



ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**'LIKE OR FOLLOW';
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE DAILY ROUTINES OF RADIO JOURNALISTS IN
ACCRA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines and supervision laid down by Ashesi University College.

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study investigated the role of social media in radio journalism at Accra-based radio stations. It was inspired by the steady evolution of radio in Ghana's democratic space and the insurgence of social media through increasing internet connectivity in Accra.

The study combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. From a sampling frame of 33 radio stations, the study used a healthy combination of random sampling methods; purposive sampling and snowballing for its data collection. In selecting and determining the radio stations that made the cut for the research, primary data was collected from 7 social media platforms. Each social media platform was given particular weighted averages based on the total numbers gathered from each of the radio station's social media accounts. The top 3 highest ranking radio stations were selected by virtue of their social media engagement because of the insight they would provide on social media use in radio journalism.

Using structured interviews, a total of 10 radio journalists from the top three most engaging Accra-based radio stations were contacted and interviewed. All of the interviews were in-depth and lasted for 20 minutes on a one-on-one basis.

It is important to note that though the journalists provided various functions of social media in their jobs, they all acknowledged that its number one role was to provide timely information. This paper concludes with a recommendation for research into radio stations that are yet to join social media or incorporate it into their news reporting.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The year is 2015 and any ardent listener of Ghanaian radio is most likely not foreign to radio broadcasters calling for comments and questions via social media accounts. This comes as no surprise because ever since its inception, radio, like most things, has been seen to be evolving quite steadily. From its early days of being a tool for the promotion of state agenda right down to local language-based private radio stations, radio has done extremely well for itself.

More interesting is social media, the mass communication tool that has taken the world by storm. Social media has literally broken barriers as to what it can and cannot be used for; in essence it is everywhere. This is why it comes as no surprise that radio journalists have resorted to its use for the purpose of meeting the demands of their job. In a journal article by Rena Bivens about the internet, she argues that the strength of new media within the public domain rests in its evolution towards cheaper, more mobile and widely accessible technologies. (Bivens, 2008) This statement further advances the dialogue on social media assimilation in almost all fields of work. It points out the cost advantage of using social media and shines a rather large spotlight on its reachability; a major reason for social media's success.

Over the course of the years, as new media technologies increase many assertions are made about how these media are used in the various professions. In Ghana for instance, it is easy for a great number of people to assume that social media is used by companies to reach a larger audience but there is no research that backs this. In addition, these corporations could be using social media in more ways than one. Given the high levels of internet use in Ghana's capital and the increasing integration of social media on radio today this study will focus on radio broadcasting sector in Accra. It is intended to ascertain social media's role in radio journalism in the buzzing city of Accra.

1.2 Background of Study

1.2.1. The Evolution of Ghanaian Radio Broadcasting

In 1931, the British colonial rulers introduced radio to the Ghanaian people. This revolutionary advent happened in the wake of the World War two, and the radio was used mainly as a propaganda tool to facilitate loyalty and support of the colonies (Nketia, 2013). This was an exploit of Sir Arnold Hodson, the colonial governor at the time. Radio ZOY, the first radio station in the country, transmitted in Ghana's capital for a year before it was extended to Cape Coast in the Central Region. As was the norm for corporations in Britain, Sir Hodson directed the station to have a controlling body to oversee its statutory regulations. This is what birthed the Ghana Broadcasting System in 1954 which later became the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) after Ghana attained independence.

In colonial Ghana, the press was employed mainly to criticize the oppression, injustice and other evils of the colonial systems (GhanaWeb, 2005). However after Dr. Kwame Nkrumah achieved independence for the republic, radio broadcasting became the propagation of the agenda of each and every sitting head of state (GhanaWeb, 2005). The first two radio stations the government commissioned were Radio-1 and Radio-2; the latter broadcast in English and other local languages while the former broadcast all its programs in English alone. By the time the 1980's came around, the state's monopoly over mass media was beginning to dwindle. The 1992 constitutional reforms challenged the superiority of the GBC stating clearly in article 162(3) of the constitution that:

"There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for the mass communication or information."

Interestingly, though the constitution made provision for the ownership of private radio and television stations it was not until 1993 that members of the community began to talk openly

about it (Nketia, 2013). The era saw many reports and discussions on the benefits of private radio and television stations and soon there was an overwhelming support for privatization of broadcasting. Regardless of this fact, the ruling party, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) was reluctant to give up its power over the press. In 1994 Accra woke up to the sound of a private radio station called 'Radio Eye' which was short-lived owing to the arrest of its operators. This development sparked riots in Accra ending the first attempt at breaking state monopoly. It was not until 1995 that Joy FM was given the license to operate in the capital. Like a number of its counterparts in Africa today, Ghana has seen a tremendous increase in the number of radio stations, from a monopoly of 11 state-owned, centrally controlled networks in the mid-1990's to 122 on air out of a total of 166 licenses issued by 2007 (Tettey, 2011).

1.2.2. Broadcasting and National Integration

After the attainment of independence it became necessary to adapt broadcasting to our national needs and objectives; this is what is summed up as national integration. What happened was that just like many other African countries, the moment after independence caused a national identity crisis in Ghana. When the colonialists made their exit, most people began to associate with their individual ethnic groups and paid allegiance to them as opposed to the state. This dulled down the patriotism that was needed to move the newly independent Ghana forward. In order to inculcate the idea of nationalism among the people, the local and ethnic groups had to give way to allegiance to the nation as a whole. This required the creation of national symbols the people could identify with which led to the need for a national airline, a national anthem, and of course a national radio to complete the package (Ansah, 2001). The national radio seemed most important because of its ability to communicate to the masses, all things Ghana. The electronic media seemed to be the best suited means of communication back then because they had the advantage of overcoming the barriers of illiteracy and distance (Karikari, 1998). The whole process of government was then made easier by the use of radio because of its effectiveness in opinion formation and mobilizing the people for the task of development (Ansah, 2001). In the

creation of national consciousness, national leaders have to get known and national objectives and aspirations explained to the people through the media reaching the largest number of people. Broadcasting became a tool for legitimacy to the leaders of the nation; it also ensured familiarity with the new political institutions. This integrative role of broadcasting led to what Cantril and Alport meant when they wrote:

...“When a million or more people hear the same subject matter, the same arguments and appeals, the same music and humour, when their attention is held in the same way and at the same time to the same stimuli, it is psychologically inevitable that they should acquire in some degree common interests, common tastes and common attitudes. In short, it seems to be the nature of radio to encourage people to think and feel alike”

Seeking a national consensus by way of a frank and open interchange of ideas is what the media encourages. Radio and television provide the means for two-way communication between citizens and their rulers. What broadcasting does is that it opens up a dialogue on national issues of allowing opposing views that encourages healthy debate on topics of national interest. A broadcasting system that is perceived to be nothing more than a one-way megaphone for government undermines its own credibility and professional integrity. A good example of such broadcasting is the ‘Radio Educative Rurale’ of Senegal. Based in the groundnut –producing areas of Thies, Djourbel and Sine-Saloum in central Senegal, it was inaugurated in 1968. Its programmes were recorded in the field with people sharing their experiences and raising explosive issues. Sometimes they would go as far as asking embarrassing questions ranging from the excessive taxes on groundnut farmers to weather reports. This was a genuine model of a two-way communication channel in which the broadcaster was merely an intermediary (Ansah, 2001). Head of the programme, Mr Boubacar said the following in describing the role of a broadcaster:

“His role is not that of missionary or politician, of expert or teacher. He is above all a mediator who seeks to get at the real problems and tries to resolve them by stimulating a fruitful dialogue between the base and the authorities, among all the people of the country.”

If broadcasting is to fulfill its role in nation building, it is important that everyone has access to radio sets. Otherwise everything would be pointless; all the programming aimed at reaching the masses would be heard by only a select few. With the coming of the internet and new technology, one does not have to buy an actual radio set to listen to the radio. Phones have radio and some radio stations also stream live online, making access to radio programming better than before.

