

Ghanaian Journalists' Perceptions of Political Influence in Radio Journalism in Ghana

**By Joseph Kyei-Boateng
MA in Global Journalism**

NLA University College, Norway

November 2019

ABSTRACT

This study assesses perceptions of political influence as an index in Ghanaian radio journalism through media ownership and related media and communication models on the heels of two research questions. The assessment is borne out of perceptions of political influence many journalists in Ghana have, as affecting the Ghanaian context of radio journalism, which is an area of interest in global journalism – factors influencing professional activities of journalists and news organisations (be it political, economic, social, organisational, etc). Through combined efforts of online survey questionnaires and Skype interviews, the study explores whether there are perceptions of political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism or not by using mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative). If there are such perceptions, the study goes the extra mile to weigh how threatening these perceptions are to journalism as a profession and institution (not compromising professional values) in the Ghanaian media market.

The findings of the study show that a majority of Ghanaian journalists perceive political influence in radio journalism in the Ghana context and convey into the atmosphere of threat to press freedom indirectly through media ownership by direct persons publicly known as politicians and indirect persons (businessmen) or groups affiliated to one political party or the other. Dissenting views expressed through quantitative surveys with journalists and qualitative interviews with media stakeholders are the driving force for a resounding journalistic culture in the Ghanaian media context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I could not hold the reins of this Master thesis without acknowledging the noble efforts of many great minds that supported and encouraged me to achieve this feat.

In quick succession, I would acknowledge the works of my Supervisor (thesis advisor), Prof. Oddgeir Tveiten. He has made quality of time with me, through thick and thin means, all to make sure I produce the best in me for this Thesis. In fact, if I have made it a step further in my academic laurels, he is epitome of this sterling performance.

Prof. Øyvind Økland is my informal boss and great friend. Our friendship dates to country of my origin (Ghana), in 2007 and upon my quest as Ghanaian journalist to seek furtherance of education abroad, Øyvind would not hesitate to encourage me to study in Norway. And here I am today in Kristiansand, Norway, as proud Master of Global Journalism. I am more than grateful to him and his wife, Stenersen Økland for their hospitality as well!

To my Course Co-ordinator, Prof Terje Skjerdal, his directions and pieces of advice could not be forgotten. Just as he wishes all his students go for GOLD, he has been wishing me same – a characteristic, very profound of him.

To my Head of International Relations, Mari Sagulin, she has been more than a boss, a mother and a friend to me. Astri-Birgitt Ekra Grimenæs, has been Acting before Mari took over and she has also been of immense help to me.

To my Head of Journalism, Media and Communication Department, Hilde Kristin Dahlstrøm (Associate Professor) and all College teaching and non-teaching staff, I would say a big thank you for your encouragement and support.

Other family and friends who could not be forgotten too are Terje and Rita Johannesen (Kristiansand) and the entire Ghanaian Community in Kristiansand.

The last big gratitude goes to my Survey Respondents (colleague journalists in Ghana) who helped answer my questionnaire online via their emails and editors and representatives of media related institutions who accepted to be interviewed via Skype. Their feedbacks have rivalled the success of this thesis. I remain grateful to them.

DEDICATION

I am glad to dedicate this Academic Work to my Parents – Francisca Addai and Joseph Boadi. If there would have been any space for Special Dedication, it would have been devoted to my mum, for being Single Parent for decades, it has not been an easy journey. However, the blessings from her reconciliation with my father after several years of marriage breakup, cuddles me from a distance in pursuance to this academic feat.

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ACRONYMS

ABC – American Broadcasting Company
CBS – Columbia Broadcasting System
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
CPP – Convention People’s Party
EIB - Excellence In Broadcasting Network Limited
FES - Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FCC - Federal Communications Commission
GBC - Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GIBA – Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association
GJA – Ghana Journalists Association
IFJ – International Federation of Journalists
IREX – International Research and Exchanges Board
NBC - National Broadcasting Company
NCA - National Communications Authority
NDC – National Democratic Congress
NMC - National Media Commission
NPP – New Patriotic Party
NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data
MFWA – Media Foundation for West Africa
MOM - Media Ownership Monitor
MSI - Media Sustainability Index
PNDC - Provisional National Defence Council
PPP – Progressive People’s Party
RCA – Radio Corporation of America
RTI – Right to Information
RSF – Rapporteurs Sans Frontiers
UDR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK – United Kingdom
US – United States

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globally, journalism (especially radio) has gone through many paradigms, possibly due to environmental changes and different phases of political regimes – dating to pre and post-World Wars. John Reith had introduced radio journalism in 1920 in Great Britain (after the first world war, 1914-1918). However, what is significant is that journalists from the local through the national to international levels produce their best to contribute to democracy and development. “Journalists ask whether their country or other country is a well-ordered society” (Ward, 2010). In view of this, politics has come to stay with many societies. And for the fact that governments are representatives of the people and governments emerge from political parties, journalistic watchdog role comes to play.

The journalistic watchdog role emanates from the feature of the media being the Fourth Estate of the Realm, coming after the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature. This gives the media power in the sense that members of the public (mass media receivers) could air their views freely through the mass media various outlets including radio. In many societies, especially, in remote and most deprived economic environments, radio is undoubtedly the best medium of communication when television channels are not accessible, and newspaper is not within the reach of the people.

Political parties and politicians are riding on the whims and caprices within their power to use the media (in this case, journalists) to propagate their agenda, philosophies or ideals. This comes in the index of political influence. Throughout Ghana’s history, relations between the media and government, have varied from regime to regime (Anokwa, 1997; Yankah, 1997; Asante, 1996).

Most of these governmental regimes have tended to excessively control the media and use them as their mouthpieces to propagate their political agenda (Anokwa, 1997; Asante, 1996; Ansah, 1991). And the Ghanaian context whereby governments use the media for their ideals

cannot be mentioned without the premier, Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah (first President of Ghana).

But arguably, whatever the political terrain may be, Journalists must be free to work without threat, being it physical or abstract to be able to “conduct difficult investigations into what lies below the surface of the daily news – the economic and political structures that are the framework for our lives” (Ward, 2010). In matters of political influence, both media practitioners, especially journalists and their audiences are privy to certain perceptions that are in variance to journalistic practices. The independent way for journalists to go about their professional duties, when compromised, will be detrimental to press freedom and journalism as a profession.

In this vein, this study assesses perceptions Journalists in Ghana have on political influence narrowed to radio journalism in Ghana. And though many questions could be asked for such this assessment, the study focuses on two key research questions and they are asked to help achieve the study objective.

Media ownership (in the light of political and commercial ownership) as the key research theory and other relevant theories and communication models are reviewed alongside the research questions in variables that generate data through mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative).

Whether political or commercial ownership, interest of those who finance media organisations could not be overemphasised. And Altschull who developed media ownership theory in 1984 argues “the content of the press is directly correlated with the interests of those who finance the press” (Maheshwari, 2015).

This suggests that many media practitioners (journalists, for the purpose of this study) operate their professional activities under the mercy of the owners of the media organisations they work for. And that Doyle (2002) describes media ownership as one of the tools used by media owners to control their workers. This description best fits into this study on the wings of media ownership theory where politicians or businessmen and groups who are aligned to one political party or the other, own radio stations in Ghana. Their interests are undoubtedly

the desirable tools used to control journalists working for them – some sort of professional compromises come to play. Such description in another breadth, provides merit for the two research questions of this study.

On media ownership, Ben Haig Bagdikian (1920-2016) as Armenian-American Journalist, news media critic, commentator and university professor has been noted for his criticisms on news media (Rubens, 2011). He is one guy whose name cannot be forgotten when rolling the rope on media ownership in media scholarly works. His book: “The Media Monopoly” (originally published in 1983 and updated in 2004) has served as impetus in ownership discussions and Bagdikian has been hailed by Robert W. McChesney for his ethical standards and being described as one of the finest journalists of the 20th century.

He (Bagdikian) seems to commensurate with Altschull for developing the theory of media ownership. However, Bagdikian’s criticism on ownership stemming from media monopoly contributes to the repertoire of ideas on media concentration (pluralism), especially, Radio journalism that have characterised the airwaves since the 20th and 21st Centuries (Rubens, 2011).

This characteristic of media pluralism is manifested in the Ghanaian context in the era of the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1992. And this has since provided fertile grounds for many media organisations to operate in Ghana. Radio journalism has been the fabric of the Ghanaian society in shaping the daily public discourse. In Ghana every conversation among individuals, they form their own public opinions. Globalisation is transforming the society and generation of ideas through political debates in media circles, offer the people public discourse to strengthen the Ghanaian public sphere (Cho, 2010).

As the days go by, many journalists around the globe have had varied perceptions of both internal and external factors that affect their professional duties. One of these factors that this study focuses on among Ghanaian practising journalists, is political influence. An index which is seen as hemlock to journalism both as an institution and as a profession.

Perception is one of the key elements that holds the overarching themes of this study together. In conceptual definitions, Oxford dictionary defines Perception as “the ability to hear, see or become aware of something through the senses” and also “the way in which something is regarded understood or interpreted”. Each of these two definitions makes sense to this body of study on the backdrop that Ghanaian journalists’ ability to become aware of political influence (“something”) on Ghanaian radio journalism through their “senses” – possibly, their mental representation. And this part of definition brings to the fore, the research objective and as well, builds the research questions.

The second part of the definition is no loose rope – it gives an understanding trend to the way in which political influence (“something”) is “understood” or “interpreted” by Ghanaian journalists. This answers the two research questions showing that journalists working in politically-owned radio stations in Ghana perceive political influence in their various media organisations and they feel threatened as much as press freedom is at stake.

Merriam-Webster dictionary for its part, views perception from different shapes as “Observation”, as “a Concept” (mental image of something), as “Consciousness” though obsolete, as “physical sensation interpreted in the light of experience” and “a capacity for comprehension”. The experiences of journalists and representatives of media stakeholders have been purposively selected through both quantitative and qualitative to provide data and their responses to questions drive towards the level of perceptions they have on political influence as long as radio journalism in Ghana is concerned.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia has it that Perception from the Latin “Perceptio” is the “organisation, identification and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the presented information or the environment”. Wikipedia gives two processes of Perception but the second process which arguably makes a lot of sense to this discussion is “processing which is connected with a person’s concepts and expectations (or knowledge), restorative and selective mechanisms (such as attention) that influence perception”. And that since the rise of Experimental Psychology in the 19th

Century, “Psychology’s understanding of perception has progressed by combining a variety of techniques” (Gregory, 1987 in Wikipedia).

One of the techniques of Experimental Psychology applicable to this study is commemorated in the Concept of Radio Journalism in Ghana and how journalists and journalism stakeholders in the country translate this concept into Expectations as political influence come their way. And discussing the future of Ghanaian Radio Journalism alongside the perceptions of quantitative survey respondents and qualitative interviewees through data gathering cannot be left off the hook.

Media autonomy or independence is viewed by many scholars as a “hallmark of professionalism”. Its core insistence is also seen as “one of self-rule without interference from politics and business”. Interference such as political influence, either internal or external, autonomy or independence must work itself into a collective level that would create “a normative bulwark” against such factors (Carlson, 2017).

Waisbord (2000) also wades into this discourse on media independence that “journalists as individuals and journalism as institution need to be autonomous in order to execute their function in a democracy”. Journalists who wish to encourage democratisation in their societies have adopted autonomy or independence as their ideal. And in the Ghanaian context, journalists working in radio outlets would need to whip up political influence, control it than being controlled by it to be able to hold in high esteem such an ideal of professional duty.

In the Ghanaian media market, it may be challenging a bit in the face of market-based economic reforms that seek to liberalise the media economic environment, especially in cases where businessmen, groups or politicians own many radio outlets. Though political influence may limit press freedom and curtail media autonomy (independence), journalists working in such radio outlets in Ghana are confronted with the challenge to battle any potential interest that comes as a setback. Seeing political influence as a setback to professional duty alone in itself could be a viable attempt to protect the sanctity of radio journalism in the West African State (Ghana).

Political Influence seen as obstruction of journalistic autonomy in news organisation is given a major attention in this study. And how journalists working in Ghana perceive such influence with its complementing consequences stand the test of time to be assessed alongside the research questions and media ownership as the main theory of this study.

1.1 Research Statement

Apart from a few state-owned electronic and print media, it is common knowledge that most of the private media stations in Ghana are either owned by politicians or persons who are openly identified with one political party or the other. It is observed that the private media outlets owned by politicians are aligned to the two major political parties – ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the largest opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) with a few being owned by the founder of the Progressive People’s Party (PPP), Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom.

In daily operations of these politically-owned media stations, they are likely to be influenced by the dictates or philosophy of their station owners, thereby, affecting Journalism. In “Journalism Today”, Jane L. Chapman and Nick Nuttall (2011) explain Journalism has undergone metamorphosis and that the “historical antecedents for many of the issues that concern journalists and the media today” are their significance to democracy and development.

Journalism (media), however, as a tool for development (Sparks, 2007) is expected to exert enough energy to change lives (society) for the best without fear, intimidation or interference from political demarcations. Radio stations owned by politicians are believed to be used to propagate the agenda of the owners, a move seen as an affront to Journalism at both national and global levels (Atarah, 2014). Like the audiences, this makes many journalists in the profession form their own perceptions on political influence on radio journalism in Ghana.

“Ironically, the largely unregulated media sector threatens journalistic freedom because powerful media owners, who are often editors-in-chief, undermine freedom because some of them dictate what should be published or broadcast in their media, according to Affail Monney, President of the 1,500-strong Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)”, (Atarah, 2014)

1.2 Background to the Study

Perception could be true or false, but it plays a key role in ideological functioning. However, in perception process, “selection, organisation and interpretation” are three factors that play key roles (Dahl, 2013). In media studies, the audience have always resorted to their own perceptions of news and other programmes that are run in the media, especially on radio, for the purpose of this study. Radio tends to be more accessible source of news than tv and print (according to Afrobarometer) and 56% of Ghanaians rely on radio as their main source of news (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018).

Apart from audience perceptions, Journalists or media practitioners themselves also have their own perceptions of how journalism is done in media outlets and other media programmes run by themselves or other colleagues and the influences therein; one of the influences which is perceived to be political (Hanitzsch, et al, 2010).

Observably, journalism has become one of the growing industries in Ghana and has attracted the interest of Ghanaian businessmen. It is also observed that most commercial media outlets are owned by businessmen some of whom are also politicians. For this reason, it is observed that many newspaper, radio and television stations are owned directly or indirectly by politicians as a means of using communication as business, after all, “Societies increasingly depend on means of public communication”, (Hanitzsch, et al 2010).

Radio, has been focused-on for the purpose of this study on the backdrop that comparatively, radio in Ghana just as in America, has more audiences than newspaper and television (Vogt, 2016), capturing both the elite and non-elite classes, especially in a society like Ghana where it is common knowledge that majority of radio stations use local dialects as means of communication and 56% of the Ghanaian population, relying on radio as their main source of news (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018).

