knowledge of ethics and by this, the method helped in providing responses to the research question that sought to examine journalists' knowledge on media ethics.

The theoretical bases for this study stems from four fundamental principles of media ethics. These principles include: Utilitarianism (consequential or teleological theory), Golden Mean (virtue ethics), Categorical Imperative (deontological ethics) and the Pluralistic Theory of Value.

These principles gave a broader explanation of the ethical dimensions of decision makers and helped in the analysis of what goes into journalistic decisions and considerations as far as ethics are involved. These perspectives were all affirmed at certain instances of participants' engagement.

5.3 Main findings

5.3.1 Knowledge of Media ethics

The study revealed that broadcast journalists at *ATL FM, Okokroko FM* and *Radio Central* generally have some knowledge about media ethics. It discovered that participants were aware of the universal code of ethics that regulate media activities across the world. Media ethics was expressed by the participants as what was 'professionally acceptable, avoiding prejudice objective, truth and accuracy in news reportage'. The understanding was also established by participants that beyond the general code of ethics, the various institutions they work with have in-house ethics that guide their practice.

In addition, it found that ethical decisions made by participants were also informed by societal ethics. The participants established that there are journalists who do not have any formal training on the ethical principles that guided the operations of

media practitioners. However, these journalists have learnt on the job and are making excellent moral decisions daily without any professional qualification. In such instances, participants advocated that the environment that nurtured these individuals instilled in them certain moral forces that adequately equipped them. The implication is that there are journalists who make appropriate ethical decisions without recourse to or knowledge of either general or institutional ethical guide. On this finding, the Golden Mean theory affirmed this position as the theory observes the force of social ethics and the need for community authority or ethics to find expression in professional ethical decision processes of media practitioners. Some journalists think that the role of journalist in truth telling is dependent on common sense, not merely the code of ethics. But the Key informant from the NMC asserts that journalists must not always be left to depend on common sense when taking very critical decisions that border on ethics. The reason is that, common sense is subjective. In the absence of any code of ethics or professional guidelines, any media practitioner will perform what will inure to his/her benefit. This angle is strongly affirmed by a key informant from the GJA who also sees the practice of journalism without the necessary training as a threat to the profession.

Again, the study discovered that though not all the participants were members of the GJA, their understanding of media ethics is informed by the presence and the operation of the GJA code of ethics. The reason is that GJA is an Association and the weight of this Association is only felt by its members as it seeks to regulate their activities. However, participants support the notion and fact that the code the Association operates with is a summary or a reflection of international standard of

journalistic practice and must therefore be respected by all journalists. They made a specific mention to article 8 of GJA which states that 'under no circumstance should news be suppressed unless it bothers on national security or it is at the best interest of the society'. To the participants, this clause reinforces the mandate of journalists to serve the society above all else.

The sought to understand the knowledge of media ethics practices among broadcast journalists. By this, the researcher analysed the five principles of media ethics of decision making; truth, justice, human dignity, non-violence and the principle of objectivity.

In making this analysis, the study observed that participants had an understanding of the principle of truth. They acknowledged the importance of truth in the work of the media and asserted that the principal mandate of the media is to sift information and get to the level of truth and offer this truth to society. To them, truth can only be achieved when media ask tough questions, engage in rigorous research and fact-check its findings. They acknowledged that the media in Ghana was however deficient in the factors that can help in arriving at the truth. The reason, according to them, emanated from the fact that the media in the country operates within a society that makes it nearly impossible for truth to be achieved. Therefore, in order to achieve this principle, the study again discovered that Journalists make speculations and assumptions in their news reportage. The assertion was that though people in positions of authority are tight-lipped in communicating useful information to the media, they always make themselves available to the public for scrutiny the moment the media makes offensive allegations that affect them. On the

above premise of speculations and the damaging effect it has on the affected party, they are of the view that if such tactics are not advanced by the media, people will treat public information as personal property.

The study again noted that though respondents showed a level of knowledge regarding the ethics of human dignity and privacy, they defy these ethical principles in practice. To them, if the dignity of individuals were to be protected and that the practice of journalism must not harm members of society, then the media will also not be objective in providing transparency and accountability to the people. Participants argued that one of the mandate of the media is to shine light on the wrongs in society, therefore if the reputation of some people are affected in the process, it does not necessarily mean that the media was breaching its own ethics. And even if it does, it achieves a greater result as is advocated by the pluralistic theory of value.

Regarding these principles, the study found that media indulged in ethical infractions such as exaggeration and deceptions in news reportage that did irreparable damage to peoples' character. On this, respondents affirmed that the media sometimes indulged in these forms of excesses to prosecute a very parochial agenda that did not serve the interest of society in any way. This interest, they explained was either doing the bidding of a paymaster or to proof a point that they had the power to deal with whoever was recalcitrant, in their view.

5.4 Practice of Media Ethics

Participants disclosed that their allegiance to the principles of media ethics is sometimes "dependent on challenges faced at home, conditions at work place and who is involved in the news".