1.2.3. The Era of Internet Connectivity

In August 1994, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African country, apart from South Africa, to establish local internet services (Nketia, 2013). Network Computer Systems, Africa Online and Ghana Internet Services were the first three internet service providers in the country. As at 2011, the number of Ghanaians who had access to internet connectivity was approximately 2.5 million people. In an interview in Accra on the 29th of April 2011, Mr. Amar Deep Hari, Chief Executive Officer of IPMC, an I. T. company in Ghana, stated that out of the 2.5 million internet users, 800,000 were Facebook users. Due to Ghana's high internet connectivity, the Wall Street Journal once cited the country as one of the five 'silicon nations' to watch in terms of connectivity, information security, human capital, business climate and the attention the government gives to technology (Nketia, 2013). However connectivity is still limited mostly to the big cities and this is an indication that internet may not have the kind of influence it could possibly have if it were available nationwide.

Before the liberalization of the airwaves newspapers had the dominant role of providing news and setting the media and public agendas for debate (Tettey, 2011). By winning the battle for the elimination of state monopoly over the airwaves, partly on account of the speed at which radio disseminates news, radio supplanted newspapers and television in this role and established

media dominance. When news stories break, radio stations broadcast telephone interviews and eyewitness reports, while the necessary camera crew can take hours to gather their equipment and get to the scene to broadcast live pictures. People resort to radio news when they need to immediately know what is going on, because it is up to date and when it comes to news reporting, it simply has to concentrate on reporting the facts most of the time. This is not the same as television because it is not the timeliest source of news, television news journalists have to collate news items for the day and report on them at specific times later on in the day. Even though some news stations have started broadcasting breaking news and afternoon news it doesn't have the same appeal as news reporting in a timely manner on the radio. In recent times however the threat of the internet to most conventional media tools has increased considerably with the advent of social media .

Social media (or social media software) are tools that increase people's ability to share, co-operate with one another and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutions and organizations (Shirky, 2008). Information shared and accessed on social media has transcended individual profiles and friendship circles and is now a bigger part of actual events happening all around us; the Arab spring uprisings were all organized through social media. As a result many journalists in developed nations have adopted social media in doing their job. What can be observed however is that the utilization of online technologies in news making has irrevocably changed the nature of news consumption (Mabweazara, Mudhai & Whittaker, 2014). This social revolution has become a dominant part of culture today so much so that even if you are not actively involved in social media you are influenced by it. A case in point would be that of the Ghanaian politician and former district chief executive of Ahafo Ano South District, Gabriel Barima. His outburst at a public function over a heckler's comment made him quite popular in 2014 after the footage was released on social media (Takyi-Boadu, 2014). Also worth mentioning, is the 2012 election petition hearing which was a major trend on many social media feeds for a greater part of the year 2012. Stakeholders including political parties, news agencies and civil society groups employed social media to augment their traditional means of information

provision, which spurred a more widespread discussion on the matter (Atengble, 2014). This prompted many discussions on the airwaves with individuals exercising their democratic right to voice their opinions on the problem. Remarkably, many Ghanaians are becoming increasingly aware of the multi-faceted nature of social media, following these national matters. A case in point to this observation would be the group of people known as the Concerned Ghanaians for Responsible Governance (CGRG) who came together earlier this year in a democratic space to call for an improvement of the daily hardships the average Ghanaian was faced with (Bagooro & Obeng, 2014). The group managed to rally quite a sizeable number of agitated Ghanaians on the 1st of July 2014 solely through social media, and demonstrated through some principle streets of Accra. They ended by converging at the seat of government to deliver their message to the President of the Republic. The inception of this group and the mobilization of participants for the march, was primarily organized through social media; Facebook to be precise.

1.3 Problem Statement

Ghanaian media have grown exponentially over the course of the last two decades of democratic rule, not just in numbers but in influence on the public sphere (Tettey, 2011). Spurred on by their freedom of speech, many Ghanaians are now partaking in many news discussions on air using different forms of new media technology. The variegated talk radio landscape in Ghana and the opportunity it provides for audiences to inject their voices into the public sphere has led to a fundamental shift in the demography of contributors to political discourse (Tettey, 2011). This is an immense improvement from a time where only those with some level of authority on national or local issues were heard.

It is easy for anyone to think radio would be an automatic casualty of the proliferation of novel information and communication technologies but that is not the case. Although radio's survival as a major cultural phenomenon may appear to be under threat from new media technologies, convergence makes it possible for it to remain a significant arena of information dissemination and change (Mudhai, 2011). This means that radio has been complimented by social networking applications; that enable rare audience feedback and participation (Tettey, 2011). New media

technologies vary widely and among its many tools is social media. This calls into question the role social media plays when it comes to the daily routines of journalists.

1.4 Research Objective

Contemporary journalism studies in Africa have tended to shy away from studies of the routines and practices of journalism, preferring instead to emphasize issues around the democratization of media and its role in political and democratic processes (Atton 2011). Major radio stations today have an internet presence, which allows them to stream their programs live or make some of their programs available online on demand. Owing to this development, radio in cyberspace has become a venue for multivocality and varied political discourse that defies state control (Mudhai, 2011). What has happened now is the progress of a new media landscape characterized by a convergence of platforms with multiple sources of information production and viewpoints. With these developments, this research establishes the extent of social media in the daily routines of radio journalists.

1.5 Research Question

- What is the function of social media in the daily routines of radio journalists?

1.6 Scope of Study

This study focused on radio stations in Ghana's capital, Accra, with a remarkable presence on social media. This was greatly influenced by the fact that most of the radio stations in the nation's capital have been in existence since the 1990's and were ideal in giving information about the role of social media in radio journalism today. Also, the limitation of internet connectivity to the city makes it more ideal for this research since it concentrated on social media use among radio journalists. By using the social media engagement of the radio stations, the study intended to speak to different radio journalists from the radio stations that made the top three on the list. This was an Excel generated list showing Accra-based radio station's engagement on social media based on primary data collected.

The selection was dependent on:

- social media engagement

This singular criterion was used because in my bid to understand the role of social media in radio journalism, it would be highly beneficial to interact with journalists of radio stations who were actively using social media themselves.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

According to Henry Jenkins (2003), “We are entering an era where media will be everywhere and we will use all kinds of media in relation to one another” (Jenkins, 2006). In essence, Jenkins is defining convergence culture as the flow of media content across multiple platforms and the die-hard behavior of media consumers who will go almost anywhere in search of the content they want. This theory forms the conceptual framework of my study in that the circulation of media content across different media platforms depends heavily on consumers’ active participation. In his book on convergence culture, Jenkins (2003) asserts that convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others. Social media facilitates social interaction and given this premise, it can be said that social media plays a role in radio journalism, which relies and reports on such interaction.

1.8 Cognitive Map

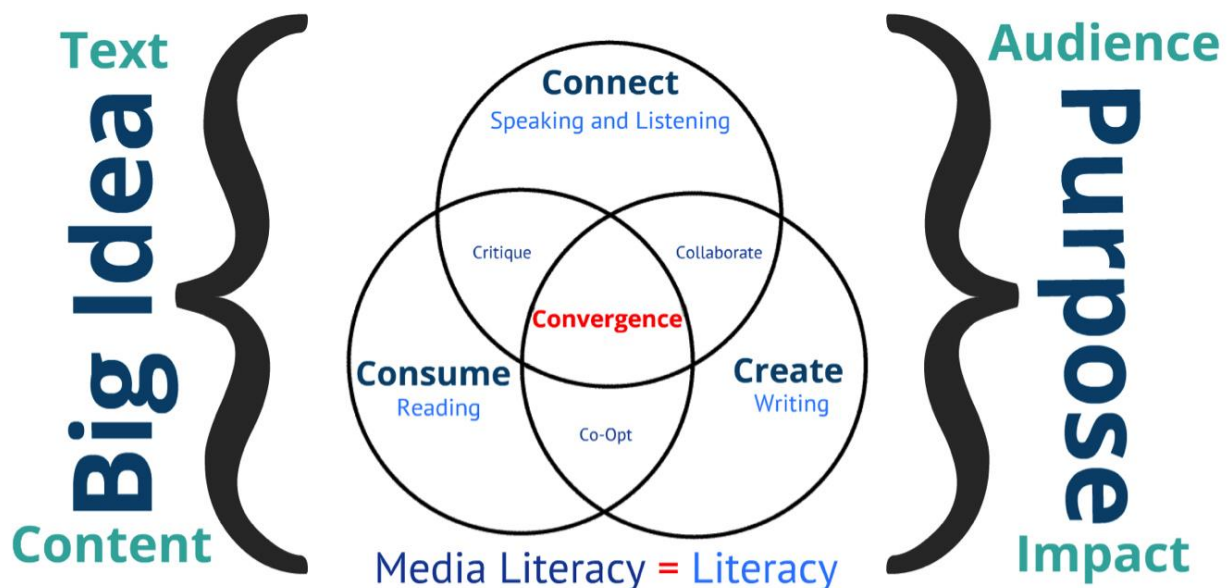


Figure 1- Convergence Instructional Learning Model

This diagram is the Convergence Academies' Instructional Model designed to show today's interconnected, collaborative nature around media consumption through a culture of "participatory learning". Here is a further breakdown of the diagram:

Connect with multiple people, resources and ideas: This explains the varied ways in which individuals connect with each other in recent times.

- With multiple sources of content
- With diverse individuals
- Critique and discuss others thoughts, work and ideas
- Collaborate with others

Consume information from multiple forms: In this part of the diagram, one is able to see the multi-dimensional nature of social media which facilitates consumption.

- Reading from text resources
- Explore visual resources (images, video)
- Engage with non-static resources (blogs, crowd sourcing sites)

Create products that synthesize current thinking with a purpose to engage others: Many forms of collaboration exist in a world that readily allows individuals to create a body of work regardless of their individual geographic locations.

- Synthesize community thinking to push the collective conversation
- Advocate for a local issue or idea
- Provocative, provide a vehicle for self-expression

1.9 Significance of Study

Many studies carried out on African journalism practices emphasize issues around the democratization of media and its role in political and democratic processes (Atton 2011). This research breaks the mould by concentrating on the routines of radio journalists as affected by social media. By doing so, the research also helps augment the body of knowledge on radio journalism in Ghana and help spearhead a revolutionary change in local radio journalism practices.

OUTLINE OF STUDY

This study is presented in five chapters.

Chapter One: This chapter takes a chronological look at the development of radio in Accra and also highlights the growing effects of internet connectivity in Ghana's capital. It also touches on social media and provides the context for the topic of study.

Chapter Two: the chapter introduces the various thoughts and concepts on the subject matter of this study. It presents the main ideas of social media use in journalism with a review of the literature which spans a wide range of arguments on the subject matter.

Chapter Three: This chapter speaks on the research method by outlining the various methods adopted with regards to sampling, data collection, the analysis of findings as well as the various approaches to the quantitative aspect of the research.

Chapter Four: This is a detailed presentation of the findings from this study. It walks through the process involved in getting the data and also shows the data collected along with the various categorizations of responses from interviews.

Chapter Five: the chapter takes on the analysis of the findings from the research using the methods of content analysis. It also closes with recommendations and mentions some limitations faced while undertaking the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review literature on the concepts and theories related to the topic under study.

The theoretical analysis will span a wide range of literature that discusses the various concepts on social media and its impact on radio journalism.

2.2 Social Media

The value of exploring the role of social media on radio journalism is rooted in an awareness that actions of both journalists and the wider public intertwine and can become influential in the production of mainstream news (Domingo, Quandt & Heinonen, 2008). Media is the means of communication, as radio and television, social media, newspapers, and magazines reach or influence people widely. Old media was about passive consumption of content while new media involves means of mass communication using digital technologies such as the internet. With these claims as a basis for argument, Britt Machaelian argues that not all media is social and that social media is a subset of new media but not all new media is social (Michaelian, 2012). These assertions give rise to pressing questions about the underlying basis for the 'social' in social media and the extent to which it actually is social.

Michael Mandiberg (2012) argues that the notion of social media has been associated with multiple concepts; famous among them is the corporate media favourite, 'user-generated content'. He goes on to mention the media-industries-focused 'convergence culture', Jay Rosen's 'the people formerly known as the audience', the politically infused 'participatory media', Yonchai Benkler's process-oriented 'peer-production' and Tim O'Reilly's computer-programming-oriented 'Web 2.0' (Trottier & Fuchs, 2015). Taking the route of sociological theory, one would find that there are different concepts of the 'social'.

The first understanding of sociality is based on Emile Durkheim's notion of the social—social facts (Fuchs, 2014). According to him, a social fact is every way of acting, which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations. This simply means that all software applications and media are social

because social structures are embodied in them. Even if a person sits in front of a computer and browses alone, these social structures are present because they have an existence of their own. Max Weber's definition of 'social' was concentrated on social actions and social relations (Fuchs, 2014). He explains that an action is social if its subjective meaning takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course. Weber however stresses that in order to constitute a social relation behavior needs to be a meaningful symbolic interaction between human actors (Fuchs, 2014). Karl Marx's notion of collaborative work was his basis for the definition of society (Marx & Engel, 1846). He argues that what is understood by 'social' is the co-operation of several individuals, no matter the conditions, manner and to what end they co-operate. One could draw parallels between this definition and that of Ferdinand Tönnies', which refers to sociality as community, whose very existence in turn rests in the consciousness of belonging together and the affirmation of the condition of mutual dependence (Fuchs, 2014).

Depending on the concept of sociality employed, the answers to the question on what 'social' is, differs. Nonetheless, all computing systems and therefore all web applications and forms of media can be considered as social because they store and transmit human knowledge that originates in social relations in society (Trottier & Fuchs, 2015). What this means is that they are objectifications of society and human relations. This statement emphasizes Karl Marx's opinion on the issue of social phenomena; he states that in a society a social phenomenon does not simply exist but are rather outcomes of social relations between human beings. In the same vein, Christian Fuchs in his book, 'Social Media: a Critical Introduction' (2014, 31), asserts that all media are social in the sense that they are products of social processes.

A social theory approach of clarifying the notion of 'social media' can be advanced by identifying three social information processes that constitute three forms of sociality: cognition, communication and cooperation (Trottier & Fuchs, 2015). According to this view, individual's interaction on social media is based on certain cognitive features that facilitate said interaction. It further states that communication on these media can also be used for the co-production of novel qualities of overall social systems and for community building. Let's take Facebook for example,

where an individual creates multimedia content like a video on a cognitive level and publishes it giving others the chance to comment and reproduce it so that new content with multiple sources can emerge. The integration of different forms of sociality and different roles on social media means that there is a myriad of possible social functions that any single platform can serve. This fact could be a major contributing factor to the prominence and adoption of social media in the 21st century.

2.3 Radio in Africa

It is true that free expression plays a vital role in fostering and consolidating democratic governance. When individuals are able to share their thoughts and hold one another and public officials accountable without fear of intimidation, a body can be trusted to ensure that state affairs are conducted in the best interest of society. The media are one of the means by which citizens exercise their voice and attempt to engage in the deliberative processes that characterize democratic participation (Bosch, 2011). Though the preponderance of newspapers is the most observable demonstration of this freedom, radio has seen significant growth as well in the fulfillment of this freedom. As the BBC World Service Trust notes:

Radio dominates the mass media spectrum with state-controlled radio services still commanding the biggest audiences in most countries but regional commercial stations demonstrating the largest consistent increases in numbers.

The observable consistent growth in the number of non-state owned radio stations in many democratic nations has led to a vibrant, pluralistic and competitive radio landscape (Bosch, 2011). This growth in private radio stations presents the opportunity for expansion in the media spaces available for the expression of citizens' perspectives. However, the extent to which this potential is harnessed depends greatly on the kind of control exercised by those in charge of those channels of information flow. Dean of the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies at the University of British Columbia, Wisdom J. Tetteh notes that:

...gatekeeping is a vital process that determines the silencing or expression of various voices. Those who control the conduits for expression have the power to filter what kind of information or

whose gets into the public realm and hence shapes public discourse. The media have significant influence through the exercise of this control. Depending on how they exercise it, the media can help shape civic competence among citizens. Civic competence is the citizens' ability to understand, engage with and make appropriate demands on the state while meeting their responsibilities and obligations as citizens.