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana guarantees freedom and independence of the media at Chapter 12 (Articles 162 to 173) though the media had been gagged in early independence era of Ghana.

Ghana's media landscape has had to adapt to different political regimes after suffering military dictatorship rather than civilian rule, though the country prides herself as Africa's first to have gained independence on the continent in 1957. Fortunately, however, media outlets in Ghana, particularly radio stations have increased following liberalisation of the airwaves in 1992 to give rise to media pluralism. In 2001, criminal libel law was repealed by the then ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) government which sought to strengthen independence of the media in Ghana (Ampomah, 2011).

Current data from the National Media Commission (NMC) and the National Communications Authority (NCA) show that there are registered 136 newspapers, 505 radios and 117 television stations aside online portals. However, 367 radio stations are currently operational or active with 14 tv and 32 print media outlets being operational (according to National Communications Authority, 2017)

Some of the radio stations owned by politicians which are of public knowledge are Radio Gold, Oman fm, Starr fm, Radio XYZ, Class media (Greater Accra Region), Ashh fm, Ultimate fm, Abusua fm, Kessben fm, Angel fm, Zuria fm, (Ashanti Region), Success fm (Brong Ahafo Region), Diamond fm, Filla fm, Mighty fm, (Northern Region), Ahomka fm (Central Region) and W Fm (Upper West Region). For example, Radio Gold, Radio XYZ are known to be full time mouthpieces of the opposition NDC whereas Oman fm and its sister station Ashh fm are also known to be full time mouthpieces of the ruling NPP. The founder of PPP, Dr Kwesi Nduom is brain behind Ahomka fm.

A former Chairman of the NMC, Kabral Blay-Amihere, had expressed disgust at the opening of a West African Conference on Investigative Journalism in Accra on Wednesday, October

10, 2018 that the situation where Politicians own media organisations in Ghana has the potential to become a threat to press freedom (Bokpe, 2018).

“If you look at the more than 400 radio and television stations in Ghana, it looks good for media pluralism, but a lot of them are owned by politicians or their surrogates. It does a lot to affect the integrity of the media”, former NMC Chairman stated.

The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) was established as a national umbrella body to steer the affairs of the Ghanaian media community with support from related bodies like the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), the Editors’ Forum, etc. to help breathe life into journalism practice in the country. The GJA was established in 1949 and in 1994 on July 27 in Sunyani, the capital of Brong Ahafo Region; the GJA adopted the GJA Code of Ethics (17 Articles) with support from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES Ghana). However, the GJA Code of Ethics was reviewed in 2016 and 24 Guidelines were adopted. The guidelines have been reviewed to suit the new media, especially, (online journalism) and social media.

The GJA Code of Ethics was developed to serve as a “ready guide and is applicable to members of the association in the state-owned, private media and freelance journalists”. (GJA Code of Ethics, 1994). The code provides the framework that ensures that practising journalists (including those working in media stations owned by politicians) adhere to the highest “ethical standards, professional competence and good behaviour in carrying out their duties”.

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

Ghana’s Parliament has passed the Right to Information (RTI) Bill into Law (Tuesday March 26, 2019) with the law expected to be a major credential to Ghana’s democracy (Kobina, 2019). On Press Freedom, Ghana has been one of the best on the African Continent in recent years. In the 2016 and 2017 World Press Freedom Indexes released by the RSF, Ghana has

remained at the second position with Namibia occupying first position in the African ranking. They are followed by Cabo Verde, South Africa and Burkina Faso in the 3rd, 4th and 5th positions (RSF, 2018).

However, in the 2018 ranking, Ghana pulls a surprise string when she rides on a horse skin to climb to the first position in the Africa ranking also released by RSF. Namibia, South Africa, Cabo Verde and Burkina Faso follow in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th positions. In the World Ranking, Ghana still surges ahead to the 23rd position out of the 180 positions, leaving countries like UK, US, Latvia, Spain, France, Cyprus, Slovakia and sister African countries behind in the index (RSF, 2018). This is in congruence to what some scholars in journalism argue about that quality journalism thrives on training and development of professional journalists, emphasising professionalism (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

Journalists, of whom those in Ghana are of no exception, are required to exhibit professionalism through fairness and balance irrespective of the political background of the source of the story, after all, Hallin and Mancini (2004) have looked at Political Parallelism as one of the dimensions to media system.

This would in turn, make journalism seek to promote democracy and development in modern society where the world views Journalism as a tool for development (Sparks, 2007). People who are concerned about development issues see the media as tool for development and thus, find ways in communication through the mass media that could be used to enhance development.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study has the necessary data collected from Ghana through mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) and this is significant, by adding to the body of knowledge in global journalism research. Findings of the study and the accompanying discussions are expected to assist media scholars and global journalism researchers to evaluate the perceptions journalists in Ghana have on

political influence as far as Ghanaian radio journalism is concerned and just as media professionalism and autonomy are much important.

The study is expected to serve as a source of reference point for media stakeholders in Ghana and others elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa and even beyond on the index of political influence. It is also expected to assist the Ghanaian national media association, the Ghana Journalists' Association (GJA) and other media related public institutions, including the NMC and the NCA to make informed decisions on media ownership alongside relationship between journalistic watchdog role and political influence. It is anticipated that the body of academic research revolving around perception could help make myriad of informed decisions in journalism education.

Free and Independent media is one of the sure ways of promoting human development (Abdellatif, 2003) thereby holding public officials accountable on behalf of the citizenry. By far, it is significant that this study outlines the positive role that Ghanaian radio journalism plays to increase the fortunes of Ghana and influences the perception of media practitioners in that context towards the enhancement of media watchdog role in independent way.

1.4 Motivation of the Study

The data generated from this study has applicable materials from the Ghanaian media framework to the global framework. The study motivates that Ghana is arguably a modern society in the comity of nations and that the Ghanaian media market would need research to identify certain bottlenecks in journalism as a profession (radio journalism in particular) and addressing them with the applicable solutions for development (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018).

A study of this nature is anticipated to encourage scholarly journalistic works in third world countries including Ghana. Furtherance to this motivation would be the extent to which ownership theory has been subsumed into the research methodology in relation to the questions to achieve the study objective.

1.5 Research Objective

The objective of this study is to assess perceptions of political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism. This brings to mind four cardinal points of the study: assessment, perception, political influence and radio journalism in Ghana. And the research objective could be achieved when the research questions are answered through the proper methods of data collection in combination with the relevant media theory and media models.

1.6 Research Questions

Looking at the research objective, there are a lot of questions that could be asked to complement the quest of the study to acquire data. However, these two questions are relatively important to the development of the study.

RQ1. To what extent do Ghanaian journalists in perceive political influence in radio journalism?

RQ2. To what extent do the journalists perceive political influence as a threat to radio journalism?

Perceptions among the Ghanaian media fraternity for the purpose of this study, are measured within the research questions above. And the research questions have been carefully designed in rhetoric to match the study objective, its theory and methodology. The research questions are focal points to measure the tools of a research design (Bryman, 2016). There could be other related questions such as: what is the ownership structure of Ghanaian radio? Does the ownership structure of radio stations in Ghana negatively affect the watchdog role of the media? In what ways, does radio ownership peel-out press freedom in Ghana?

Creswell (2013) explains how research questions could not stand alone but are closely linked to the frameworks of a research design. They are preparatory characteristics and embodiment of successful study.

1.7 Summary

In this chapter, it is established that the media in Ghana enjoys enough press freedom following freedom of expression guaranteed in the 1992 Constitution and the Liberalisation of the Airwaves that gives rooms for plural media (since 1992). Several Radio stations have sprung up, majority of whom are private and owned by politicians or businessmen who are aligned to one political party or the other. It is perceived that the owners are directly or indirectly using their news organisations for political ideals.

The ownership pattern of the radio stations has raised eye brows culminating in perceptions of political influence – perceptions on both sides of media audiences and practitioners. This study focuses on perceptions of media practitioners (journalists) in Ghana, West Africa on the index of political influence. This study as the objective states, is to measure the perceptions among the Ghanaian media fraternity through mixed methods – quantitative and qualitative which are critically brought to bear in Chapter three and discusses radio ownership through Ownership Theory in the next Chapter (Chapter Two) alongside review of related Literature.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/ LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the main theory for the study (media ownership) and some related theoretical frameworks within the borders of global journalism which are relevant to the study.

The chapter also reviews media models relevant to the research questions and the significance of the study on the backdrop that journalism has gone through different paradigms and interests into democratisation of journalistic roles are growing as the days go by. Media Ownership theory and Three Models of Media & Politics are reviewed with relevant modern references.

A brief background information on the Ghana media situation (the Ghana Public Sphere) is given its deserving attention within the reins of media ownership, in attempt to strike the difference between political and commercial ownership. After all, there is no apparent meaning to the research objective and corresponding research questions except they are closely linked to the research theory, which is Media Ownership.

Ben Haig Bagdikian (1920-2016) as Armenian-American Journalist, news media critic, commentator and university professor has been noted for his criticisms on news media (Rubens, 2011).

His warnings about concentration of corporate ownership of media organisations in his book “The Media Monopoly” (originally published in 1983 and updated in 2004) has gone through several editions which has also influenced many writers including Noam Chomsky. Bagdikian has been hailed by Robert W. McChesney for his ethical standards and described him (Bagdikian) as one of the finest journalists of the 20th century.

In relations between government and the media, Bagdikian criticises media monopoly that has characterised the news media terrain. And that if his 1983 work suggested 50 corporate entities “exerted too much influence and control over the politics and economics of the media”, then Bagdikian tend to make a lot of sense when he asserts that the trend has

worsened on the whims and caprices of what he calls the “five global dimension firms, operating with the many of the characteristics of a cartel, own most of the newspapers, magazines, book publishers, motion picture studios and radio and television stations in the United States” (Rubens, 2011). For Bagdikian on the news media monopoly, though many of the firms in the cartel tend to critique government interference in media markets, the extent of ownership is that of “communication power” that exceeds world’s greatest dictatorships historically.

More so, Rubens (2011), expands on Bagdikian new media monopoly that “political leaders and parties know that the new media control how politicians are depicted to the voting public...politicians treat the country’s most powerful media corporations with something approaching reverence”. Meanwhile, Bagdikian certainly expects media ownership to impose its views not views from afar (politicians influencing news or media practitioners through ownership).

In the “New Media Monopoly” (2004), Bagdikian being joined by Den Emeritus explicitly emerges from ideas on media that are influential to the understanding of the dangers of corporate consolidation of democracy and marketplace of ideas. This is not forgetting his earlier criticism (1983) that bordered on the warnings of the “chilling effects of corporate ownership and mass advertising” on the media institution in America as a nation. Bagdikian’s criticism on the media monopoly in his book could be arguably touted as the “most respected critique of modern mass media ever” and as the first great media book of the twenty-first century as Robert McChesney describes.

Library Journal (in Reviews of New Media Monopoly, 2014) explains that the media ownership worldwide since the last three decades has been increasingly concentrated in fewer and larger media corporations. And citing the media industry in America as example, the number of conglomerates has declined from 50 in the 1980s to 10 or 5, in line with the ownership structure of the media market globally.

Drake (2017) outlines Bagdikian’s works, explaining that concentration of ownership did not just begin ten years ago. It has its roots back in 1919 when the Radio Corporation of America

(RCA) was formed as umbrella monopoly under which “General Electric, Westinghouse, AT&T, and the United Fruit Company agreed to divide the newly emerging radio market among themselves” and that National Broadcasting Company (NBC) was their radio network.

He continues that Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), now United Independent Broadcasters, Inc CBS, did not start until 1927, seven years after John Reith founded radio in Britain, and that it wasn’t until 1943 that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) compelled RCA to divest itself of one of its radio networks, thus creating American Broadcasting Company (ABC).

Halper & Clarke (2004) write on the views of the rights and refers to neo-conservatives as a new political interest group who are also prolific writers who acknowledge “canonical texts are in short supply”. One example of neo-Conservatives is Irving Kristol who accepts the title “godfather” of neo-conservatism and prefers to describe neo-conservatism as “persuasion”. Neo-conservatism as a movement or persuasion is not enough for public views on the right. Corporate media ownership adds the tally of shaping public opinions or views on the rights of people in society. Some Corporate media around the world, for example, Fox News, the Weekly Standard and the London Times are under the same ownership. And that media ownership has led to some homogenisation of “views on the right” (Halper & Clarke, 2004).

2.1 Research Questions

There are two research questions for this study, and each helps to build the study objective alongside the theory. These questions are the fulcrum of the theoretical framework and theories are reviewed in synch with the questions (Bryman, 2016).

The first Research Question (RQ): to what extent do journalists perceive political influence radio journalism? brings in the power of journalists’ perception. It helps make Media Ownership theory more meaningful. And how this theory makes such research question relevant. This also helps the study to find out whether the element of ownership reflects a perceived political agenda that underpins journalism in Ghanaian Radio journalism.

The second RQ: to what extent do the journalists feel threatened by political influence? also tries to establish whether journalists working in radio stations feel threatened by political pressure either from the incumbent or the opposition party. The threat may be viewed as not physical but abstract that provides a breeding ground for journalism to crawl – journalists not delivering their best due to certain dictates of political ideals from their owners (bosses). Journalists must be free to work without threat, being it physical or abstract to be able to “conduct difficult investigations into what lies below the surface of the daily news – the economic and political structures that are the framework for our lives” (Ward, 2010).

Ward (2010) also elaborates on global media ethics by digging into John Rawl’s theories of justice and of the human good which in one way or the other conforms with the aims of journalism practice, one of which is objectivity. And for that matter, objectivity as one of the professional duties among journalists in relation to a study on perceptions of political influence remains a critical issue.

This shows the Research Questions are fundamental to the theoretical framework as well as the objective of the study which is to “assess perceptions of political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism”.

2.2 Ghana Media Situation

Jurgen Habermas (2015) explains that public sphere is how exchange of ideas takes place. And that media is the public sphere where people acquire knowledge and information with the audiences holding media practitioners to the marrow in exercising public accountability.

In Ghana, every conversation among individuals, they form their own public opinions. Globalisation is transforming the society and generation of ideas through political debates in media circles, offer the people public discourse to strengthen the Ghanaian public sphere (Cho, 2010). Max-Wirth (2015) writes that it is common to find in the Ghanaian Public Sphere, the relationship between rumour and politics – how many political leaders use rumours, positive and mostly negative to discredit their political opponents in the mass media. And the danger is that, these rumours rampant in the media, especially, in radio media activities, serve as source of news and to a larger extent, influences the Ghanaian electorate’s choice of a

political leader. But robust media is dependent on participatory freedoms that enhance democracy with the media providing platforms for communication between the government and the people (Student Works, Duke Law School, 2013).