The study found that there was undue interference by media owners when it comes to news reportage. The participants confessed that there are countless times that they had to conceal information from the public because the institutions they work for called the shot and they had to obey to either save their jobs or the face of their organizations and paymasters.

Further, the study revealed some journalists will choose to conceal information that is of public interest for very selfish reasons. They advanced that such journalists will normally blackmail whoever was involved to part with money and when the demand is met, they kill the story. In this regard, the interest in concealing damaging or sensitive information is neither motivated by the desire to serve society or the institution they work for.

The study once again established that in practice, journalists are again unable to report the truth to society as a result of personal safety concerns. They spoke about the absence of legal aid and other forms of insurance that ensured that journalists were safe as they discharged their constitutionally mandated responsibility. In such instances, a journalist will avoid any story that had the potential to attract court suit. Under such circumstances, media practitioners sometimes compromised on ethical practice on the grounds of personal safety and security. Again, in such instances, the truth is as good as dead especially when it affects the powerful in society and

since every human instinct is to protect life before all other things, a journalist, when threatened, will think of safety first.

The study revealed that respondents engage in secret recordings in order to protect the interest of the public, to expose corrupt activities, for personal interest, etc. More so, the study found that there is a higher propensity for local journalists to tow the pattern of practice of the stations that they syndicate their programmes from the national channels. The notion is that receiving stations at the regional level indulge in what they termed 'hero worship' of presenters and therefore imitated their way of operations. By this, the participants concluded that journalists breached the basic ethical principles of practice because their 'heroes' may not always be right.

The study also established that the tendency to sensationalize and embellish stories which breached media ethics is as a result of perceived public interest in such practices. However, the key informant from NMC observed that journalists who indulged in such practices seem to be towing a particular way of presentation without recourse to the language distinctiveness. This development has resulted in hyper-sensationalism on local radio stations- especially where a paragraph story in English is rendered or read in the local language, it could take more than enough time because anchors will have to embellish it with needless commentaries which eventually rob the story of its original meaning.

Journalists are driven towards the path of unprofessional conduct to beat competition for listenership. Under such circumstances, journalists do not check

fact and end up like social media amateurs who disseminate rumours that cannot be trusted.

Key informant from NMC holds the view that knowledge and perspectives of journalistic ethics must be viewed from the angles of exposure and competence of language use. He observes that Ghanaian journalists are sometimes seen to be unethical because they lack exposure and the language to clearly express their thought s and intentions.

Key informant of NMC notes that the opportunity to listen to the finest gives a whole new perspective to journalists to aspire to be the best and to maintain the highest ethical standards. During the period of observation at *Okokroko fm*, the presenters exhibited a lot of mannerisms that were akin to their partner station in Accra. In effect, the radio station in Accra, whose programmes were being syndicated by *Okokroko fm* was directly influencing the delivery skills of on-air staff at *Okokroko fm*. What this means is that, Peace fm in Accra had set a standard (positive or negatively), and this standard was driving the ethical conduct of these presenters. In the same vein, presenters at ATL fm demonstrated similar characteristics and work ethics to that of Joy fm and the BBC in Accra and London respectively because these are partner stations of *ATL FM* in the Central Region. Therefore, to improve journalistic practice, training must target key presenters that are perceived as leaders in the industry.

5.5 Importance of media ethics

The study discovered that the knowledge of ethics mattered most to the journalists for diverse reasons. Participants unanimously agreed that the profession is under attack by amateurs who are pushing the agenda of minority groups and novices who utilize social media to push news from questionable sources into the mainstream. The respondents are of the view that if the development is not checked, media in Ghana stands the threat of imposition of undesirable policies and legislations.

In highlighting the importance of media ethics, the study observed that it was crucial for the media to be found always doing right. The reason was that the media is supposed to be superintend over all other sectors and demand accountability. If the media is therefore unable to abide by its own ethics, then it has no business in the operations of other sectors.

The importance of ethics is also because the media educate people. And they do this based on the information they provide. Through this medium of education, a large number of people make decision; so if the premise of the information is faulty, then the media will always mislead people.

5.6 Conclusion

The objectives of the study were to assess the knowledge of broadcast journalist on media ethics using the five universal principles of media ethics, investigate the practice of media ethics among broadcast journalist, and determine the importance of media ethics among these journalists.

The study concludes that journalists have some knowledge media ethics. This knowledge is either acquired through formal training in an institution of learning or on-the-job practice.

Journalists with knowledge of media ethics sometimes fail to practice them for a number of reasons. Some of the reasons were either personal safety or preservation of the reputation of employers.

The practice of journalists in Cape Coast was influenced by the practice of journalists in Accra who they perceive to be doing well.