Generally, the media in Ghana have grown exponentially over the course of the last two decades and this is not just in numbers but in influence as well. The vibrant and unrestrained discussions over the airwaves are one of the vivid pieces of evidence that observers of Ghanaian politics are drawn to in touting the nation as a model of democracy and consolidation on the African continent.

Under free airwaves, audience participation, through phone-ins, for instance signaled 'that private-enterprise radio may be experimenting with forms of political expression that contradict prevailing orthodoxy' (Van der Veur 2002: 101). An accurate example is Ugandan Capital Radio's 'Capital Gang' discussion show, which includes live phone-ins, and which has sometimes been in trouble with the government (Mudhai, 2011). Ansu Kyeremeh (2007: 107) points out that discursive and interactive listener phone-in radio programs that usually focus on local issues are very popular and demonstrate resistance to foreign content in Ghana. Audience input usually offers opportunities for radio to converge with informal media, which is characterized by innuendos and rumor, a risky territory that has led Kenya to propose legislation on broadcasting, in the quest of criminalizing unconfirmed reporting.

A more significant form of convergence in recent times involves dissemination of radio content through modern ICT platforms in an adaptation to the digital future (McCauley 2002; Attias and Deflander 2003; Girard 2003b; Ilboudo and Castello 2003; Jallof 2003). In the increasing intersection between mass media, social media and personal media, radio has not been left out. The internet has been the most dominant platform of convergence for the radio (Mabweazara, Okoth & Mudhai, 2014). Alhassan (2004: 196) acknowledges that in Ghana

several FM stations stream their audio content on their web pages and also provide alphanumeric content. Radio broadcasters in most other African countries have similar online presence – some offering live streaming (Nketia, 2013). A number of websites for African radio stations, especially South African and Kenyan ones, have improved over the past few years with a number of features that allow audience participation and choices. These additions have come to include links that redirect the audience to social media pages of these radio stations and this opens more platforms for massive participation in online discussions following news stories making the airwaves. In Ghana radio stations like Peace FM, Joy FM, Adom FM and an increasing number of others actively engage their audience on social media pages, especially Facebook.

The sheer fluidity of radio, its pervasiveness and its links with the new media, extend its range and potential (Bosch, 2011). It allows African radio to be simultaneously present in metropolitan centers and seemingly remote areas, disseminating news for the improvement of civic education and stirring up online participation of news discussions to promote freedom of expression and accountability of state leaders.

2.4 Post-Modern Form of Broadcasting: Citizen/Participatory Journalism

Mandiberg (2012) believes that access to tools and the invention of new media networks like social media has blurred the lines between news producers and consumers. Many argue that it presents many threats to the most cherished values and standards of journalism (Pavlik, 2001). Authenticity of content, source verification, accuracy and truth are all suspect in a medium where anyone with a computer and modem can become a global publisher. This phenomenon has given rise to a new form of journalism known as citizen or participatory journalism. Jay Rosen, a media critic, writer, and a professor of journalism at New York University defines citizen journalism simply as “when the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another”. The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the internet to create, supplement or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others (Kaplan, 2009).

The role of citizen journalism was made very evident in the series of revolutions that took place in some northern African and Arab states dubbed the 'Arab Spring' which began in Tunisia in 2010 and spread across Northern Africa to the Middle East resulting in the fall of long-time presidents like Libya's Muammar Gadhafi and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. Social media during this period was largely credited with giving a voice to the people even in the face of government crackdowns on communication systems (Fahmy & Ali, 2013).

Unlike the 'exaggerated celebration', to use Winston's (1998) phrase, that has accompanied discussions on new media's impact on journalistic practices in newspaper, newsrooms, such praise has been more measured in regard to radio (Mudhai, 2011). Without a functional qualification, new media has therefore been variously called transformational, innovative and even unmanageable in Africa. According to George Ogola (2013) the focus on new media should be redirected from just its impact, to the manner in which they have been appropriated, domesticated or even ignored by local media. This brings into question, the meaning of the 'new' in new media seeing as it requires some disambiguation. Pavlik (2011) attempts a fairly useful disaggregation of the term by providing a five-part conceptual framework which teases out some of its constitutive elements. He observes that in new media there are implied acquisition devices, storage facilities, processing technology, distribution technology and display or access devices. According to George Ogolo (2013) the break-down is necessary because it allows one to understand the range of elements the idea of 'new media' encapsulates but also allows for an investigation of their roles in journalism. Pavlik notes how acquisition devices such as mobile phones now enable journalists to conduct interviews and how, in turn, this has helped shrink the spatial distance between journalists and their sources. Journalists across the African continent have integrated a range of new technologies in their newsrooms and journalistic practices. Ogola (2013) asserts that the growing online presence of many African news organizations has led to the increasing level of audience influence on news products. What this means is that with the advent of new media tools like social media and mobile phones,

audiences can now generate news and disseminate it through the various new media platforms available.

As an illustrative example, in March 2012, the Atlanta based international news channel CNN was forced to pull a video from its website following online protests criticizing the organization's coverage of a story in Nairobi, Kenya. This followed a story that was reported following an incident where suspected Al-Shabaab Militants threw grenades into a bus terminus, killing and injuring several Kenyans. Although factually accurate, the headline read 'Violence in Kenya' which sparked anger among the Kenyan online community. They encouraged others on Twitter, Facebook and other social networking sights calling for an apology for what they termed as 'poor reporting'. The specifically significant thing among all this was the fact that a reporter from a local newspaper, the Daily Nation, used this online 'Twitter storm' to write a story for both the online and print editions of the newspaper. Notable to know is the fact that this news story was completely sourced and put together using tweets and Facebook messages.

This 'virtual story' demonstrates how new technologies like social media have become part of the news and the news-making processes in Africa. Myers (2008) argues that, there is a "rediscovery of radio in the context of ICT's, a realization that technology has made it a two-way medium that can help bridge the digital divide by providing a powerful tool for information dissemination and access for 'hard-to-reach rural audiences'". A similar argument is made by Moyo (2013, 211) who talks about the transformation of radio as a medium by the internet and mobile phones through multiple platforms such as webcasting, mobile streaming, blogging, podcasts and indeed, social media. The most radical appropriations of these new media technologies have largely taken place in commercial radio. However, as Willems (2013) put it, their transformative potential in so far as they allow for broader and more inclusive public participation is compromised by the various stations' commercial orientation.

Table Showing a List of Registered Radio Stations in Accra

No.	Name of Company	Type of Station	Assigned Frequency
1	Adom FM	Commercial FM	106.3MHZ
2	Amanie Community Radio	Community FM	88.3MHZ
3	Asempa FM	Commercial FM	94.7MHZ
4	Atinka Fm	Commercial FM	104.7MHZ
5	Atlantis Radio	Commercial FM	87.9MHZ
6	BBC Radio	Public Foreign FM	101.3MHZ
7	Breeze FM	Commercial FM	90.9MHZ
8	Channel R	Commercial FM	92.7MHZ
9	Citi FM	Commercial FM	97.3MHZ
10	Happy FM	Commercial FM	98.9MHZ
11	Hitz FM	Commercial FM	104.3MHZ
12	Hot FM	Commercial FM	93.9MHZ
13	Joy Fm	Commercial FM	99.7MHZ
14	Kasapa FM	Commercial FM	102.3MHZ
15	Latenu FM	Community FM	102.7MHZ
16	Live FM	Commercial FM	91.9MHZ
17	Marahaba Radio	Commercial FM	99.3MHZ
18	Meridian FM	Community FM	100.5MHZ
19	Muntie FM	Commercial FM	100.1 MHZ
20	Neat FM	Commercial FM	100.9MHZ
21	Obonu FM	Public FM	96.5MHZ
22	Okay FM	Commercial FM	101.7 MHZ
23	Oman FM	Commercial FM	107.1MHZ
24	Peace FM	Commercial FM	104.3MHZ
25	Pluzz FM	Commercial FM	89.9 MHZ
26	Pravda Radio	Commercial FM	93.5MHZ
27	Prime FM	Commercial FM	89.1MHZ
28	Radio Ada	Community FM	93.3MHZ
29	Radio Daestrifa	Community FM	105.1MHZ
30	Radio France International	Public Foreign FM	89.5MHZ
31	Radio GIJ	Commercial FM	97.7MHZ
32	Radio Gold	Commercial FM	90.5MHZ
33	Radio Universe	Campus FM	105.7MHZ
34	Radio XYZ	Commercial FM	93.1MHZ
35	Radion VVU	Campus FM	97.7 MHZ
36	Rainbow Radio Radio	Commercial FM	87.5MHZ
37	Star FM	Commercial FM	103.5 MHZ