To strengthen the Ghana communication process, the GJA has formed nationwide coalition with many interested parties including OccupyGhana on the passage of Right to Information (RTI) bill into law by Ghana Parliament. And the bill has subsequently being passed into law after receiving the assent of the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Danwka Akufo-Addo. The RTI will among other benefits, enhance dissemination and gathering of information among journalists, media practitioners in entirety. By far, it will enhance the fight against corruption menace and promote national development. (IFJ, 2018)

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) since its inception in 1926 has been the global voice of journalists and world's largest organisation of journalists (representing 600, 000 journalists from 187 unions and associations in more than 140 countries), also shares some thoughts on the RTI. The General Secretary of IFJ, Anthony Bellanger, is quoted as saying that: "The passing of this law is well overdue, and we call on the legislators in Ghana to act urgently and show their commitment of media freedom and access to information". (IFJ, 2018).

The RTI is now a legal document working in Ghana and this applause could be attributed not only to Ghana's Parliament but in the annals of the books of Ghana's media situation, the high-level public sphere. RTI Law now operating in Ghana aids the media or journalist community in the country to map up a highly-developed communication structure that "provides ever-growing capacity for citizen journalism and public deliberations but provokes government attempts at control" (Dai & Reese, 2008).

The influence or control from government, obviously political, affects the ownership power of the various media stations, especially, the radio stations. The fourth annual study by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) on Media Sustainability Index (MSI) of African countries (about 41 countries) including Ghana shows that the West African state, Ghana is moving "inexorably closer to the sustainability on the MSI scale". And that the MSI panellists have cited the strength of Ghana media's legislation and supporting of regulations

as viable for creating the “proper foundation for pluralistic and sustainable media for an overall progressive verdict on the MSI scale”. (IREX, 2010).

One of the indicators that IREX uses to scale media practitioners for MSI is professional journalism. “Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption” (IREX, 2010). And this explains in review that if pay levels of journalists are low, it encourages corruption and political influence is easy to permeate into the rank and file of the media practice in Ghana, especially radio journalism. There are linkages between journalism (mass media) and politics of Gold Coast (Colonial Ghana). The media played a seminal role in Ghana’s struggle for independence which resulted in the total liberation and emancipation of country from colonial rule. Thus, the media has been a powerful tool in the independence of Ghana (Amoakohene, 2007).

Not only in Ghana; throughout Africa, the mass media have been used as a powerful tool to either ensure the practice of democracy or safeguard their practice from abuse (Amoakohene, 2007). After independence in 1957, Ghana’s premier, Dr Kwame Nkrumah succeeds his political regime with his Convention People’s Party (CPP). It continues through the unconstitutional years of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) led by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings and touches on other short-lived regimes until it reaches the Constitutional regime of Rawlings’ later National Democratic Congress (NDC) in 1992. And Ghana has been running democratic regimes since 1992 between the NDC and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) till now. Not forgetting that John Agyekum Kufour had led the NPP to assume power in 2000 and ended his two-term in 2008. John Evans Atta-Mills of the NDC took over as President from 2009 but unfortunately died from ill-health and was succeeded by his Vice, John Dramani Mahama who also won as President on the ticket of the NDC in 2012 till 2016. Incumbent Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo brought the NPP back to power when he won the December 2016 presidential elections and has been President till now (2019).

Ghana’s democracy is seen as a hybrid of North America and British Westminster models combining constitutionalism, participation and representation at both national and local levels. And Ghana’s system of democracy practice makes the mass media as both actors and facilitators (Amoakohene, 2007).

The National Media Commission (NMC) is one of the independent Constitutional bodies alongside the Judiciary that have made the power of the media effective. McQuail (2000) helps provide a list of mediation roles and functions of the mass media perceived to be played in society. And the Ghana Media Organisations are media seen as “a window on events and experience”, “a mirror of events in society and the world”, “a filter or gatekeeper”, “a signpost, guide or interpreter”, “a forum or platform for the presentation of information and ideas” and “interlocutor or informed partner in conversation” (McQuail, 2000). This scholarly framework has given birth to the rise of media outlets in Ghana today, especially, radio and democratic-political regimes have observably, ridden on the skins of a powerful mass media.

Before radio, newspaper was introduced and used as political tool and also a tool for the dissemination of information (Anokwa, 1997; Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998). Newspapers were used to organise and galvanise the people to fight to liberate Ghana from colonialism during the struggle for independence by Kwame Nkrumah and his allies (Ansah, 1991). However, in the 1990s, following Freedom of the Media as enshrined in Article 164 of the 1992 Constitution, “the period of transition from the Rawlings years of dictatorship to a democratic republic” (Ampaw, 2004) has witnessed greater media involvement in Politics. And Radio is essential tool in this regard.

Throughout Ghana’s history, relations between the media and government, have varied from regime to regime (Anokwa, 1997; Yankah, 1997; Asante, 1996). Most of these governmental regimes have tended to excessively control the media and use them as their mouthpieces to propagate their political agenda (Anokwa, 1997; Asante, 1996; Ansah, 1991).

During the Unconstitutional Rule under the PNDC (1982-1992), the Ghanaian media encountered what is termed as “Culture of Silence” with the promulgation of the Newspaper Licencing Law (PNDC Law 211) which curtailed journalism practices. Journalists could not experience freedom of expression as it is today. And the “Culture of Silence” has been defined mainly as “an anti-democratic and anti-freedom of expression communication” (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1999-2001). This made many practising Ghanaian journalists, mostly in Radio and Newspaper practice, harbour fear and went about their professional activities in panic reaction.

Culture of Silence as a concept recalls the belief of Ghana's Premier, Dr Kwame Nkrumah that the kind of free expression "which established democracies have taken generations to evolve" (Nkrumah, 1963).

It could also be recalled that during much of Ghana's post-independence history, the media have been under the monopoly and control of the government (Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998). And this makes the National Communications Authority (NCA) use the terms "The State-owned media" and "Government Media" interchangeably – Media outlets owned by the public". There is only one State-owned or government radio in Ghana which is called the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). However, the media in Ghana (including the GBC) are critical to the realisation of the ideals of Ghana's democracy (Amoakohene, 2007).

The media would therefore monitor the extent to which people's right to free speech, free expression, free movement, free association and equal opportunities to the various sectors of the Ghanaian economy including Education, Employment, Health, among others are respected (Ansah, 1991). After all, the Ghanaian media have been instrumental in safeguarding the democratic principles of the country (Ayee, 2001) thereby playing vital roles in both the historical and socio-political development of the country (Frimpong-Ansah, 1991; Gyimah-Boadi, 1999/2000; Smith & Temin, 2001). To reinforce this, Ghana's media till today have been termed the "Fourth Estate" to the trio Arms of Government: Executive (Presidency), Legislature (Parliament) and Judiciary (the Law Courts) with much expected from the independent or autonomous wings of flying journalism (media watchdog role at play here).

2.3 Ownership Theory

Journalism practice around the globe operates within certain parameters or frameworks that make the practice an acceptable profession. For this study, ownership theory best suits the objective that helps the methodology to answer the research questions. Media ownership theory espouses journalists' reliance on certain political cloaks as sources and dominant ideologies that all work in synergy to promote the interest or information of a person, class or group of people (Lorimer and Scannell, 1994).

Maheshwari (2015) writes that the theory of media ownership was developed by Altschull in 1984 and Altschull posits that “the content of the press is directly correlated with the interests of those who finance the press” with Doyle (2002) describing media ownership as one of the tools used by media owners to control their workers. In a related development, Shoemaker and Reese (1991) also posit that the owners of media organisations have ultimate power over the news content of their media organisations. The two scholars write that news organisations that are financed primarily by “interest” sources are far less likely to place value on objectivity and newsworthiness.

Apart from the GBC that is a state-owned broadcaster, all other radio stations in Ghana are either single-handedly owned by an individual or a group of shareholders (RSF, 2017). This means the stations are commercial entities operated by individuals linked or affiliated to one political party or the other.

McChesney’s (2003) assessment is that social and political theory hold that communication system is a cornerstone of modern society. Communication and information have become a key component of marketisation process and the two, have developed as a tool for media organisations. And the general marketisation process in media circles has developed rapidly over the last few decades (Philo and Miller, 2000).

On the skins of Economic Theory, there could be views on development of messages and media content, private ownership has contributed immensely. However, culture diversity is stimulated through cultural diversity on the platforms of these private plural media. Arguably, ugly, these privately-owned media organisations through private ownership are likely to raise the problem of devaluation of fundamental social and cultural values of the society (McChesney & Schiller, 2003). The media as the fourth estate of the realm, assumes certain characteristics and central to this media role is the belief that journalists should carry out investigative and watchdog role on behalf of the public (Waisbord, 2000 cited in Jibril, 2013).

Liberal theorists have argued that the existence of “unfettered and independent press” is essential to the process of democratisation (Whitten-Woodring, 2009) and that independent media enhances the exercise of freedom of expression which obviously may not be the case for the environment in private media ownership, where owners with their political inclination influence media decisions or agenda setting a great deal.

Jebril (2013) writes that watchdog journalism finds expression in an objective, factual and reporting style, and that as playing this role on behalf of members of the public (the citizens), it requires a lot of more neutral energies to excel. Freedom of expression and information as an element is recognised as a basic unit of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (Shardow, 2015) of which media ownership (either local/national or foreign) comes to mind.

Article 19 of the 1948 UDHR states that: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any medium and regardless of frontiers”. The classical liberal school focuses on the freedom of the press to publish or broadcast the material they please with the media mediating between all groups of society (Curran, 1996 cited in Becker, English & Vlad, 2010) culminating in the influence of political owners of media outlets.

Lowenstein (1970) as a Scholar posits that press freedom prevails when the media has full independence with the media being critical on all sects of people including those within the government machinery without fear or intimidation. Weaver (2010) identifies three elements of press freedom: the relative absence of government restraints on the media, relative absence of non-governmental restraints and the existence of conditions to free dissemination of ideas and opinions to large audience.

2.3.1 Local Ownership (Public, Private, Role of the State)

In July 2017 on the website of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), it was announced and previewed of a collaboration between the MFWA and the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) of a stakeholder forum on media ownership in Ghana. The forum which was subsequently held in Accra on July 25, 2017 presented a report on research findings of media ownership in Ghana. The project was titled: “Media Ownership Monitor” and a website to the effect of the monitor was also launched at the forum. (MFWA, 2017).

The background is essential to issues regarding who owns media outlets in Ghana, the overarching power of these owners and who or what are the institutions responsible for regulating these outlets. The kind of mid-posture between the watchdog and lapdog concepts is owing principally to the uncertainty of their operational environment (Boafo, 1985; Anokwa, 1997). And the media have tried to play the watchdog role during civilian administrations (Boafo, 1988; Blay-Amihere & Alabi, 1996). And the same Ghanaian media, on the other hand, have played the lapdog role out of genuine fear of their lives (Boafo, 1985).

The Media Ownership Monitor (MOM) in Ghana reveals that market leaders for radio in Ghana differ from one region to the other, cropping up with different media outlets nationwide. The MOM shows a medium level of audience concentration on radio for four market leaders of the Despite Group of Companies, Multimedia Group, TV3 Network and the state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). These four, together deliver news of 44.8% of the listenership (RSF, 2017).

The high-level of political ownership in Ghanaian media outlets is viewed from Newspaper through Television to Radio. Two examples of radio organisation owners from the two major political parties in Ghana (NPP and NDC) are that Stella Wilson Agyepong who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Oman fm, a pro-NPP radio station with other sister stations across the country, has direct links to her husband, Kennedy Agyepong who is a Member of Parliament on the ticket of the NPP and party financier as well; whereas a former Minister of Finance and Economic Planning in the NDC administration, Dr Kwabena Dufour is the owner of Starr fm of the Excellence In Broadcasting Network Limited, EIB (RSF, 2017).

One element vital for this theory in the local domain is that the MOM finds that media ownership information (data) studied on a third of the Ghanaian media outlets has been inconsistent between the Registrar General's Department and the National Communications Authority (RSF, 2017). Scarcity and incomplete ownership information as a result of conflict of interest between politics and ownership portrays a weak regulatory system in Ghanaian radio journalism. "No safeguards are in place to prevent or curb media concentration or inhibit political control over media ownership" (RSF, 2017).

RSF (2017) also quotes the Executive Director of MFWA, Sulemana Braimah that "The results of the Media Ownership Monitor emphasise again that the passage of a Broadcasting Law that provides both safeguards against media is long overdue. This project sets the tone for an informed debate on the next steps to be taken". And it makes a lot of sense on local media ownership within certain parameters: if the audiences would be able to evaluate the reliability and credibility of information of a radio stations by the owner; if journalists could work efficiently when they know who controls the information they provide and if media authorities would be able to address excessive media concentration by identifying owners of the various operating media outlets. After all, conflict of interest between media owners and politics coupled with a weak regulatory system pose a threat to press freedom in Ghana (RSF, 2017).

Atawura (2017) looks at the ownership structure and concentration of the media in Ghana as a fundamental tool in the "political economy" of the country. He writes that following deregulation of the Ghanaian media for the past decade, private/commercial radio and television outlets have been mushrooming. Most of these commercial stations are owned by individual politicians. Besides, under Ghana's Premier, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, community-based radio stations were part of the state broadcaster's plan to decentralise the media and promote pluralism and to also propagate the government political philosophy (Atawura, 2017).

2.4 Models of Journalism

According to Hanitzsch (2008), two main approaches to studying media and journalism in societal perspective are Journalism culture (inductive) by looking at journalism norms and practices and Media Systems (deductive) which is a top-down approach that looks at media relations to political and societal system.

Siebert et al (1956) in the four theories of the press explain that in the Libertarian Theory, the role of the media which is watchdog is critical and as well, stress on independent nature of the media with emphasis on individual rights with regards to John Milton's proposition of individual rights. In the Social Responsibility Theory, the media do not have only rights but responsibilities, especially responsibilities to minorities and the media must be accountable to both the state and the public (Siebert, et al; 1956).

Media systems that are functioning in North American and Western European countries have very limited role of the state, weak connection between the press and political parties, high professionalism, neutral journalism practice and commercialised media component (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In view of this, Hallin and Mancini (2004) have invented the three models of the Press for a comparative analysis to study media system. They are: The Liberal, the Democratic Corporatist and the Polarised Pluralist Models, focusing on only western societies.

Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini are a pair of media scholars who have measured all the three models in four dimensions which are the Structure of the Media Market, Political Parallelism, Professionalism and the Role of the State. However, three of the dimensions which are significant to this study are reviewed succinctly. They are "Professionalism", "Media Market" and "Political Parallelism".

2.4.1 Professionalism

It is an important instrument for professional improvement seen as an effective tool for refining the quality of journalism by refining the quality of journalists (Joseph, 2009).

Professionalism is a key issue among journalists and lack of professionalism which could be caused by political influence is addressed by researcher Stacy Sullivan. "...there is simply a lack of talented and professional journalists". (Stacy, 2000 cited in Andresen, 2009). Professionalisation as a dimension or variable in their "Three Models of the Press" is relevant to this study looking at professionalism of journalists from the viewpoint of the perceived political influence.

Additionally, western journalists are less supportive of any active promotion of particular ideas, values or social change (Hanitzsch, et al, 2011) and that Diedong (2016) writes that responsible journalism in Ghana may be at the crossroads and that the professional conduct of journalists in Ghana would need to be improved.