The practice of media ethics is very important as it lends much credence to the stations that journalists who practice journalism work with. Journalists who practice high standards of ethics influence their colleagues to also practice the ethics of the profession.
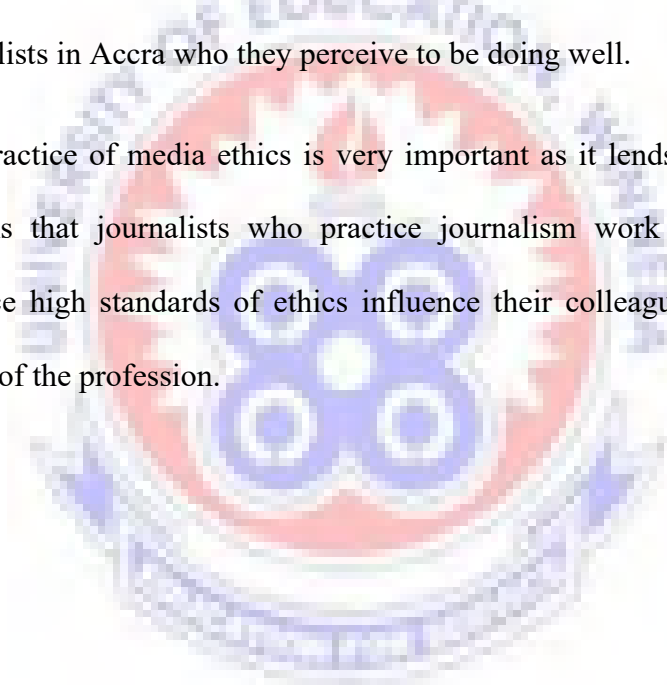
5.7 Limitations of study

There short time available for the research to be submitted meant that not all participants could be observed directly for their practice of media ethics. Participants, being fully aware that the researcher was present to observe their practice might have changed their usual behavior, and researcher did not have adequate time to observe them long enough for them to get use to the researcher's presence.

5.8 Suggestions for further studies

Subsequent works should expand the observation period to cover a duration of one week or more. This is to ensure that efficient and adequate data are gathered to make valid conclusion.

Furthermore, future studies may adopt observation alone to study media ethics practice by broadcast journalist to give a better perspective of the ethical dilemma of journalists in the field of operation. This is because, in as much as the knowledge of media ethics by broadcast journalists is crucial, awareness of the ethical demands may not necessarily impact practice.

5.9 Recommendations

The journalism profession is a trusted one and the society takes daily decisions based on information from the media. Media practitioners should therefore ensure that information disseminated to the public is truthful, just and objective without giving room for speculations. To ensure this, regulators should punish media houses whose practitioners make wild public allegations that bother on deception and character assassination.

All who want to practice journalism should get formal training to equip them with the requisite knowledge of ethics for media practice. However, continuous training on the job is recommended to keep journalists up to date, and alert to their ethical responsibilities. Media houses should endeavor to provide avenues for continuous training for their staff.

The study also recommends that broadcast journalists must be able to show language competence in their presentation. This is important as a result of the crucial platform they get to educate and to inform. The study is of the view that the command over the broadcasting language may minimize the call for rejoinders and retraction of stories as a result of totally misinforming the public.

Also, all media houses should have in-house ethics policy to ensure that their staff applies ethical standards in their practice. They should also provide security for journalists while on duty. In this regard, nationally, the government through the law enforcement agencies should provide a safe environment for journalist to practice.

The NMC, NCA and other media regulators should take action on the concerns of journalists and to make sure that media owners are held accountable for any form

of ethical violations by the members in a media house. This is to ensure that, truth, justice and protection of human dignity are not sacrificed on the altar of parochial interest of media owners and their cronies.

The study strongly recommends that journalists who blackmail sources of information to either demand for money or any form of favour are also punished and their right to practice taken from them.

Since the practice of well-known faces in the industry tend to be imitated by others, the NMC, GJA and other organizations with interest in journalistic practice should have a modelling programme that involves the training of well-known or famous practitioners who have tremendous influence on other presenters on the ethical media practice. When they are trained well, they can influence others for good through a mentorship programme.

Again, media regulators should ensure that media houses (both private and public) only engage the services of trained and qualified journalists in their respective media houses. The finding was that since a number of these practitioners do not have any formal training, they do the bidding of their employers in order to secure their jobs. If formal training is ensured, practicing journalists will not feel insecure if they are threatened with termination of appointment. This is to guarantee the performance of the highest ethical practice and to ensure that journalists whose job security depended on serving the parochial interest of media owners are offered better options.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The researcher is a graduate student at the University of Education, Winneba, pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree in Communication and Media Studies. In fulfillment of the requirements of the programme, the researcher is undertaking a study on the *knowledge of media ethics practice by broadcast journalists.*

This means that as participants, you will be expected to give your candid opinion (general and personal on issues pertaining to your experiences as a broadcast on media ethics. The conversation will be recorded but anonymity is completely assured as the whole engagement is strictly for academic purposes. The interaction will also be guided by the following questions.

1. What do you know about media ethics?

2. What factors influence your practice of media ethics?

3. How have you acquired your knowledge of media ethics?

4. When do you practice or not practice them?

5. What is the importance of media ethics to you?

6. How can a journalist improve his/her knowledge on media ethics?

APPENDIX II

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

How ethical are broadcast journalists in their practice?

Why should radio journalist know and practice media ethics?

What factors influence the knowledge and practice of media ethics among journalists?

How can journalists improve their knowledge of media ethics?