38	Sunny FM	Commercial FM	88.7MHZ
39	Sweet Melodies	Commercial FM	94.3MHZ
40	Top Radio	Commercial FM	103.1MHZ
41	Unique FM	Public FM	95.7MHZ
42	VOA	Public FM	98.1 MHZ
43	Voice of Moderation	Commercial FM	107.5MHZ
44	X FM	Commercial FM	95.1MHZ
45	Y FM	Commercial FM	107.9MHZ

Figure 2- National Communication Authority's List of Accra-Based Radio Stations

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Sampling Strategy

In research, it is neither practical nor feasible to collect data from every individual in the population one wishes to study (Valdivia, 2014). Sampling techniques were developed to select an accurate representation of the population under study. In selecting a sample for this research, certain key decisions had to be made and these include the sample frame, the use of probability or non-probability sampling procedure and the sample size.

A sample frame should be selected based on its comprehensiveness in representing the population, probability of selection and efficiency with which one can make the selection (Valdivia, 2014). Using radio stations in Accra for this study, my sampling frame will be the different radio journalists and radio broadcasters at the radio stations that meet the criteria for the selection of my sample size. According to the National Communications Authority's list of radio stations in Ghana as at the fourth quarter of 2014, there are a total of 46 authorized radio stations in Accra. Out of that number, 44 of them are in operation and 11 of them are international radio stations.

The sampling procedure adopted for the purpose of this research was a blend of purposive sampling and snowballing. In purposive sampling, respondents are selected based on some criterion or characteristics. Appelberg, Nygren and Gardestrom (2012) in their study of how social media active radio journalists make use of the medium, used purposive sampling as their sampling process. According to them, this ensured that the respondents were relevant to the study and helped to advance the research (Appelberg, Nygren & Elin, 2012). Snowballing came in handy because the initial respondents were able to point out other journalists that I ended up speaking to. Based on the topic of this study, the criteria for the selection of radio stations for the data collection was determined by their level of penetration and engagement on social media; mainly Facebook and Twitter. Facebook and Twitter because as per my research, they are the two social media platforms that broadcasting networks use the most to boost their online

presence asides personal websites. Going by these criteria, I spoke to radio journalists and broadcasters at the following radio stations:

1. Joy Fm
2. Citi Fm
3. Adom Fm

Selecting a sample size remains one of the biggest dilemmas for researchers however this case study looked at studying the professional practices of approximately 30 radio journalists and broadcasters working under the selected radio stations.

3.2 Research Design

The data collection for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. For a research of this nature, it was important that opinions from both radio journalists and radio broadcasters be sought. This approach provided an insight into how individual radio journalists and their organizations appropriated social media personally and professionally.

3.3 Qualitative Design

For the qualitative aspect of this research, in-depth interviews with the radio journalists and broadcasters of the news organizations were conducted to determine the role that social media plays in these news organizations, especially amongst the journalists themselves. According to Kvale (1996) the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences. Also, Moritz (2012) in his study of social media and the evolution of journalists' routines employed in-depth interviews with journalists to study the research question. A similar approach is adopted for the purpose of this research.

3.4 Quantitative Design

In order to establish the top three engaging radio station on social media, primary data collection was necessary to decide on the radio stations to speak to. Out of the 45 radio stations in Accra, there were thirty three ones still running. First, the numbers from each of the

radio station's accounts on the social media platforms were recorded to generate weighted averages. Using the number of platforms used by a radio station and the numbers on each of them, a ranking that was based on social media engagement was generated.

3.5 Data Collection Tools/ Instruments

The primary research tools included interviews and textual analysis. Interviews were conducted with radio journalists who source news stories for the radio newsrooms as well as broadcasters doing the dissemination. The interviews were semi-structured which means there was a question guide. Interviews were used because generally, they create an avenue for flexibility: an opportunity to adjust questions or discussions to fit diverse situations. In addition, they give a higher response rate and are also relatively less tedious (Saranthakos, 2005). Laforest and Bouchard (2009) also note that since interviews provide access to perceptions and opinions, they are effective for gaining insight into problems and phenomena that are not immediately perceptible but that nonetheless raise concern in certain areas.

3.6 Data Analysis

Using qualitative content analysis, I analyzed the results of interviews which were recorded on an audio device for later perusal. Websites and social media accounts of the various radio stations were also analyzed to gain insight into the position of social media in the daily activities of radio journalists and broadcasters. According to Smith, D., & Hope, J. (1992), content analysis is the systematic analysis of text or pictographic material. It can be used on both original data collected by you as a researcher, or on any range of secondary documentary sources. I looked at both latent and manifest content and came up with an adequate coding method for the final analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This section of the study describes how the data collected was analyzed to reach conclusions about the topic under study. Using Content Analysis, there was some coding used to translate the responses gained from the interviews. The coded concepts help categorize the responses and put them into perspective to for an accurate conclusion to be drawn.

The findings are reported in two parts; those collected from interviews with radio broadcasters and radio journalists. The second part of the analysis includes insight gained from what was observed as a result of analyzing the radio stations on social media.

4.2 Interviews

The interviews were conducted with radio journalists and radio broadcasters from the top three radio stations ranked highest based on their social media engagement. Each interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes as respondents' answers led to further probing on issues raised. To aid the process, an interview guide with open ended questions was used. The question guide was split into three main areas to facilitate the decoding process of the analysis:

- Social Media Usage
- Alternative Social Media Platforms Used
- Organizational Attitude to Social Media
- Effects of Social Media Usage on Journalism

4.2.1 Social Media Usage

To find out the actual function of social media in radio journalism, I prepared an interview guide for my interviewees. The following questions helped to get the conversation steered in the right direction:

Do you have personal social media accounts? If yes, which ones?

Out of my sample size of 10 radio journalists, 100% said they had personal social media accounts out of which Facebook and Twitter accounts were the most common. 100% of the journalists I spoke to in my sample size had Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, 90% of the journalists in my sample size were on Twitter and 40% of my respondents were on Instagram. The other social media platforms like Google plus, Youtube, Pinterest and Tumblr did not appeal to them and thus none of them were present on there.

Do you have professional social media accounts?

It turned out that none of the journalists I spoke to had professional social media accounts. They explained that there was no use having one because it did not help them out in their job in any way. One of them explained further saying that she was able to follow up on news stories and investigate happenings with her own account better than with a professional one. People were more likely to exaggerate news stories if they felt they were dealing with a public figure so it was better for her to use her personal accounts especially since radio journalists have some anonymity.

Have you ever used your social media accounts to source news stories?

100% of the respondents answered yes to this question. The radio journalists explained that they constantly reported news they saw on social media on a daily basis and there were different reasons as to why this was. One radio journalist explained that the premise of the on-air show she worked on, Joy News Interactive, was to report what was happening in town from the perspectives of individuals in the community. Here social media was used to pick up trending news topics and opinions directly from the people. A case in point was the nation's response to the president's state of the nation address that was aired quite recently. Joy News Interactive was able to use the hash tag #SOTN to gather sentiments on the speech from both Facebook and Twitter. There was also an instance where some of the journalists read about issues affecting

communities and followed up them to develop a news-worthy story. One example I got from my interviews had to do with a community that was sharing a water body with animals. A complaint was made by one of the community's inhabitants on social media and the journalist who saw this followed up on it to develop an actual story which gained some public attention.