Professionalism as an issue in the print industry might be the similar or worse in the Radio industry one way or the other caused by political influence that challenges the status quo of media practice in Ghana. And the unethical practices in the media landscape may be due to poor education qualification, a weak regulatory body, existence of more than enough professional associations and "Money matters" that threaten professionalism (Nyarko, 2017).

Sakyi (2012) in his article published on ghanaweb, writes that political interests in possession of many Ghanaian media practitioners, those in radio, overcrowd elements of professionalism. "Current political disquiet in our country is fanned by some incorrigible and irresponsible media hoodlums, who are hell-bent on poisoning the political chalice in order to serve their diabolical and nefarious ends. Some of these spineless broadcasters, incessant paparazzi serial callers, uncouth presenters and stomach-direction journalists show bluntly which side of the political divide and spectrum they belong to, by unprofessionally and unwittingly writing and speaking unashamedly of their political biases".

2.4.2 Media Market

The structure of media market (readership, ownership, etc) is one of the four variables that Hallin and Mancini (2004) use to study media systems. Ownership as to whether it is by the state, a political party-controlled, an individual or an individual with political inclinations. BBC (2017) reports that Ghana enjoys media freedom and broadcasters operate without borders or restrictions. And that the 8 million Ghanaians who use internet (as of 2016)

representing 28% of the population, could easily access news on their smartphones. Most radio stations crowd the dial, many of which are in that commercial vein chasing advertisers to increase their revenue to survive (BBC, 2017).

“Ghana has one of the most-free media in Africa and vibrant Press”
– AFP quoted in picture caption by BBC (2017).

Further on the Ghanaian media market shows that the Ghana media is dependent on the political, legal and social context of the country, culminating the historical and political regimes that have characterised the media landscape to present Fourth Republic. The legal framework of the country guarantees freedom of speech and encourages plural media but seems to be devoid of adrenaline that prevents media concentration and inhibit “political influence hidden in ownership structures” (RSF, 2019).

2.4.3 Political Parallelism

Political Parallelism explains to what extent, political configuration is reflected in the media outlets. How some media outlets align their content towards one political party or the other (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). However, de Albuquerque (2013) argues that Hallin and Mancini’s political parallelism is only useful in western societies. And that the concept of political parallelism can be productively make sense when two conditions are satisfied.

The media in Ghana have been used as a conduit for promotion of ideas through political debates and have been platforms for political education of the citizenry, thereby making political building climate synergies paramount that could engender democratic participant communication processes for nation building (Diedong, 2018). Anyidoho (2016) in his ethnographic study writes that there are traces of professional cultural, political, economic factors that the Ghanaian media use in shaping the country. Relationship between political factor and professionalism is the key issue here.

2.5 Political Communication

Political Communication primarily, could be seen an interplay between the media, the citizens and politicians in the field of research. In other disciplines, “it is a subfield of Communication and Political Science that is concerned with how information spreads and influences politics and policy makers, the news media and citizens” (Wikipedia). More so, Christian (2016) explains that as a field of research in academia, political communication studies the relationship between three processes: “Production (how messages are developed and transmitted), content (what is contained in each message) and effect (how messages are received and interpreted)”. It may be seen as an interface between politics and the media taking into many forms, narrowly, political messaging in radio confines. Taking into consideration the extent to which politicians influence media practitioners.

Within politics, communication flows in many directions (direct and indirect). The power of information as in political messaging, persuasion and strategic communication design could be used to understand and affect the outcome of that communication process (Christian, 2016). Political Communication as effective tool for the study may not be appropriate but it could support in related development. Norris (2001) writes that political communication “has always been central to electoral and policy-making process but since the early 1990s, certain important developments have fundamentally altered this process, particularly post-war trends in the mass media moving from the traditional world of newspaper, radio and television broadcasting towards the internet”.

Hogan and Melville (2015) give a more interesting phenomenon on political communication. The pair write that among Political Scientists, the old modes and methods of political communication are depleting from the elites to the masses (top down) and from the masses to the elites (bottom up) being “rapidly displaced and reconfigured by social media”. They add that Social Media Users or Activists are “building new movements and protests” in their personal capacities that are “increasingly successful at altering the mainstream political agenda”.

The example of this new trend is the United States (US), where Members of the Congress have resorted to use their Twitter buttons to engage in partisan cloaks with the political opponents and broadcast messages to their constituents instead of doing this on Radio or TV. Again, of the politicians in the US use YouTube to post their political campaign advertisements instead of doing this the traditional way on radio or tv. And in many parts of the world, grassroots movements are using social media to cause the wheels of political regimes turning (causing real political change) in many ways that “direct action has failed to achieve” (Hogan and Melville, 2015).

“The power of social media in politics is not isolated to the United States or indeed, Western democracies. Commentators have suggested that social media have played a significant part in the organising of protests and protection of dissident voices in the popular uprisings associated with the Arab Spring (primarily on Facebook) and the Iranian Green Revolution (primarily on Twitter). The threats that social media present to regimes have led to efforts of many countries to either crack down social media, censor content or actors, or introduce surveillance during or after protests” (Hogan and Melville, 2015).

Bergman (2019) argues that the academic study of Political Communication must go away in the light of existing limitation and weakness of the current subfield of it. He (Bergman) feels there should be priorities for scholars of Political Communication as the world “forward through these precarious times for democracy, justice and even species survival”. He (Bergman) writes that there is the need for scholars to look no further than the recent outcry of the subfield of political communication. He criticises the proposal: “Reformatting the field” by both Lance Benett and Barbara Pfetsch (2018), of whom are calling for the overhaul of “changing such core concepts of gate keeping, framing, indexing, agenda-setting and media effects in the light of disrupted relations among media, publics and democratic institutions”.

If the field of Political Communication was built on standard liberal notions on the efficacy of western democracies after World War One (WW1) in the economic boom and social progress leading to the period of enlightenment, then Bennett and Pfetsch (2018) make sense

that public resistance has reached critical mass – the “publics are on to the democracy ruse”. And that scholars of Political Communication need not assume that the existing foundations of “western democracies and media are benign” (Bergman, 2019).

Before scholars of political communication began measuring aspects of media and politics based on flawed assumptions, many critics including Michael Parenti (1995) feel activities of political parties are insufficient measures against their influences on the media. This brings to light how modern-day political leaders and political activists are climbing the ladder of political communication to influence the media. And this counts back to 1967 when Parenti was involved in founding a caucus for a New Political Science aimed for a “fundamental redefinition of the purposes, categories and politics of Political Science”. Aggression or Suppression, Political Communication has been widely used in the field of research related to POLITICS and MEDIA and the influences therein. Whether the goals of the caucus he formed on the ideals of Political Science were genuine or not, Parenti has since the 1970s, aside the litany of accolades for his work, has continued to this day “as a prolific, engaged public intellectual” (Bergman, 2019).

2.6 Perception

The key words and terminologies functioning in the research topic are “Perceptions”, “Ghanaian Journalists”, “Political Influence”, and “Ghanaian Radio Journalism”. For this reason, mixed methods of Quantitative and Qualitative alongside the theory of Media Ownership have come a long way to build the assessment which the research objective seeks to achieve. However, Perception as one key element in this study, stands on its own for a full discussion whereas political influence and press freedom are also discussed succinctly alongside media ownership theory. It is the ultimate framework that holds main theory and all sub theories in helping collected data to answer the research questions to achieve the study objective.

More importantly, the perceptions speak volumes of certain representations among Ghanaian media practitioners and media stakeholders. After all, “The logic of our argument makes certain measure of representativeness inevitable”. (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Perception is: “how we understand and interpret the stimuli that we get through our senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching” (Dahl, 2013). And three factors that influence perception process come to play: selection, organisation and interpretation. The perception of Ghanaian media practitioners and representatives of media-related institutions in Ghana though vary on political influence in the West African state, they come to a central point that runs in synch with the research objective. “Perception is central concept of social research as theorists have long recognised that ‘reality’ is in the mind of the observer” (McLeod, Wise and Perryman, 2017).

The focus of this study is on perceptions of political influence of Ghanaian media practitioners (journalists), and because of this, the study is also concerned with the various factors that shape those perceptions. And this is more psychological – how individuals in the media domain perceive political influence emerging from a condition of their past experiences and predispositions, not forgetting their affective moods and stereotyping.

“Through our childhood, up-bringing and training in a society we learn how to interpret and get certain assumptions that we take for granted” (Dahl, 2013). Perceptions of political influence linking to press freedom and the future of Ghanaian radio journalism as gathered through mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) bring to bear a study of assumptions and interpretations of the survey respondents and the qualitative interviewees on the eardrop of Media Ownership as the key research theory.

2.7 Summary

This chapter builds on the foundation of the study from Chapter One. In this chapter, it is reviewed that the plural media in Ghana’s democracy is much coveted for enhancement of free speech and promotion of fundamental human rights which is good for the Ghana’s public sphere in any modern society. The conceptual framework on Perception holds the theory and sub theories to achieve the objective of the study.

Politically-owned radio stations are also commercial stations but their interest as espoused through professional activities tells of the basis of their ownership. However, political interests hiding or steering the affairs of many media outlets, particularly radio stations could inhibit press freedom. And this may be dangerous for future of Ghana's radio journalism as media ownership theory attempts to aid the research design to answer the research questions. The next chapter discusses the methodology and its processes and how in combining force with the theory of media ownership, the research questions are answered to achieve the study objective.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the data collection, its methods and the overall study design. It builds a link between the Research theory from the previous chapter and the research objective to aid in data collection and its analysis. It also highlights the scope of the study and justification for the data collection design. Much as the scope and justification are important, the data collection could not be overemphasised.

This chapter in one breadth, is a fulcrum of the entire study since it describes the methods used to collect data that are linked to the study objective, its questions and the theory. “Research methods are more ‘free-floating’ than has been presumed” (Bryman, 2016). The methods (both quantitative and qualitative) display the realities emerging from the research objective and questions. They resonate the efficacy of the research theory – media ownership.

Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative (for the purpose of this study, Survey) and qualitative (Interview) research. And this approach is used in this study because as integration, it provides better understanding to the research problem than when used each alone. Whereas the Quantitative includes the close-ended information in the questionnaire design for the Survey to answer the research questions, the Qualitative involves open-ended information that are used or gathered through interviews to collect data; aiding in presenting the diversity of ideas from different informants (interviewees) for data collection and analysis.

According to the FoodRisc Resource Centre, a resource centre for food risk and benefit communication, “By mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and data, the researcher gains in breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration, while offsetting the weaknesses inherent in using each approach by itself. One of the most advantageous characteristics of conducting mixed methods research is the possibility of triangulation (the

use of several means, methods) to examine the same phenomenon”. “Triangulation allows one to identify aspects of phenomenon more accurately by approaching it from different vantage points using different methods and techniques”. (FoodRisC, 2016)

For this study, it is hoped that mixed methods will provide a complete and comprehensive understanding of the research problem. And this method, provides an approach for developing better, more context specific instruments.

However, by riding on the shoulders of mixed methods, the research design could be very complex in identifying the important elements in the research topic such as “Perception”, “Political Influence”, “Radio Journalism”, etc. to the development of a suitable but comprehensive data analysis. More so, discrepancies that may arise from interpretation of the findings of the study are anticipated and handled to the marrow through coherent empirical strategy.

3.1 Empirical Strategy

Strategically, both questionnaire and skype interviews are used in the study to collect data. This strategy is a combined “force” that stratifies the study. While the questionnaire design follows a quantitative strategy, the skype interviews are a demonstration of a qualitative strategy. According to Bryman (2016), the “distinction between qualitative and quantitative research remains useful. But the connections between epistemological/ontological commitments and research methods are not deterministic”.

In Mixed Methods (combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a study), Morgan’s Classification (1998) makes a lot of sense. How far a quantitative or qualitative method is a principal tool in data gathering or whether the two have equal weight is a priority decision. More so, whether the quantitative should precede the qualitative or vice versa is the sequence decision.

This empirical strategy is built around sequential explanatory design whereby sequentially, collection and analysis of quantitative data are followed by qualitative data. By far, the findings from the qualitative skype interviews complement the quantitative survey. This embodiment is in its implicit value at the discussion chapter of the study.

Once mixed methods are selected to collect data, the purpose of the research or the study objective, specific research instruments are incorporated into the main theory of the study (Media Ownership). And the quantitative part could be used for generalisation of qualitative findings. (Lobe, 2008). Patton (1990): “qualitative data can put flesh on the bones of quantitative results, bringing results to life through in-depth case elaboration”. In common practice, interpreting data of this study in both positivism (quantitative survey) and constructivism (in-depth qualitative interviews). And in explanatory situations, the study aligns to detailed discussions on the findings of the survey questionnaire.

3.2 Questionnaire

“Surveys and questionnaires attempt to measure attitudes or elicit accounts of actions/events – all of which are issues of meaning” (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire design only targets media practitioners who have been selected through purposive sampling for the survey. It tries to bring out the meanings in the perceptions that these practitioners have on political influence in radio journalism in Ghana, West Africa.

And the questionnaire falls within a research paradigm that allows easy responses from respondents who share their experiences in journalism through how they perceive political influence (Creswell, 2013).

3.2.1 Format, quantitative

The questionnaire follows a well-structured format that encapsulates demographics of the

respondents (informants) through some background of their professional working media environments linked to their perceptions. This format is to uncover the regularities of the study. Quantitative research can uncover regularities (Bryman, 2016). After realising that some of the questions were similar and overrun the others, the 16 questions are reduced to 10 questions and the free online Survey App (Application), SurveyMonkey has been used to administer the questionnaire.

3.2.2 Rationale and Justification

The first part of the questionnaire (survey) captures the demographics of the respondents (informants) – age category and gender. These are helpful for data analysis to ascertain which respondents within which age bracket and of what gender participated in the survey. The second part gives an array of some working background of the respondents, concerning the number of years they have been practising journalism and which media category they fall within. This is because though the study is designed to focus on radio journalism, the journalists who were selected for the survey are working in newspaper, television, online and radio stations to intimate their perceptions.

The third part is justifiable in the sense that it brings out the basis for the perception of political influence of the respondents, considering which radio programme they listen to, which news segment they are familiar with and also if they are open to tell the political direction of the radio stations they listen to. Political favouritism is a key issue for this study (Ghanaian radio journalism) and whether there is influence from the ruling NPP or the largest opposition NDC on a radio station is an essential element in the questionnaire design.

3.3 Skype Interviews

For the fact that this study is utilising mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative methods), Skype interviews are used to complement the survey in the questionnaire design,

with the two combining to fashion out the weight of the study in synch with the research objectives and the research questions. After all, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in data collection process in making a research project effective (Kohlbacher, 2006).

Getting representatives of Ghana media-related institutions has been one of the setbacks for this study. However, those who participated have provided inept and critical perception of the political influence that the study seeks to find. Their responses to the interview help in understanding and interpretation of data for better experiences of participants involved in a study (Creswell, 2009).

Apart from a representative from the National Communications Authority (NCA) who declines to speak in the interview, all the other representatives who belong to offices that deal directly with radio operations in terms of regulation, association and as interested parties contribute their honest parts during skype interviews.

3.3.1 Format, qualitative

The questions for the skype interview are a few but smack of requiring responses from different directions. The dimensions of the interview questions are framed to cover how the interviewees themselves perceive political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism and their views to the extent to which radio station owners, toll to the whims and caprices of political favouritism in the day to day journalism. In qualitative studies, it is known that people's experiences and beliefs influence the way they act and how they conduct the study (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research reveals social processes (Bryman, 2016), hence this format follows a meticulous and coherent structured interview questions which the interviewees could least resist to avoid participation. The format is such that simple and straight to the point questions are asked, however, follow-up questions not in the prepared interview questions make data collection assemble to the study.

3.3.2 Rationale

In as much as the views of the interviewees are to be solicited for data gathering and analysis, it is also important to find out if they really pay attention to radio journalism to experience any political influence. This is because, there is likelihood that these interviewees would be interested in monitoring online media stations, newspapers and television more than radio journalism that this study seeks to work into.

And yes, many media models and theories support political parallelism, the interviewees in their ability to supply answers directly or indirectly to political influence to the detriment of press freedom could help generate profitable data for the study. This is because the interviews belong to institutions that deal with the media hand-in-hand.

3.4 Sample and Population

Quantitative research helps to form the basis for representative sampling in a qualitative research. And for small samples, it is a bit risky for results from qualitative study to be used as reflecting a wider population (Bell, 2005). For the quantitative method, 106 practising Ghanaian journalists have been selected in purposive sampling to respond to 10 questions in a survey design through online questionnaire. Fortunately, the App shows all selected, have received the questions in their emails and it shows who respond to the questions or not. Purposive Sampling as a technique outlined by Patton (1990).

Out of a population of 1000, 106 are selected to respond to the survey and used for data analysis. Journalists in the survey population are working in newspaper, television, online and radio organisations some of whom are members of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), a mother media association for the Ghanaian media community.

Confidence level - 95% and Confidence Interval - 9 for population of 1000; is used to determine the sample size (106). The confidence interval as popularly known as margin of error is known in quantitative studies for plus or minus figure usually reported in newspaper, radio or television opinion polls.

Confidence level tells how sure or certain the researcher could be, in this case, being 95% sure that the sample size (journalists selected out of the population) will be a true reflection (The Survey System, a survey software, 2015).

For the qualitative part, Editors, Sub-Editors, a representative each from the Ghana Journalists Association, Media Foundation for West Africa are selected for interview to complement the data derived from the quantitative part. Others termed as “Senior Reporters” are also selected to solicit their views on the study and they are carefully selected based on their anticipated “matured contribution” to the topic of political influence, holding in high esteem, the professionalisation of the views of these interviews. Their contributions help to answer the research questions of the study.

3.5 Data Collection

In utmost satisfaction of the research objective and the research questions, both qualitative and quantitative methods (survey/questionnaire and interviews) are used. The combination strike with complete description of the study design and analysis of the data considering the nature of responses of the participants (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

The popular App, SurveyMonkey is used to reach all the 106 respondents through their emails for the quantitative method. The App uses the designated word: “Complete” for those who have responded and “No” to those who do not respond. This makes it easy to send a reminder to all those whose responses have been recognised by the App.

A reminder to respond to the survey is prepared and it is sent by the App through email of the selected respondents after 14 days of invitation whereas a “Thank You” message is also generated and automatically, it is being sent to thank all who respond to the survey as a sign of gratitude. These activities make the quantitative method easy and interesting one to collect data. In the qualitative method, eight prepared interview questions are targeted at five

3.6 Process

The research process for this study has been a well-designed questionnaire for a survey in a quantitative method that marries the research objective and tries to answer the research questions to produce data. While the survey brings out the perception Ghanaian Journalists have on political influence on radio stations they listen to, the qualitative skype interviews complement the survey response by similar or deeper perceptions from media activists who regulate radio stations or work closely with radio journalism practitioners to at least, have a feel of political influence.

Bryman (2016) cites Holdsworth (2006) as one of the best examples for using both quantitative and qualitative methods in a research process. He uses quantitative method through a questionnaire survey to strike the difference between university students living at home and those living away from home. Then he uses qualitative interviews and focus groups to explore the processes that lie behind the differences. Copies of the survey questionnaire and qualitative Skype Interview questionnaire have been saved as part of this study in the Appendices.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

SurveyMonkey as a Computer Application moulds all the 10 questions and sends them to the emails of the respondents (informants) whereas for the qualitative interviews, the consent form and interview questions are sent as attachment via email for the interviewee to know or have an idea of the interview. This places emphasis on validity and reliability. As instruments, both validity and reality of this study measure what is intended to be measured, the extent to which how well the collected data covers the field of study and the how consistent and stable the collected data are measured. They are measured to the phenomenon of respondents and informant's perceptions of political influence. Reliability of the research results will be questionable when an inductive approach produces generalised theories and conclusions based on small population (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Reliability and Validity are inter-twin concepts used in research works to determine the quality of those works. They are used to indicate how well a method or technique measures a

phenomenon in the sense that whereas Reliability is about the consistency of the measure, Validity is the accuracy of the that measure (what the method of the study is intended to measure).

Much as it's important to establish that a study of this nature – measuring the perceptions of journalists (media practitioners) on the index of political influence - requires consistency (recurrence of the response pattern on perception of both survey and interview responses) to be reliable; analysis of the responses gives a defining shape to validity. And that if the study is valid then of course, it is reliable. But it can be reliable when it is not valid. “High reliability is one indicator that a measurement is valid. If a method is not reliable, it probably isn't valid. However, reliability on its own is not enough to ensure validity. Even if a test is reliable, it may not accurately reflect the real situation”. (Middleton, 2019)

It is in part, worthwhile to note that reliability and validity of the results of this study depends on creating “a strong research design, choosing appropriate methods and samples, and conducting the research carefully and consistently”. (Middleton, 2019)

3.8 Setting up the Study

Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Norsk senter for forskningsdata, NSD) approval has been very significant before the survey questionnaire could be administered online via emails of the respondents/informants. Before applying for the approval of the NSD, emails of all the respondents have been ready to begin “serious business” alongside questions for qualitative Skype interviews.

A Consent form seeking the consent of all respondents before answering the survey or participating in the Skype interview was sent to the informants. The analytical framework of the study focuses on theme. However, thematic analysis is used to discuss the findings of the study. Data is examined to identify the common themes of the study – ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly

3.9 Limitation of the Study

NSD Approval has been delaying the research process – culminating in the slightly-late administering of Consent Form to Informants/Respondents of both the Survey Questionnaire online and Skype Interviews. More so, some survey respondents have had a few challenges to visit their emails on time, causing a delay in their response to the survey in their emails. The email from SurveyMonkey was either sent to their inbox or spam with most finding it difficult to locate the email in their spam messages. This has been a bit challenging.

For the Qualitative Skype Interviews, some of the interviewees have pushed the NSD-approved Consent Form aside and have been asking for an official letter authenticating the research project from a researcher in Norway. This researcher has been taking enough time to explain to the interviewees that the consent form contains a lot of official content to approve for granting audience. This also eventually has been delaying the Skype interviews, a limitation to the study that cannot be forgotten.

53.5% of the Ghanaian Journalists surveyed for the study responded to the quantitative questions (out of the journalists selected for the survey only 54 of them responded to the questions by email). This means the margin of error is relatively wider, resulting from the delay in feedback to respond to the questions via email. This pins the study at a corner to some extent, and it is anticipated that if questionnaire was self-administered offline, the response could have been better of – aiding the margin of error (confidence interval) than an online survey. However, because the study operates within the borders of mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative), the 53.5% in addition to qualitative interviews gives a wider spectrum of research findings on how Ghanaian Journalists perceive political influence on Radio Journalism in Ghana.

3.10 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, it is worthwhile to note that combining quantitative and qualitative methods to extract data for this study has been stressful but at the same time, these mixed methods have been helpful to make an academic project more effectual.

The strengths and weaknesses of using mixed methods in a research study have been taken into consideration to ensure that his chapter on Methodology is widely and effectively utilised to make sense in academic work. The limitation of the study cannot exhibit perturbation on the researcher. Rather it helps in combination of the research design to present a realistic study which shows much credence in the next chapter.

The next chapter (Analysis & Discussion), builds upon this chapter to make the study more resounding as much as the research questions are connected to the theory to make sense to the study objective.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data results or findings and they are followed by thorough discussions on both the Survey questionnaire and Skype interviews. It brings to bear the significance of this study, how the data collected through mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative) are linked to the research questions and the research theory (media ownership) to achieve the study objective.

SurveyMonkey as Computer Application which is used to collect part of the data, makes it easy to analyse the results from responses of 54 Ghanaian practising journalists on their perceptions of political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism. Just as has been mentioned in the Methodology chapter, 54 out of 106 sampled for the survey questionnaire online are able to respond to the 10 questions for their perceptions on political influence.

For the qualitative skype interviews, apart from one representative that is unable to turn up for the interview, all the remaining four representatives of media regulatory institutions, media associations and media stakeholders are able to make it for the interview. It is however, important to take inspiration from Haagerup (2017) on attempts to use “journalism of tomorrow” to save the media and democracy who quotes Apple Commercial - “Think different” 1996 that: “People who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do”.

4.1 Survey Questionnaire

As explained earlier in the methodology chapter, Ghanaian journalists are surveyed to represent the population for this study. This is to satisfy the quantitative part of the study.

4.1.1 Demographics of the respondents

The two demographical data of the respondents are Age Category and Gender. Whereas more Ghanaian Male journalists participate in the survey than their Female counterparts, majority of the respondents (both male and female) fall within the age category of 26-34.

Table 1: Demographics of the respondents

Age Category	Percentage
18-25	3.7%
26-34	66.67%
35-44	24.07%
44 and above	5.56%

66.7% shows the level of maturity of most of the respondents of the survey which is as important as their perception. This helps in the assessment of the study, a critical index of political influence that journalists perceive as the research objective seeks to achieve.

4.1.2 Gender Representation of Respondents

For table two on Gender representation of the respondents, though two skip their gender information, majority of the respondents are Males, meaning that the number in gender responses links to the age categories, with the males dominating the females in the survey. The table shows such as below:

Table 2: Gender Representation

Gender	Percentage
Females	21.15%
Males	78.85%

This gives certain impression to research question two that journalists who perceive political influence, whether they feel threatened or not, comes with no gender biases.

4.1.3 Background of the Respondents

The background of the respondents gives a better understanding of their perceptions. It captures which media category they belong to and how long they have been practising journalism. All the respondents for the survey are journalists and a little bit of their professional background shows the seriousness of their perceptions of political influence in radio journalism in Ghana. And interestingly, majority of the survey respondents are practitioners working in radio stations (42.3%) whiles the rest work in newspaper (26.9%), online media (17.3%), television (11.5%) organisations. None of the respondents works in the Magazine industry whereas 1.9% are Freelancers. Two of the respondents skip their information on which media organisation category they belong to.

Table 3: Media Organisation of Respondents

Media organisation category	Percentage
Radio	42.31%
Television	11.54%
Newspaper	26.92%
Magazine	0.00%
Online	17.31%
Freelancer	1.92%

The media organisation representation helps to study the backgrounds of the respondents that also in the interpretation of the first research question

4.1.4 Professional Practice of Survey Respondents

On the question of how long the respondents have been practising journalism as a profession, one out of the 54 skipped the question. For the remaining 53, who answered the question, majority of them have been practising journalism in less than 10 years (45.3%) whereas the next to the majority, (41.5%) have been practising for more than 10 years. Those who have practised journalism in less than five years are 9.4% with the least 3.8% being those who have practised journalism for more than 20 years.

Table 4: Professional Practice of Respondents

Years of professional practice	Percentage
Less than 5 years	9.43%
Less than 10 years	45.28%
More than 10 years	41.51%
20 years and above	3.77%

This scales up the experiences the respondents have in professional practice to be able to make sense to the research objective

4.1.5 Morning News and Morning Show

It is noted that Morning shows on radio are political programmes that dominate the radio airwaves in Ghana. The shows are usually begun by interviews based on the agenda setting for the day and later, representatives of political parties and social commentators would discuss the various topics for the day set on the agenda. However, before the morning shows begin, Morning News comes, and it's aired at 6:00am. The question as to which radio programme do the respondents pay attention to when listening to radio rivals Morning News as the highest (41.5%), followed by Morning shows (33.96%). For the purpose of this study, an attempt to solicit perceptions of political influence on radio journalism throws more light on Morning show which has the tendency to reflect political favouritism. And most of the respondents as shown in Table 6, respond that political favouritism is rampant in morning shows. While (44.4%) say the favouritism is high, (29.9%) perceive the show to have very high political favouritism. It is interesting to note that only 3.7% of the respondents, a small number of journalists is in a dilemma, not able to tell whether there are political favouritisms in Morning Shows.

Table 5: Radio Listenership

Radio Programme	Percentage
Morning News	41.51%
Morning Show	33.96%
Midday News	13.21%
Evening News	7.55%
Evening Show	1.89%
Other	1.89%

4.1.6 Political Favouritism

Political favouritism shares common characteristics with political influence as shown in the next table. It contributes to the interpretation of the two research questions and significance of the media ownership theory

Table 6: Element of Political Favouritism

Political Favouritism in Morning show	Percentage
Very high	25.93%
High	44.44%
Low	20.37%
Very low	5.56%
Don't know	3.70%

4.1.7 Claim of Political Influence

On Yes or No question of whether there is political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism, 51 out of the 54 respondents representing 94.4% vehemently respond in the YES affirmative. Only 3 representing 5.6% respond in NO to perceive no political influence and this could depend on the type of radio stations they consistently listen to in a recurrence behaviour pattern.

Table 7: Element of Political Influence

Claim of Political Influence	Percentage
Yes	94.44%
No	5.56%
Other	0.00%

This part of the survey is the fulcrum of the research objective that establishes that almost all journalists studied perceive political influence on the professional duties of radio journalists in Ghana.

4.1.8/9 NPP and NDC perceived to be influencing Radio

There is assumption that most radio stations in Ghana are operating on the whims and caprices of the two main political parties – the ruling NPP and the largest opposition NDC.

Whilst 57.4% respondents in one question perceive NPP influence on radio journalism as high, 46.3% perceive NDC influence as high in a different question.

This means that the degree to which Ghanaian journalists perceive political influence on the part of the ruling party (NPP) is higher than that of the opposition party (NDC) as shown in Tables 8 & 9.