What do social media contribute to the daily demands of your job?

This particular question generated different answers from the 10 respondents, yet there were similarities that run through. To adequately communicate the different roles social media played in radio journalism as per their answers, I grouped the answers into the five responses that came up for the question asked. This gave me a total of five differing opinions as to what social media contributed to their jobs:

- **Public engagement:** the radio journalists believe that social media helps them to engage with the public in that they are able to see people's reactions to news stories they report, get leads they can develop into stories and also allows for live discussions with listeners while their shows are being aired.
- **Generates feedback:** one journalist in particular mentioned that the ability to get timely feedback from social media was very important to her in her job. She explained that in doing live interviews, listeners sometimes helped her with her line of questions by calling out government officials who would be downplaying the effect of some government policy, or lack thereof, on the people.
- **Added relevance and boost for radio station:** social media numbers contribute positively to a radio station's marketing. This is largely due to the fact that its source of income is advertisement and marketing heads that target the social media demographics go where those numbers are. I was further enlightened on how radio journalists use social media for publicity. Before their shows and for upcoming interviews with politicians and public figures, social media provided a platform for advertisement and hype.

- **Great source of information:** on a daily basis, individuals take to social media to report things they see, their sentiments on issues affecting them and others. As I pointed out by Mandiberg (2012) in my literature review, access to tools and the invention of new media networks like social media has blurred the lines between news producers and consumers. One of the respondents described the act of individuals posting news stories online through their social media accounts as “non-restrictive”. She explained saying that no particular protocol needed to be observed for an average citizen to post about a news story and this made social media a great source of information for her. To date she commends social media for bringing to light the cruelty of the Ugandan nanny who tortured the child in her care.
- **Allows for citizen journalism:** Jay Rosen, a media critic, writer, and a professor of journalism at New York University defines citizen journalism simply as “when the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another”. The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the internet to create, supplement or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others (Kaplan, 2009).

Here is a summary of the types of responses the journalists gave pertaining to what social media contributes to their daily routines as radio journalists and broadcasters:

Responses	Response Type
Public Engagement	Type A
Generates Feedback	Type B
Added Relevance	Type C
Source of Information	Type D
Citizen Journalism	Type E

Figure 3. Coded Responses

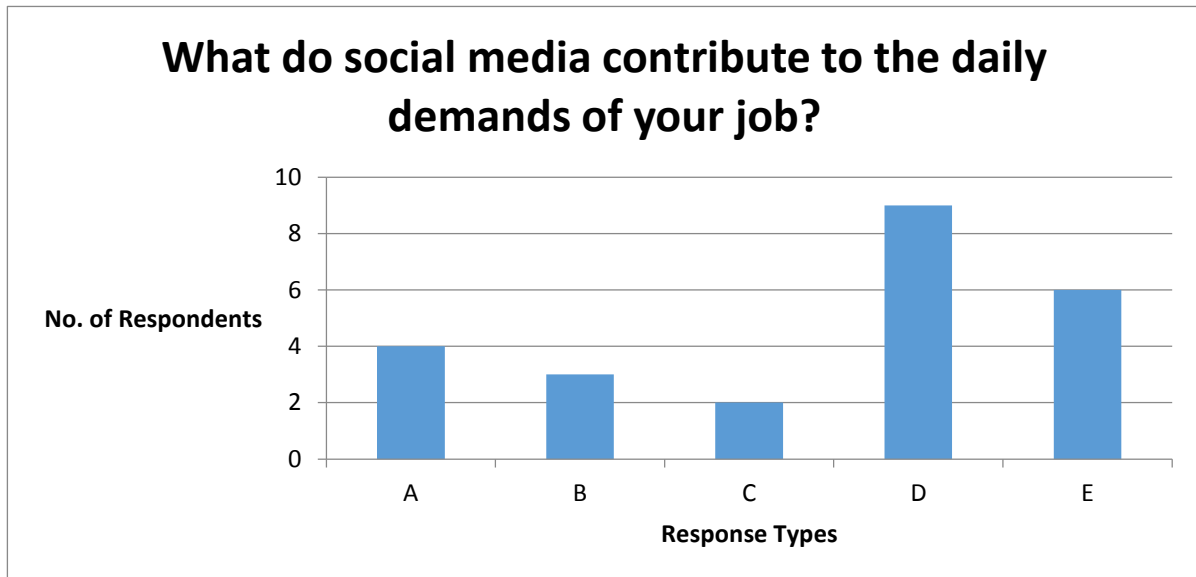


Figure 4 Graphical representations of responses

Do you trust social media platforms as news sources?

All the journalists I spoke to did not fully trust social media; they agreed to the fact that using social media in their job came with a lot of verification and fact checking. As one of the journalists put it during the interviews:

"You cannot always trust what is put up on social media. If you do not cross-check you could be party to someone's personal agenda to defame another"

From what I gathered, it was quite obvious that social media was a big part of their sourcing but it came at a price: thorough authentication.

Do you think using Facebook and Twitter to source news stories affects journalistic standards? Why?

All of the respondents in my sample size answered no to this question. According to them, journalists were well aware of the processes involved in doing their jobs one of which was fact-checking. They explained that using social media enhanced their job because they were made aware of a lot of information they would have otherwise not been privy to. One of the respondents argued that even with traditional media, he still had to verify news stories. He gave an example of a recent news story relating to a member of parliament's resignation that later proved to be false. It turns out, the journalist who reported the issue saw a post on social media complete with a copy of the resignation letter and this prompted him to report on it without the necessary background check. Based on the interview, I gathered that the standards relating to practicing radio journalism are not affected in any way by social media. This is because the only way in which social media could affect the standards I speak of is through the authenticity of news stories shared and it is the job of journalists to make sure the news they report on is factual.

4.2.2. Alternative Social Media Platforms Used

Are you active on any other social media networks aside Facebook and Twitter? If yes, which ones do you use and why?

It turns out that all of the journalists I spoke to were using 'WhatsApp' in sourcing and reporting the news. One journalist said 'WhatsApp' was her most preferred social media because of its multimedia nature. On WhatsApp one can send text messages, pictures, voice notes, share contacts and very recently, make calls. Owing to the multiple means of communication of WhatsApp, citizens send in a lot of information about developing news stories and this helps the journalist to follow leads and know what is happening around them. On one of the shows hosted by a journalist I spoke to, they depend on WhatsApp for all of their news stories. The way it works is that during their broadcast they announce the phone number and encourage people to send contributions via texts, pictures or voice notes. Another reason one other journalist gave for using

WhatsApp was that it eased the verification of news stories because you could call the individual who reported the news story directly on their mobile phones.

4.2.3. Organizational Attitude to Social Media

Does your organization currently have a social media policy?

Of the three radio stations I conducted my research at; only one radio station did not have a social media policy. The other two had a working social media policy that everyone had to adhere to. According to the journalists at Joy FM, this is what their social media policy says: **The social media tool must be enhanced to a level where it becomes a marketing tool. It should aggregate radio listenership to a point where it is marketable.**

Joy FM and Adom FM are being run by The Multimedia Group and thus have the same policy on social media. The journalists at Adom FM also emphasized that as employees of The Multimedia Group, they were expected to be very mindful of what they put on social media even with their personal accounts. On minding what they put out on their personal accounts, one of the journalists stated that she believed this was due largely to the very partisan nature of Ghanaian politics. Explaining her point, she said that based on how they reported news stories, people easily associated radio stations with either of the two prominent parties in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party.

Also, the journalists under The Multimedia Group also have training services to enhance their social media use. Their organization hires the services of Penplusbytes to take them through training and orientation of social media platforms and technologies used across the various media. The international Institute for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Journalism (Penplusbytes) is a registered company limited by guarantee since 18th July 2001. It seeks to empower the media through the use of ICT's to advance the work of journalism (PenplusBytes, 2014).