Table 8: Rate of NPP Influence on Radio

NPP Influence on Radio Journalism	Percentage
Very high	18.52%
High	57.41%
Low	11.11%
Very low	5.56%
Don't know	7.41%

Table 9: Rate of NDC Influence on Radio

NDC Influence on Radio Journalism	Percentage
Very high	9.26%
High	46.3%
Low	24.07%
Very low	9.26%
Don't know	11.11%

Both Tables 8 & 9 combine to give one code of deriving force – the index of political influence and how it is perceived by journalists through activities of owners of radio stations linked to one political party or the other. They shed light on the research objective and help in drawing patterns to the research theory.

4.1.10 Political Influence as a Threat to Journalism growth

On political influence as a threat to the growth of Ghanaian radio journalism, most of the respondents perceive it to be highly threatening. This means many practising journalists in Ghana have the perception that the future of radio journalism in Ghana is threatened, not good news. As many as 61% of the respondents perceive political influence is highly a threat to the growth of Ghanaian radio journalism as shown in the table below:

Table 10: Political Influence as a threat to radio journalism

Degree of Political Influence as a Threat	Percentage
Highly threatening	61.11%
Threatening	31.48%
Not threatening	5.56%
Don't know	1.85%

This last table on the quantitative method is explicit command to answer the research question two. It helps to make data analysis of political influence being a threat more coherent.

4.2.0 Skype Interviews

Skype interviews conducted on representatives of media organisations and stakeholders have interesting revelations on how they perceive political influence on radio journalism. The representatives from the Ghana National Media Commission, Ghana Journalists Association, Editors Forum and the Media Foundation for West Africa have been responsive to all questions asked. In order not to reveal their identity, they are labelled as Rep 1, 2, 3, 4 respectively. Their qualitative responses are expected to give broader perspective in addition to the quantitative part to make meaning of media ownership and the research objective in general.

4.2.1 Frequency of Radio Listenership of Interviewees

Asked the question on how frequent the interviewees listen to radio, all Reps 1,2,3, 4 confirm they listen to radio more than once every day. Follow-up question reveals that their listenership is not only for News but Morning Shows and other radio programmes. This affords them the pride of place to answer all questions related to their perceptions of political influence on radio journalism in Ghana.

Table 11: Radio listenership of Interviewees

Frequency of Radio Listenership	Representatives
Every day	Reps 1, 2, 3, 4
Not every day	-
Once in a week	-

Frequent listenership by member of these media stakeholders indicates the level of their interest and monitoring roles on radio journalism in Ghana. It helps make the statement of the problem a reality and sheds light on the significance of the study.

4.2.2 Political Affiliation to Political Parties

A Yes or No question is asked to establish the fact that on their radio listenership and observation or monitoring, are there radio stations in Ghana that are affiliated to one political party or the other. All Reps 1,2,3,4 answer in the affirmative to confirm some radio stations that are operating to the tunes of political parties.

Table 12: Radios labelled as Party Favourites

Radios operating for political parties	Representatives
Yes	Reps 1,2,3,4
No	-

This part confirms responses from the quantitative data to answer research question one in relation to the variables that the theory (media ownership) portrays.

4.2.3 Claim that Radio Owners dictate workers to favour parties

To know their perceptions on the claim that radio owners dictate to journalists working in their stations to favour one political party or the other, only Rep 2 thumbs up to that perception. While Rep 1 does not support such claim, both Reps 3 and 4 are not sure whether the claim is valid or not.

Table 13: Claim of radio ownership in favour of political parties

Claim that Radio Owners dictate to their workers to favour a party	Representatives
Yes	Rep 2
No	Rep 1,
Not Sure	Reps 3, 4

This is a deepening tool to the background of the study and also, research question one that prepares breathing space to the study objective

4.2.4 Report of Political Influence

Though all the four Reps perceive political influence in radio stations, on this special note, none of them has received any official report from journalist (s) that there is political influencing going on their stations. Possibly, journalists reporting in radio stations perceived to have political influence care less to make official report or complaint to any state regulatory institution or media associations. On the other hand, they fear the risk of losing their jobs even if they sense political influence and would report it.

Table 14: Official Report on political influence

Report of Political Influence	Representatives
Yes	-
No	Reps 1,2,3,4

This part looks embarrassing to the study objective but it one way or the other, indirectly has a bearing on whether the two research questions would be answered or not.

4.2.5 Negative effect of Political Influence on the future of Journalism

Asked on the extent to which political influence could negatively affect the growth or future of journalism in Ghana, all the Reps are conscious of their answers. While three of them high agree, one agree that political influence if perceived and it's not controlled could destroy the frontiers of journalism in Ghana in the future.

Table 15: Political influence as a threat to Radio Journalism

The extent to which Political Influence can affect growth journalism	Representatives
Highly Agree	Reps 2,3,4
Agree	Rep 1
Disagree	-
Don't know	-

This table from the qualitative data is direct significance to research question two, if journalists working politically-owned radio stations feel threatened by political influence. The views of these media stakeholders are indepth to the discussion of the

4.2.6 Journalists threatened by Political Influence

All the four Reps agree to answer in the affirmative YES that they perceive journalists to be threatened by political influence, especially, those working in radio station labelled party A or B (politically-owned radio stations). The threat according to them stems from the point that political influence would inhibit journalists from adhering to the very principles of professionalism required of them. Table 16 shows the summary of their answers.

Table 16: Journalists threatened by political influence

Journalists threatened by Political Influence	Representatives
Yes	Reps 1,2,3,4
No	-

This table also attempts to answer research question two through qualitative data and draws background of the study to the study objective via media ownership

4.2.7 Press Freedom threatened by Political Influence

Apart from Rep 2, all the remaining three perceive that political influence in Ghanaian radio stations could threaten Press Freedom. Rep 2 disagrees on the backdrop that whether there is political influence or not, Press Freedom could better succeed when media practitioners themselves adhere to professional standards. Perception of the rest is the opposite.

Table 17: Press Freedom threatened by political influence

Press Freedom threatened by Political Influence	Representatives
Yes	Reps 1, 3, 4
No	Rep 2

Another important data that brings to bear the research objective and questions reviewed in media ownership

4.3.0 Analysis and discussion

Discussion of this study permeates through thematic areas that are in synch with the Research Objective which is “to assess perceptions of political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism”. And this as a reflection on the research objective goes concurrently with the research theory (media ownership) and the research questions which ask as follows:

RQ1. To what extent do Ghanaian journalists in perceive political influence in radio journalism?

RQ2. To what extent do the journalists perceive political influence as a threat to radio journalism?

4.3.1 Perceptions & Political Influence

Perception has remained a key element in this study. Assessing perceptions of media practitioners in Ghana on political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism rings at a crescendo. Perception is: “how we understand and interpret the stimuli that we get through our senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching” (Dahl, 2013). And three factors that influence perception process come to play: selection, organisation and interpretation. The perception of Ghanaian media practitioners and representatives of media-related institutions in Ghana though vary on political influence in the West African state, they come to a central point that runs in synch with the research objective. “Perception is central concept

of social research as theorists have long recognised that ‘reality’ is in the mind of the observer” (McLeod, Wise and Perryman, 2017).

The focus of this study is on perceptions of political influence of Ghanaian media practitioners (journalists), and because of this, the study is also concerned with the various factors that shape those perceptions. And this is more psychological – how individuals in the media domain perceive political influence emerging from a condition of their past experiences and predispositions, not forgetting their affective moods and stereotyping. “Through our childhood, up-bringing and training in a society we learn how to interpret and get certain assumptions that we take for granted” (Dahl, 2013). Perceptions of political influence linking to press freedom and the future of Ghanaian radio journalism as gathered through mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) bring to bear a study of assumptions and interpretations of the survey respondents and the qualitative interviewees on the eardrop of Media Ownership as the key research theory.

Combining findings of the two methods, it is clear as crystal that Journalists in Ghana have perceptions that there is political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism stemming from news, morning shows to other radio programmes. A quick look at the tables shows some growing interest in Perception as an index in this study. Journalists, news organisations and journalism as an institution do not exist in vacuum (Hanitzsch, et al 2019). Political influence as one of the restraining elements and forces that put their knife on the things that make journalism an enviable profession, has been viewed as a threat by many Ghanaian journalists and media stakeholders.

In Table 3, 42.31% of the quantitative survey respondents shows journalists working in radio stations. And most of these practitioners are working in politically-owned radio stations whose perception on political influence clinches to the research objective, the research questions and makes sense to the research theory (media ownership).

In the book: “WORLDS OF JOURNALISM, Journalists Cultures Around the Globe” edited by Thomas Hanitzsch, Folker Hanusch, Jyotika Ramaprasad and Arnold S de Beer (2019), Political Influence has been seen as one of the forms in media contexts that acts as “draconian measure restraining press freedom” globally. The book collects world views from more than 27,500 journalists in 67 countries on roles and responsibilities as journalists of which political influence is one of the external factors preventing journalists to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. And this is seen as an affront to Global Journalism.

This in part, means that though data on journalists from Ghana on perceptions of political influence is absent in the book, this study adds on that body of knowledge. The far-reaching consequence of politics on journalism which in Table 7, 94.44% of the survey respondents perceive political influence as a threat. And this explains that with regards to the research questions, not only Ghanaian journalists working in politically-owned radio stations perceive political influence and feel threatened as in RQ1 and RQ2. But per the Media Ownership concept in Ghana, many journalists of that study population give a response that calls for a paradigm shift to affect journalist culture in a positive way. Though many of the media stakeholders in qualitative interviews have not officially received complaints of political disturbances to the works of radio journalists in Ghana as shown in Table 14, the claim of radio stations to the ownership directly or indirectly to a political party or politician as in Table 13 is resounding argument on the floor of this study.

Hanitzsch et al (2019) in their book: “WORLDS OF JOURNALISM” explain political influences index in many journalist cultures around the globe are combined pressures from “politicians”, “government officials”, “pressure groups” and “business representatives”. This go a long way to affirm the perceptions both journalists and media stakeholders have in Ghana on political influence.

More importantly, not only in comparative index where political influence may outweigh economic, organisational, personal network, among other factors that thrust global journalism at a corner. But responses emanating from survey questionnaires from Ghanaian journalists and interaction with Ghanaian media stakeholders re-establish an index that curtails press freedom.

Bagdikian (1983) in his media monopoly would not let go of economic influences as the primary goal of every news organisation is to make profit in news production precepts. However, the Ghanaian context shows recurrent pattern in many societies around the globe as gathered by Hanitzsch, et al (2019), that economic factor could be subsumed in the political influence. This is in the sense that, though radio stations intend to make profit (as in media ownership), they devise certain strategies that forge them ahead of possibilities to make ends-meet: thereby risking journalistic values to align their ownership conditions to a political party, a politician or pressure groups labelled for one political party or the other.

Realistically, journalism researchers around the globe would be imbued with that firm accolade attached to this study that Ghanaian journalists perceive political influence as threatening 31.48% and quite arguably significant number 61.11% of them seeing the influence not just as threatening but highly threatening (refer to Table 10). Media stakeholders (as shown in Table 16), node in concurrence that they perceive journalists working in radio stations in Ghana to be threatened. This comes to answer the RQ2 (the second research question of the study): do the journalists feel threatened by political influence?

The study also having answered RQ1, which is: Do journalists perceive political influence in radio journalism in Ghana? inscribes of the emotional power of the research objective and its theory (media ownership). After all, research questions could not stand alone but are closely linked to the frameworks of a research design Creswell (2013). By further implications, the perceptions of political influence on Ghanaian radio journalism expressed in the mixed-methods data gathering come to affirm some public utterances made by concerned journalism development personalities in Ghana, West Africa and even beyond.

Two of these figures: Professor Kwame Karikari, a journalism professor at the School of Communication Studies of the University of Ghana, Legon who doubles as the Founder of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and Kabral Blay-Amihere, a former Chairman of the National Media Commission (NMC) have on separate occasions decried political influence on journalism in Ghana (Bokpe, 2018).

Their disgust for the index (political influence) goes beyond only radio, however, for the purpose of this discussion, their concerns call for both denotative and connotative reactions of global journalism researchers. Political influence, if it is perceived by both practising Ghanaian journalists and journalism stakeholders in the country as one of the bottlenecks for the profession, then is important that this study helps to identify them (those bottlenecks) and address them with applicable solutions (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018).

Amoakohene (2007) writes that the media has been a powerful tool in the independence of Ghana from colonial rule of the British. This assertion could arguably be dragged in the mud on condition in this study discussion that should journalists, media owners and media related institutions and stakeholders remain in the reactive state of rest, the role the media played towards independence of Ghana would be meaningless and regrettable. In fact, in a bigger picture, political influence as perceived, if not controlled, stands to risk the future of radio journalism in the country.

Owusu (2011) writes that the “entrenched political stances” taken by some Ghanaian journalists appear to be the worry of many Ghanaians. And this could gravely affect journalism in diverse ways. According to him, some Ghanaian Journalists are accused of mounting political platforms to campaign for their favourite political parties irrespective of the GJA Code of Ethics that talk against this stance also seen as affront to global journalism ethics.

Respondents of the survey for this study have confirmed that though majority of Ghanaian journalists listen to morning news on radio (41.51%) as compared to Morning Shows on radio (33.96%), seen as one of the first radio programmes with large listenership; those who pay attention to morning shows perceive political influence.

While 44.44% of the survey respondents perceive political influence in morning shows as high, 20.37% of them perceive the influence in such programmes as low. This puts jackets onto the objective of the study, that attempts to assess political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism. Hasty (2005) writes that though there is high political culture in the press in Ghana, it could be as high as in radio in the same country. The political culture has been intense so that “development journalism” would evolve to articulate the national narrative every day.

Apart from the survey findings, qualitative interviews from media players including the NMC, MFWA, GJA, EF, have come to confirm the perceptions of the Ghanaian journalists of certain political influence that inhibits an effective and effectual journalism that should thrive to develop society at large. Though none of the representatives of NMC, MFWA, GJA, EF has formally received complaints of political influence in the works of practising journalists, the interviewees highly agree that political influence in Ghanaian radio is a threat to journalism. “Political influence in journalism is common perception in the world and in Ghana too. The sad aspect is the inability to provide or establish evidence to this effect”, a rep from the GJA stated in interview.

Oddgeir (2005) writes that the “kind of political deepening” in television often “shallow reporting of world events”. This when likened to radio is likely to show similar results and behaviour pattern. The findings from the Ghanaian radio professional domain share some antecedents of the political influence that in comparative nature, cloud the American television way of presenting world events. The Ghanaian context on the metric of political

deepening could differ from other media societies around the globe including the United States but the point of political influence is a shared concern to this study.

4.3.2 Press Freedom

Press Freedom is widely connected to Perception as the key component of this study- the two are intertwined, interwoven. Primarily, in mass media precincts, it is understood as the freedom of the media (the press) – both electronic and print. In a closely related operational framework, Press Freedom as rudimentary element is subsumed into a media principle that communication and expression of ideas through various media outlets by public members be considered a right to be exercised freely. Not only would the audiences (mass media receivers) freely express themselves through the various media outlets but these outlets by far, would also need to go about their professional activities freely. In simple terms, globally, Press Freedom is the ability of mass media to work independently, that's, media independence (Freedom House, 2017).

Freedom House is one global media-related body that assesses the degree of print and electronic media freedom in 199 countries and territories. It has been doing this since 1980, though its first edition of Press Freedom was covered in 1979. However, to the spirit and letter of this study, Freedom House in its quest to achieve the tangent has been evaluating the legal environment for the media with political pressure (influence) emerging as one of the factors that underpin reporting (Freedom House, 2017).

United Nations (UN) recognises freedom of expression and information as the basic human right in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 – 3 years after the Second World War (UN, 1948). UN universally declares that: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. (Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Besides, the African Charter on Human and People's Right, the European Convention on Human Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights all come to play in people's freedom to expression and information, hence Press Freedom in mass media. By monitoring and observation, Press freedom in Ghana has been much debated within the Ghanaian media landscape in recent times. The current World Press Freedom Index released by RSF in April 2019, Ghana is 3rd in Africa and 27th in the world among 180 countries studied (RSF, 2019).

This means Ghana loses its former position as the 1st in Africa and 23rd in the world when it comes to press freedom in sharp contrast to the 2018 index. Now Ghana is at third place, Namibia and Cabo Verde are the 1st and 2nd in Africa. Ghana and Namibia have been annually battling for the first and second places but what gives a sour taste is a decline to a third place. RSF has not yet been able to attribute one of the factors or metrics accounting for the decline to Political Influence which is the bone of contention of this study. However, in future, it could be recorded that this study finds perception of media practitioners in Ghana that political influence stabs press freedom in the back.

Any physical attacks on Ghanaian journalists would seem to be an enemy to press freedom but at the same time, in abstract, political influence (which is not seen physically) counts to be another enemy to press freedom. This is in the sense that political influence means dependence and the more media practitioners are not independent, the less freedom they possess to work in a professional framework. Independence is one of the five key Ethics required of journalists around the world (according to Ethical Journalists Network, global).

Findings of this study show that the 57.41% and 46.30% of survey respondents perceive most radio stations in Ghana are operating in favour of the ruling party, NPP and the largest opposition party, NDC respectively. These responses provide breeding grounds for political connotations which stab press freedom in the back.

Hanitzsch, et al (2019) write that understanding editorial autonomy is important both to journalism as a profession and to comprehension of media scholars on contribution journalism could make to society. The extent to which journalists work to control their professional activity includes the freedom they have in selecting stories (Hanitzsch, et al 2019). And for radio stations in the Ghanaian media market to leave their media freedom to the detriment of political influence leaves much to be desired. Assumptions that are born out of the research questions could be valid to aid the study's theory and methodology to achieve its objective.

In the history of Ghana media landscape and in terms of media ownership, the repeal of the criminal libel law in early 2000s rings a bell when it comes to press freedom. Liberalisation of the airwaves in 1992 was seen as the birth of radio freedom in Ghana akin the national constitutional framework (freedom of the media enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana). "Although the repeal of the criminal libel law was seen as the beginning of the 'real' freedom of the press and diversity in the media, observers like MFWA, NMC, GJA and other civil society groups have persistently expressed concern about the high level of unethical practices on the part of some journalists and media houses" (Owusu, 2011).

Owusu (2011) again refers to a former Chairman of the NMC, Kabral Blay-Amihere that "as a result of media freedom, the NMC Chairman says there is more citizen participation in public discourse and debate". He further quotes Blay-Amihere as saying that: "Ghanaians openly and publicly discuss issues without fear of being arrested by security agents (and where there have been aberrations in security agents arresting people for free speech, public outrage has stopped such violations)...the days when Ministers/Secretaries /Commissioners

served as supervising editors of the state-owned media are over and no editor of any of the state-owned media can claim to be manipulated by government. And where such control is found, it is with the full blessing of an editor or journalist who still prefers servitude to freedom”.

A rep from the MFWA stated that: “Lack of partial or total Press Freedom takes away the power of media independence. Traits of this phenomenon among members of the media in the 21st century a public outcry. Not only journalist associations are concerned and worried, media related institutions and partners are worried too. The need to come to the drawing board to address political influence as setback in radio is now”.

This sounds welcoming news and somewhat contrary to responses from the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews; mainly because for radio stations operating in Ghana, some are state-owned whereas many are not state-owned and might dodge the government or state control as Bagdikian (1983) inscribes from his media monopoly. However, perceptions that radio stations in modern Ghana, are still operating on the whims and caprices of political parties or politicians, is still worrying to the body sphere of national and international journalism.

In his monograph on Ghana’s Media, Kwame Karikari (2000), a professor of communication studies at the University of Ghana, says the common licensing laws and decrees “pursued by governments frequently disrupted development of the media”. Governments are no more pushing for licensing laws and decrees to send Ghana aback on press freedom but in a subtle way, influencing some media practitioners to act otherwise (becoming Public Relations Officers overnight), makes it a bigotry of mass media ownership theory. And this brings into fruition the research objective and the research questions.

Media ownership in Ghana as explained in the theory chapter shows a politically-polarised environment that radio stations in the country find themselves in – either they are openly known for operating for Party A or B or they are clandestinely the mouthpieces of those parties whose interest they serve in their daily media markets.

However, Watchdog journalism which places the Media at the position of Fourth Estate of the Real, emphasises freedom of expression in an objective, factual and critical reporting style. And that this role of being a watchdog on the government is being played by the various media outlets on behalf of the people (the masses).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) in their quest to compare media systems builds around political parallelism as one of the variables. The extent of political configuration is reflected in the media outlets, practitioners' perceptions of their professional activities on the heels of press freedom could soar high amid pressure from political parties, politicians and business persons who own radio stations in the country. And as to whether the argument from de Albuquerque (2013) that political parallelism is "only useful" in western countries makes sense or not, media ownership plays a critical role in the Ghanaian context.

Already, Doyle (2002) has described media ownership (as a key theory of this study) as one of the tools used by media owners to control their workers. This in one way or the other, risks press freedom in the Ghanaian media market. The public sphere could smell so much of incense by holding political influence in the check (this has to do with many radio station owners who openly are either members of the ruling NPP and largest opposition NDC or linked to any of these two major political parties in Ghana).

It could be argued that Ghanaian radio stations owned by politicians are less critical of either the ruling NPP government or the largest opposition NDC and vice versa (that's when the NDC is in power). And the dire consequence of being not critical or less critical of party in power, places twists and turns on media independence as much as press freedom is concerned. Of course, many journalists working such media organisations are prone to the fear of losing their jobs and this establishes a claim that is likely to emanate from the two research questions. Lowenstein (1970) as a Scholar posits that press freedom prevails when the media has full independence with the media being critical on all sects of people including those within the government machinery without fear or intimidation.

Weaver (2010) identifies three elements of press freedom: the relative absence of government restraints on the media, relative absence of non-governmental restraints and the existence of conditions to free dissemination of ideas and opinions to large audience. Without these “accolades”, perceptions of political influence as generated through mixed-methods of this study and that reflect to answer the research questions could mar Press Freedom.

4.3.3 Radio Morning Talk Show as cradle of Political Influence

Tables 5 and 6, also converge with other tables to form the fulcrum of the study. This is borne out of the assumption that many radio morning shows portray some elements of politics that characterise the Ghanaian airwaves than other genres of radio programmes including morning news. This assumption is commemorated into perceptions journalists also have on political influence.

In Table 5, of the six domains on radio programme for the day asked respondents, Morning News comes up with 41.51% followed by Morning Show with 33.96%. This shows that many journalists in Ghana who listen to radio, pay attention to news rather than morning shows, possibly on the common premise that radio outlets are quick in breaking news much easier than other media outlets like tv and newspaper or online. Arguably, a study on the part of the audience could show a different pattern whereby possibly, the audiences pay attention to morning shows more than morning news. This is of the firm assumption that news usually takes a maximum of 30 minutes in the morning whereas the morning shows run for not less than two hours.

Consequently, based on the assumption of political cloaks that characterise the morning shows, much focus is turned to it than morning news in the quantitative part of the study. 44.44% of the survey respondents perceive radio morning show that is clouded with political favouritism to be high whereas 20.37% perceive political favouritism in morning shows to be low. This brings to bear media ownership since in the Ghanaian context it's seen by many journalists and media stakeholders that morning shows take the greater part of everyday radio programme. Media owners or power breakers at radio organisations are likely to exhibit traits of political influence through hosts of the morning shows. These runs into crescendo with

Tables 9 and 10 that show the lifeline of influences or interests from the two major political parties as mentioned in the background of the study.

In the in-depth qualitative interviews, many media stakeholders and journalists have confirmed that many radio outlets are operate their daily professional activities to the tune of one political party or the other. In Table 12, all representatives of four media stakeholder institutions have answered in the affirmative that many radios in Ghana are operating for political parties, thereby been labelled as “NPP or NDC radio”.

“Though there has not been any research work yet to show the number of radio stations that are working to favour NPP or NDC but every serious journalist in Ghana knows this. Every serious person observing from far or near knows that there are radio stations which are daily operating on the whims and caprices of the ruling NPP and the opposition NDC as the two major political parties here in Ghana”, one Editor stated this during the qualitative Skype Interviews.

These come to confirm what a former Chairman of the National Media Commission (NMC), Kabral Blay-Amihere was quoted as saying in one of the news stories by Bokpe (2018) that: “If you look at the more than 400 radio and television stations in Ghana, it looks good for media pluralism, but a lot of them are owned by politicians or their surrogates. It does a lot to affect the integrity of the media”. The NMC is no mean a media stakeholder institution in the body journalism of Ghana and for that matter, such statement from the former boss could not be taken for a ride. It manifests itself into the Research Questions, sheds light on the Theory (media ownership) and influences the study objective a great deal.

Max-Wirth (2015) writes that it is common to find in the Ghanaian Public Sphere, the relationship between rumour and politics – how many political leaders use rumours, positive and mostly negative to discredit their political opponents in the mass media. And the danger is that, these rumours which are rampant in the media, especially, in radio journalism, serve as source of news and to a larger extent, influence the Ghanaian electorate’s choice of a political leader. It comes back to the common knowledge that representatives of political parties who engage in their political agenda during radio morning shows find traces to the study objective. It goes some more sour tastes that even on many radio morning shows

discussants who participate in talks and are labelled as Social Commentators are often blamed for either aligning to political party A or B. A clear example is number one Radio Station in Ghana, Peace fm. Two newspaper Editors (Kweku Baako of the New Crusading Guide and Kwesi Pratt Jnr of The Insight) participate in the morning show of the radio station as Social Commentators. However, observation shows that these two Social Commentators are often accused of speaking for the ruling NPP and opposition NDC respectively when they are expected to remain neutral in their talks, though the two have vehemently denied doing the bidding of any political party. Whether the blame is true or false, the relationship between rumour and politics in the Ghanaian public sphere is an affront to professional radio journalism (Max-Wirth, 2015).

If Ghana's system of democracy practice makes the mass media as both actors and facilitators (Amoakohene, 2007) then blending political parallelism and media watchdog role could be one of the points at climax in this study. Morning shows on radio stations seen as "Breakfast Shows", often prepare the minds of the audiences in striking the balance between democracy and development. Development through democracy is often desirable in developing countries including Ghana and if the media could be used a tool for development (Sparks, 2007), journalists hosting radio morning talk shows and their owners have a critical role to play.

McQuail (2000) talks about mediation roles and functions of mass media and provides a list of these roles and functions perceived to be played in society. His list includes mass media organisations been seen as "a window on events and experience", "a mirror of events in society and the world", "a filter or gatekeeper", "a signpost, guide or interpreter", "a forum or platform for the presentation of information and ideas" and "interlocutor or informed partner in conversation".

This list by far explains that if radio outlets in Ghana would be "a window of events and experience", Morning Talk Shows play a part of informing radio listeners of events happening to make the audiences draw some experiences from them. And the element of political influence could hold this mediation role in check. This goes far when radios function as "a mirror of events in society and the world". Discussion of local, national and global events on radio morning talk shows afford the audiences the pride of place to deepen participation level in democracy, aside the primary roles of education and information.

However, political influence could mar this role, seeing politics and rumours around it in the wheels of propaganda is an affront to journalism (Max-Wirth, 2015).

More so, mass media mediation role as being “a filter or gatekeeper” and “a signpost, guide or interpreter” also rings at a crescendo. Morning talk shows on radio outlets in Ghana which are believed to be taking much attention of the audiences in the Ghanaian public sphere, could guide and interpret developmental paradigms by the content they produce. However, qualitative interviews with media stakeholders for this study come to confirm that politicians and their political parties are seemingly cuddling radio morning talk show hosts into their “inner circles” instead of serving as filters, gatekeepers or signposts.

One of the interviewees has stated: “Political rallies are no more only held in public places where political party members and their sympathisers attend to the climax and anti-climax. Indirectly, hosts of radio morning talk shows have been bought by the parties into their inner circles and most of these hosts have converted their studios into party rally grounds, throwing media functions and mediation roles to the dogs”.

This quotation is really in bad taste to radio journalism but at the same time, it is in good taste for scholarly work – thus, the significance of this study that clinches to the study objective. Media autonomy (independence) when compromise under the guise of political influence or other interests, raises eye brows in global journalism (Hanitzsch, et al, 2019).

Another media mediation role as “a forum or platform for presentation of information and ideas” and “interlocutor or informed partner in conversation” sounds favourable to political influence. In this case, it will be difficult to accuse the radio owners or talk show hosts for using their airtime to do the bidding of one political party or the other, seeing media platforms or radio studios as places for presentation of ideas when representatives of political parties participate in these talk shows. On the other hand, it becomes a bit challenging in usual debates or political discussions on air when hosts show traits of biases. In that case, colleague journalists who also listen to such programmes could trace some shadows of political influence, either directly been a compromise between the host and that party or indirectly through the radio owner and that party. After all, within politics, communication flows in many directions (direct and indirect). The power of information as in political

messaging, persuasion and strategic communication design could be used to understand and affect the outcome of that communication process (Christian, 2016).

“Some political parties deal directly with hosts of radio talk shows where the hosts as journalists compromise on their media mediation roles and they make sure that, if NPP or NDC is their favourite, they push them ahead of other discussants in the studio. This is so clear that anyone who listening or observing could know the biases of the host. This shows that the arm of political interest or influence is highly infiltrating into the rank and file of radio journalists who host morning talk shows and this attracts a sense of deep concern by media associations and media stakeholder institutions for the sake of independent journalism”, one of the interviewees is quoted as saying during qualitative skype interview as one of the methods of data collection of this study.