Are you provided with any resources to enable the effective use of social media?

All of the journalists I spoke to said they had resources that aided their use of social media at their work places. They also added that most time, mainly because they were “on-the-go”, they resorted to using their own devices.

4.2.4. Effects of Social Media on Radio Journalism

From my interaction with the journalists with regards to social media’s effects on radio journalism, they pointed out that the media landscape is changing and social media is now a vital part of news reporting. Speaking to the journalist from Joy News Interactive, this is what she had to say on the issue:

“Social media affects journalistic standards somewhat largely due to the issue of credibility. This largely depends on where the news story is going to be used and for what purposes because for JN interactive, we are focused on what is trending on social media so in that aspect credibility does not really come to play. People see anything on social media and do not bother to verify and get into trouble.”

What was established by the end of the interviews however was that when it comes to social media, anonymity causes problems; spoofs. She said that because humorous stories about politicians are constantly being shared on social media, many actual news stories get lost in translation.

To conclude on this particular sub topic, I am borrowing the words of one of the journalists I interviewed where he says: “Social media helps in getting information for news; it can complement the work you do but cannot be a firm basis for the work you do.”

4.2.5. Findings from Textual Analysis

Joy FM is present on three social media platforms; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Adom has accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Google plus whereas Citi has Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and a Youtube account.

All radio stations actively put up news stories that are developing in Ghana and around the world. In addition, they post updates of what goes on in their studios featuring resident hosts and

broadcasters. They also have their Twitter pages linked to their Facebook pages so they post content simultaneously. As of the 29th of March 2015, Joy FM's Facebook page had 269,597 likes with an average of 28 posts each day of a week. Citi FM also had 274,384 Facebook likes with an average of 27 posts a day. Adom had 183,561 Facebook likes but does not post as much as the other two with an average of 2 posts a day. In all instances, the number of posts increases depending on special shows the radio stations host like the recent Music of Ghanaian Origin (MOGO) awards held by Citi FM on the 28th of March, 2015. This is because they used their accounts for the show's publicity hence many more posts than usual.

For some stations like Joy FM, there are separate accounts for specific shows like Joy Business, Joy News Night and the Cosmopolitan Mix. These accounts have their own following and focus solely on reporting content that has to do with the show. On Twitter, Joy FM puts up news posts about the day's news headlines along with questions about the news stories. Such posts get a lot of replies and retweets as many people tend to engage with the radio stations by sharing their opinions. Joy had 170,000 followers and posts throughout the day announcing public figures they have in their studios and sometimes invite the general public to tweet questions, comments and feedback. Adom FM's twitter had been quite dormant for a month as at 28th March, 2015. However, their radio journalists and broadcasters mention the station's account in their personal tweets in relation to their jobs and the shows they host. Though Citi FM's twitter timeline featured daily news headlines, there was also a lot of play-by-play update of music that enjoyed airplay on the station. On other occasions, the radio station put up pictures of public figures and personalities visiting their studios as promos for ongoing interviews.

Since Joy and Adom both belong to The Multimedia Group, the same people responsible for Joy TV and Adom TV, their stories and videos of news happenings are posted to the general youtube pages, My Joy Online and Adom TV respectfully. Citi FM on the other hand has its own Youtube page with 834 videos and 4714 subscribers as of 29th of March, 2015.

Generally these radio stations have established a social media presence for themselves which compliments the work they do on air. Their individual approaches and methods may be different but it gets results because they all have engagement on their pages each day of the week.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter focuses on interpreting the findings of the study to reach a suitable conclusion on the subject matter being discussed. It will also discuss the limitations of the study and some recommendations to radio stations in Ghana's capital; Accra.

5.1 Limitations

In the course of this study, there were certain setbacks that caused some changes in the methodology and led to certain modifications.

First, the unavailability of radio journalists due to their busy schedules was a major hurdle that delayed the progress of the study being conducted. Every minute of every day, it seemed there was a story breaking somewhere that needed to be covered by one journalist or the other. Several appointments I made had to be rescheduled more than once and the mode of communication had to be adjusted to suit the availability of some of the journalists I spoke to.

Second, there were some uncooperative Human Resource (HR) managers at some of the radio stations I visited causing further delay to the study. I had to prove within reasonable doubt that I was a final year student carrying out a final project which required that I speak to the radio journalists employed at the selected stations. A formal letter of introduction from my school was found to be vague and I was made to surrender my interview guide for inspection and approval by an HR manager. In the end I had to speak to some of the journalists I had contacted as private journalist with no mention of the firms they were associated with.

There was a general bureaucracy surrounding the processes involved in getting access to radio journalists at the various radio stations. Due to financial constraints, proximity and because phone calls proved futile, it was not particularly pleasant having to visit these stations on several occasions to get permission to speak to the journalists in the first place. In the end persistence earned me time with 10 different journalists working at three different radio stations in the nation's capital.

5.2 Discussions of Findings

This research intended to investigate the role of social media in radio journalism in Accra. Motivated by the wave of social media taking over the talk radio landscape and complimented by the convergence culture propounded by Jenkins (2003), the study expects to explore social media as it pertains to radio journalists and the work that they do. In discussing the findings of this study, it is important to look at the research questions and objectives of the study.

Research Objective:

Examining the role played by social media in the daily routines of radio journalists

Research Question:

- What is the role of social media in the daily routines of radio journalists?

Findings

Based on the results of the findings in figure 4 (page 35), it is evident that social media is a source of information for radio journalists. Out of the ten respondents I contacted for the purpose of this research, each of them mentioned that social media gave them a lot of information. When asked to rank the different roles of social media they had mentioned, 'source of information' came first to the others.

Just like David Domingo (2008) said in the Journal Article; 'Participatory Journalism Practices in the Media and Beyond', actions of both journalists and the wider public intertwine and can become influential in the production of mainstream news. The results of this study further

reinforce Christian Fuchs assertions about social media which states that social media is social because they are products of social processes. Conversation is a form of communication that people resort to everyday to get information from each other. By using social media, radio journalists are able to communicate with people that matter over pressing issues no matter where they are. Also, because of the myriad of possible social functions that any single platform can serve the communication is enhanced. An example would be the case of the individual who contacted Joy FM to complain about a community sharing their source of drinking water with animals. Not only did he communicate by conversation, he also sent pictures to back his story. This draws in the journalist and gives them a true sense of what is happening which translates into how they report the story in particular. In recent times citizens are reporting more on news stories and the fact that social media affords them different means of doing so is an added bonus to radio journalists everywhere.

5.3 Recommendations

In the course of this study, it became apparent that though they derived some information from social media, there was no playbook or specific strategy as to how radio stations were posting on social media, beyond a somewhat vague intention to ensure that all interaction moves towards marketability. Most were simply “doing their own thing” and seemingly inventing their own game plan on the basis of trial and error. Adom FM’s inconsistency in their Twitter posts and regular (albeit short) periods of inactivity on Joy’s Instagram was proof of this.

As long as social media interaction remains inexpensive, it will most likely continue to be a part of stations’ and journalists’ game plans. The issue of whether social media is increasing ratings, or the bottom line, in any appreciable way is a topic I recommend future studies to investigate, as it involves the relationship between listener numbers and station ‘Likes’ (Freeman, Klapczynski, & Wood, 2012). However, it is difficult to accurately draw this correlation because stations are incredibly guarded about releasing the listenership research/figures that they privately commission to establish their market position.

However, journalists and the radio stations they work for could leverage their presence on social media sufficiently if their presence on the platforms could be measured appropriately. Based on this, I recommend that radio stations manage their entry into the social media space before they start to measure it. From my findings, I did notice that radio has a distinct advantage by being able to leverage their social media presence via their on-air activities. They drive listeners to their social media sites through their air time. The rule book for businesses posting on social media is open to the business in question and since the rules are still being written, I suggest that radio stations adopt plans that inform the way they post on their various social media platforms.

5.4 Conclusion

This paper has been able to communicate, the actual role of social media in radio journalism in Accra-based radio stations; the reason for which this study was conducted. In doing this, the paper communicated all the processes by which the study was conducted and also presented and discussed findings which were a result of a data collection process.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the words of Tanja Bosch (2011): the media are one of the means by which citizens exercise their voice and attempt to engage in the deliberative processes that characterize democratic participation. As people become increasingly aware of the power of voicing out, they are ready to share news stories when they can or point journalists in the direction of those who can. This makes it an ideal time for journalists of all kinds, not just radio, to be on social media and the reason could not be any clearer.

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APPENDIX

Table Showing a List of Accra Based Radio Stations and Their Presence on the Various Social Media

Name of Company	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Google +	Pinterest	YouTube
Atlantis Radio		92					
Radio Gold	21458						
Live FM	478	11500	2942	27			
Choice FM	96						
Radio Universe	6						
Adom FM	183,561	1403			23		
Sunny FM	532						
Hitz FM	43,165						
Peace FM	7,292	13000			18		
Radio France International							
Top Radio	14						
X FM	161,918						
Happy FM	12,683	907					
Citi FM	274,384	134000		536			4714
Hot FM	54						
Unique FM	1,133						
Asempa FM	69,532						
Oman FM	36,076						
Sweet Melodies	8,992	1144					
Okay FM	4,224						
Joy Fm	269,597	170000	1010				
Y FM	118,420	146000					
Pravda Radio	5,420	420	5				
Neat FM	2,593						
Pluzz FM	823	1622	34		1		
Prime FM	1,981						
Radio XYZ	36,102	1013	72				
Radio VVU		34					
Rainbow Radio Radio	5,140						
Breeze FM	209	132					
Amanie Community Radio	1,912						
Starr FM	5,646	1818	3928		14		

Obonu FM	160						
Atinka Fm	534						

Figure 1.3

Table Showing Ranking of the Various Social Media Based on the Level of Engagement of the Listeners of Accra-Based Radio Stations

Social Media	Numbers	Weighted Average
Facebook	1079058	0.689184
Twitter	483085	0.308542
Instagram	2942	0.001879
LinkedIn	563	0.00036
Google +	56	3.58E-05
Total Sum	1565704	1

Figure 1.4

Weighted averages were calculated by dividing each platform's radio numbers by the total social media numbers.

Weighted Average of Facebook=

$$1079058/1565704 = .689184$$

Weighted Average of Twitter=

$$483085/1565704 = .308542$$

Weighted Average of Instagram=

$$2942/1565704 = .001879$$

Weighted Average of LinkedIn =

$$563/1565704 = .00036$$

Weighted Average of Google + =

$$56/1565704 = 3.58E-05$$

Table Showing Ranking Of Accra-Based Radio Stations Based on their Level of Engagement on Various Social Media

Name of Company	Facebook	Weight	Twitter	Weight	Instagram	Weight	LinkedIn	Weight	Google +	Weight	Rankings	No.
Joy Fm	269597	0.689184	170000	0.308542	1010	0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	2.38E+05	1
Citi FM	274384	0.689184	134000	0.308542		0.001879	536	0.00036		3.58E-05	2.30E+05	2
Adom FM	183561	0.689184	1403	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036	23	3.58E-05	1.27E+05	3
Y FM	118,420	0.689184	146000	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.27E+05	4
X FM	161918	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.12E+05	5
Asempa FM	69532	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	4.79E+04	6
Hitz FM	43165	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	2.97E+04	7
Radio XYZ	36102	0.689184	1013	0.308542	72	0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	2.52E+04	8
Oman FM	36076	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	2.49E+04	9
Radio Gold	21458	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.48E+04	10
Peace FM	7292	0.689184	13000	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036	18	3.58E-05	9.04E+03	11
Happy FM	12683	0.689184	907	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	9.02E+03	12
Sweet Melodies	8992	0.689184	1144	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	6.55E+03	13
Starr FM	5646	0.689184	1818	0.308542	3928	0.001879		0.00036	14	3.58E-05	4.46E+03	14
Live FM	478	0.689184	11500	0.308542	2942	0.001879	27	0.00036		3.58E-05	3.88E+03	15
Pravda Radio	5420	0.689184	420	0.308542	5	0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	3.86E+03	16
Rainbow Radio Radio	5140	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	3.54E+03	17
Okay FM	4224	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	2.91E+03	18
Neat FM	2593	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.79E+03	19
Prime FM	1981	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.37E+03	20
Amanie Community Radio	1912	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.32E+03	21
Pluzz FM	823	0.689184	1622	0.308542	34	0.001879		0.00036	1	3.58E-05	1.07E+03	22
Unique FM	1133	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	7.81E+02	23
Atinka Fm	534	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	3.68E+02	24
Sunny FM	532	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	3.67E+02	25
Breeze FM	209	0.689184	132	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.85E+02	26
Obonu FM	160	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.10E+02	27
Choice FM	96	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	6.62E+01	28
Hot FM	54	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	3.72E+01	29
Atlantis Radio			92	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	2.84E+01	30
Radio VVU		0.689184	34	0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	1.05E+01	31
Top Radio	14	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	9.65E+00	32
Radio Universe	6	0.689184		0.308542		0.001879		0.00036		3.58E-05	4.14E+00	33

Figure 1.5

Questions/Interview Guide

1. Do you have a personal Facebook or Twitter account?
2. Do you have a professional Facebook or Twitter account?
3. Have you ever used Facebook and/or Twitter to source a new story?
4. How do they enhance your job?
5. Do you trust Facebook and Twitter as news sources?
6. Do you think using Facebook and Twitter to source news stories affects journalistic standards? Why/How?
7. Are you active on any other social media networks aside Facebook and Twitter? If yes, which ones do you use? If no, why not?
8. Do these other media also help in doing your job as a radio broadcaster/ journalist?
9. Is there anything that social media adds to your job that traditional media does not?
10. Do you think your organization (or yourself) would have the same success in gathering and reporting the news without social media?
11. Does your organization currently have a social media policy?
12. Are you provided with any resources to enable the effective use of social media?
13. What do you think is the reason for your organization's presence on Facebook and Twitter?
14. Do you think it is important for radio journalists to have a presence on social media?
15. Is social media incorporated in all of your programming?
16. Which do you think is more important for your organization on social media, reporting news stories or engaging your audience?

Letter of Introduction Sent to Radio Stations



4TH February, 2015

To whom it may concern:

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I would be grateful if you could allow **Joseph Amo Nti** of Ashesi University College to conduct a research about your organization. Ashesi University is a four-year undergraduate college offering major studies in Computer Science, Management Information Systems and Business Administration, with a strong liberal arts core curriculum.

As part of our degree requirements, our final year students are required to undertake a Project. These projects entail gathering of information, doing analysis and writing reports about relevant subjects. In order to get data students are encouraged to visit companies, professionals and individuals to gather relevant information needed for their project.

This exercise is purely for academic purposes and has been reviewed and approved by the Ashesi Internal Review Board (IRB) for Human Subject Research which ensures that this project does not infringe on people's rights. I would want to thank you in advance for providing him with the required information. Should you need further information, please do not hesitate to call me on the under-listed phone number alternatively via email at aespio@ashesi.edu.gh.

Yours faithfully,

Anthony Ebow Spio
Head of Department, Business Administration
Ashesi University College
+233 24 286 8237

Sample of Personalized Letter Sent to Radio Stations

Joseph Amo Nti

Ashesi University College

Berekuso- Ghana

4th February, 2015.

Human Resource Department,

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER OF CONSENT

My name is Joseph Amo Nti, a senior at Ashesi University College studying Business Administration. I am currently undertaking a final year project; a study that looks into the role of social media on radio journalism. As part of this project I will like to interview radio journalists in your organization about their daily duties to gain more insight on the topic. All interviews will be recorded with an audio recording device and the names of the respondents will be withheld. If granted the access I will also be sitting in on shows to observe the means by which your broadcasters employ social media in their programming. This will form part of my data collection.

Regards,

Joseph Amo Nti