He added that: “Apart from morning talk shows, there are a few radio stations who also run evening political talk shows and the kind of things they do on their airwaves are seeming debatable whether they are practising journalism or not. Asempa Fm belongs to the Multimedia Group Limited, its popular evening show is dubbed ‘Ekosisen’ two different journalists who have been hosting that show have been lambasted for running the show in favour of either NPP or NDC. Two other radio stations – Oman fm and Radio Gold are openly politically-labelled stations running their airtimes purposely for the ruling NPP and opposition NDC respectively. You could see that their journalistic mannerisms on air are either to credit one party and to discredit the other political party. This is obviously a big headache to radio journalism in Ghana”. Responsible journalism in Ghana may be at the crossroads and that the professional conduct of journalists in Ghana would need to be improved (Diedong (2016).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) could make sense on “Political Parallelism” – how political configuration is reflected in the media outlets - as one of the variables of studying media systems. This variable is criticised by de Albuquerque (2013) that Hallin and Mancini’s political parallelism is only useful in western societies. And that the concept of political parallelism can be productively make sense when two conditions are satisfied. The essence of tapping into his argument is that possibly, that variable may not be useful in young democracies like Ghana where the media system is yet to apply the concept of political configuration.

Diedong (2018) makes sense when he writes that the media in Ghana have been used as a conduit for promotion of ideas through political debates and have been platforms for political education of the citizenry, thereby making political building climate synergies paramount that could engender democratic participant communication processes for nation building. This obviously brings to the fore that radio political talk shows which dominate the Ghanaian radio context is the cradle of perception of political influence. And this appeals to the senses of the study objective which tries to assess perceptions of political influence in the Ghanaian radio journalism and tries to seek answers to its accompanying research questions.

4.3.4 Confidence Level, Interval

Confidence level and Confidence interval are two methodological machinery that shed light on the quantitative findings as one part of the study. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, the Confidence level of the study has been set to 95% in a Confidence Interval of 9 from a population of 1000 journalists. These have helped to determine the sample size of 106 journalists who were surveyed for the study. Though not all surveyed journalists could answer the questions in the survey, which likely to happen in every quantitative study, the choice of Confidence Level speaks volumes of the quality of answers expected to come from the respondents (informants). Confidence level tells how sure or certain the researcher could be, in this case, being 95% sure that the sample size (journalists selected out of the population) will be a true reflection of the population (The Survey System, a survey software, 2015).

The experiences of these journalists selected for the survey culminate in their perceptions on political influence. Though 45.28% of the survey respondents have practised journalism in Ghana in less than 10 years as shown in Table 4, 41.51% have professional practice in more than a decade. And these experiences have generated a wealth of information about journalists in radio practice in Ghana. Fuming into litany of journalistic cultures around the globe, the confidence reposed on the survey respondents helps in such viable conclusions, the extent to which political influence is perceived among journalists in Ghana. However,

comparing findings generated from the quantitative data of this study, it gives scholars the pride of place to deepen the practice of comparative research (Hanitzsch, et al 2019).

Resounding to the confidence level traces reins to what Hanitzsch, et al (2019) write that political influence as an index includes four groups of actors: politicians, government officials, pressure groups and business representatives. In cases where governments (especially the Executives) tend to have more power in political systems, journalists become infidels in their quest to ride on the shoulders of media autonomy or independence to make deep meaning to journalism as a profession.

Much as Hallin and Mancini (2004) would commiserate into their framework of media activity in line with “political parallelism”, journalists’ ability to manage this framework evokes a lot of energy in practice than it may be understood in professional parameters. In a situation where Ghanaian practising journalists understand the combined concept of politics and journalism; their roles assume the shapes of being lapdog or watchdog in the face of being the fourth estate of the real. However, understanding politics and for that matter political influence and its ascending dire consequences on journalism as profession and institution is remarkable to the level of confidence needed for the quantitative part of this study – that which rides in greater force in combination with data generated from qualitative part of the study.

4.3.5 Future of Ghanaian Radio Journalism

There is no definite future lifeline that journalism should thrive on in Ghana, but with much focus on radio, without strong checks and balances from professional supervisory body, the future of Ghanaian radio journalism looks gloomy on the scorecard of political influence. Hence, the objective of this study, its research questions and the theory combining as riding forces in a scholarly work of global journalism.

Responses from the quantitative survey show that majority of the respondents (61.11%) perceive political influence as a threat to the growth or future of radio journalism in Ghana – they choice of “Highly Threatening” rings a bell to the second research question of this study: “do the journalists feel threatened by political influence?”

A minority of the respondents that perceive political influence as not a threat to future of Ghanaian radio journalism is represented in the survey as 5.56% - ticking for “Not threatening”, a response arguably, a weak one that appear as warm-eaten water lily.

Interestingly, one respondent represented as 1.85% in the survey has no perception or does not know whether political influence is negatively crucial to the future of radio journalism in Ghana. This presumably strikes of certain assumption that there may be some elements within the Ghanaian media professional array who seem not to be aware or less knowledgeable the dangers posed by political influence on their work. And if the assessment by McChesney (2003) makes sense that communication system is the cornerstone of a modern society, Ghanaian radio journalism could pull the strings towards the centre of its path and drink at the table of global journalism by working independently in the future.

Diedong (2016) writes that responsible journalism in Ghana may be at the crossroads and that the professional conduct of journalists in Ghana would need to be improved, on the instinct that political influence is a threat to responsible journalism for the radio community of Ghana.

Professionalism as an issue in the print industry might be the similar or worse in the Radio industry one way or the other caused by political influence that challenges the status quo of media practice in Ghana. And the unethical practices in the media landscape may be due to poor education qualification, a weak regulatory body, existence of more than enough professional associations and “Money matters” that threaten professionalism (Nyarko, 2017).

An example of a persisting index of political influence is the closure of two radio stations (Radio Gold and Radio XYZ) linked to the opposition NDC in Ghana, mid 2019. Armed security personnel with officers from the National Communications Authority (NCA) stormed the premises of both Radio Gold and XYZ on May 9, 2019 and ordered their immediate shutdown. NCA claimed the reason for the shutdown of the two stations was that the affected radio stations have been operating without valid authorisation - they had not renewed their licences to operate as radio stations in the capital city of Accra (Mordy, 2019).

Meanwhile, persons affiliated to the opposition NDC have since the shutdown, taken into mainstream and social media, their suspicion of foul play, blaming the NCA of doing the bidding of the government (ruling NPP) by hiding behind invalid authorisation. Some posts monitored on *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* by this researcher showed similar pattern of disgust by activists on the shutdown. Those aggrieved activists blame officials of the NCA for being imbued with to political stratagem to disable the very dissenting radio stations, especially, those criticising government and helping to “sell the ideals of the NDC to Ghanaians”. This brings to fore the index of political influence which has been the crux of the study objective and its accompanying questions.

Media ownership on economic of scale may not necessarily derive much significance than the political connotations carried out through professional activities of journalists working in these politically-owned radio stations. John Mahama is the Presidential Candidate of the NDC in the runup to the next Ghana Presidential elections in 2020. He accuses the ruling NPP government of using the NCA to misapply the law in varied ways aimed at oppressing pro-opposition radio stations and it’s “unacceptable”. (Kojo, 2019). The NCA has denied any deliberate attempt to disable pro-opposition radio stations by shutting down addition stations bringing the total to 57, to give merit to the NCA waging war on valid authorisation but not political meandering.

This recalls similar decry of Oman fm, a pro-NPP station in the year 2012. The station is owned by Member of Parliament for Assin Central and party financier of the ruling NPP, Kennedy Agyepong. In the runup to the 2012 elections of Ghana, the NPP was then in opposition and used Oman fm as one of the pro-opposition stations for their campaigns. Oman fm experienced series of airwave (frequency) jam and accused the then ruling NDC government of using the media regulatory authority oppress the station (ghanaweb, 2012).

These two examples are display of counter accusations by the two major political parties in Ghana – NPP and NDC, depending on who is in power and who is in opposition to hide behind arms of government to oppress the pro-opposition radio stations. This shares various characteristics from quantitative and qualitative data collected for this study which in turn, seek to answer the research questions and make meaning to the research objective.

In a story published by ghanaweb (sourcing Classfmonline.com), a former President of Ghana, Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings is quoted as saying that businessmen and politicians in Ghana own the voices of the media in Ghana. This was when a delegation of the GJA paid a courtesy call on him in the build-up to the celebration of 70th anniversary of the GJA. He decried the phenomenon if not controlled could plague the media institution Ghana as a emerging modern society. “Former President Jerry Rawlings has said “things have gone so bad” in the media to the extent that the voices of journalists are now owned by politicians and business people”, Rawlings was quoted as saying and he further questioned: “How are you going to fight them? I don’t know but you have to try. You have to work hard at it,”. This reference shares the similar characteristics in political index that this study assesses as growing perception in journalistic practice in Ghana.

Scare and incomplete ownership information as a result of conflict of interest between politics and ownership portrays a weak regulatory system in Ghanaian radio journalism. “No safeguards are in place to prevent or curb media concentration or inhibit political control over media ownership” (RSF, 2017).

The BBC Ethics Guide 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 people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy. In the wake of political influence that prevents radio journalists in Ghana to be independent, radio practitioners in the Ghanaian Context would need to take professional ethics to the climax.

Besides, the BBC, the GJA Code of Ethics, within the national media parameters, also frowns upon political favouritism at the local and national levels. The future of Ghanaian radio journalism hangs in a balance until both National and International Ethical Codes are applied by journalists working in radio stations in Ghana. For index of political influence, ethical code as Autonomy or media Independence may be ideal and appropriate

4.4 Summary

Analysis based on the findings of data collected through mixed-methods is exposition that indeed, Ghanaian Journalists have perceptions of political influence. The influence, which is of course, a threat to journalism as a profession if not controlled, could be a big obstruction to the future of radio journalism in Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

As shown in the previous chapter (Findings and Analysis), the study by far, assesses perceptions of political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism. Through mixed-methods (both quantitative and qualitative) with aid from Media Ownership Theory to answer the two research questions, the study identifies certain cognitive representations among Ghanaian journalists selected for the population of the study.

Ghanaian Journalists in the first place, perceive political influence in radio stations which answers the RQ1. They in addition answer RQ2, especially, how threatening it is for journalists working in media organisations where the index of political influence abounds; clinging to interpretative repertoires of the danger political influence poses to journalism as a discipline and as an institution.

Assessment on different variables brings to bear professional lapses with regards to press freedom. Within the domain of perceptions of political influence based on responses from journalists and media stakeholders, the index redefines assumptions in media ownership. Findings that resonates literature on the relationship between media systems and the political environment (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Pockets of media frameworks such as political parallelism and the Ghana public sphere in review, attempt to accord successful characteristics to make meaning to data collection and analysis towards the study objective.

The study finds that many of radio stations in Ghana are owned directly by politicians and indirectly by business persons or groups believed to be aligned to one political party or the other (Mordy, 2019). More so, it finds that the two major political parties in Ghana – NPP and NDC, depending on which of them is in power, uses the state media regulatory bodies to oppress the pro-opposition radio station as one of the political machineries for propaganda building (Kojo, 2019). On both sides of national and global journalism, political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism, could be seen as a phenomenon affront to journalism in any measure (Atarah, 2014).

However, three key findings are learnt from the study bothering on Media Independence, Press Freedom and Future of Radio Journalism. Globally, one of the universal media ethics is Independence, when journalists are not independent, political influence either through internal and external factors curtails their professional framework and inhibits them on press freedom. And if such themes or codes are not controlled in the Ghanaian media context, the future of radio journalism becomes problematic. In other words, lack of media independence is crucial to press freedom and development of radio in Ghana as an emerging modern society, in future will be unsuccessful.

From Chapter One to Chapter Four (Introduction, Theory, Methodology, Findings and Analysis), the study scribes of the emergence on the need of radio as major source of news or information in Ghana, hence radio development as unit of interest for media scholars. Ghana currently has estimated population of 29 million and 56% of this population depends on radio for their information (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). In that vein, perceptions of political influence with its complementing threats, raise serious eye brows in the body of global journalism and media research which somewhat undermines the mass media mediation roles and functions perceived to be played in society (McQuail, 2000).

In another breadth, it could be emphasised that the study does not look at perceptions of political influence on the side of the audience (the listeners of radio stations in Ghana) but focusing on journalists and media stakeholders is fertile for body knowledge. After all, the media in Ghana has been a powerful tool in the independence of the country from colonial era and has till today, offered varied platforms for consensus building and calls for development and redevelopment (Amoakohene, 2007).

Furthermore, Press Freedom, which is a key metric in global journalism, primarily underlines how free the press is. Meaning, a study of this kind that focuses on the Ghanaian context, a country which has been ranked best in press freedom in Africa and 23rd in the world among 180 countries (RSF, 2018), political influence would to some extent, mar the image of the West African state in the annals of the history of journalism in Africa and the world.

While media licencing or accreditation body in Ghana, the National Communications Authority (NCA) would need to double up their investigations of political influence before authorising operation of radio stations, the National Media Commission (NMC) would need to be so much concerned of the media contents propagated by the radios in Ghana.

The GJA and all other media associations and media related stakeholders would need clockwise assessment of radio journalism in Ghana when it comes to political influence in the Ghanaian context. The study rejuvenates one of the cardinal points in global journalism that the media must be autonomous or Independent – being independent from political demarcation in professional operations is as significant than it may sound.

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APPENDICES

- Survey questionnaire
- Skype Interview Questions

Questionnaire for Survey (Quantitative)

This questionnaire is intended to collect data for academic purposes in Norway.

It follows your consent to help in a Master Thesis and data protection issues guaranteed by Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

The questionnaire is a survey study to solicit your views on Political Influence in Ghanaian Radio Journalism.

Please be assured that your identity will not be revealed, and your answers will be treated with confidentiality as emphasised in the Consent form. Feel free to answer the questions:

1. Tick the age category you belong to:
 - . 18-25
 - . 26-34
 - . 35-44
 - . 44 and above

2. Select your gender
 - . Female
 - . Male

3. Which of the following media categories do you fall within in terms of your journalism profession?
 - . Radio
 - . Television
 - . Newspaper
 - . Magazine
 - . Online
 - . Freelancer

4. For how long have you been practising journalism?
 - . Less than 5 Years
 - . Less than 10 Years
 - . More than 10 Years
 - . 20 Years and above

5. Which of these programmes do you pay attention to when listening to radio?
 - . Morning News
 - . Morning Show
 - . Midday News
 - . Evening News
 - . Evening Show

. Other

Specify.....

6. To what degree would you rate political favouritism in Morning Shows of your choice of radio?

. Very low

. Low

. High

. Very high

. Don't know

7. Would you support the claim that there is political influence in Ghanaian radio journalism?

. Yes

. No

. Other

8. To what extent would you rate the radio stations in Ghana perceived to be NPP?

. Low

. Very low

. High

. Very high

. Don't know

9. To what extent would you rate the radio stations in Ghana perceived to be NDC?

. Low

. Very low

. High

. Very high

. Don't know

10. To what extent would you perceive political influence as a threat to the growth of radio journalism in Ghana?

. Threatening

. Highly threatening

. Not threatening

. Don't know

THANK YOU!

*Political Favouritism in this case means whether it goes in favour of one of the two major political parties in Ghana (NPP or NDC)

Interview on Skype (Qualitative)

A representative each from the following offices/agencies/bodies:

- . The National Media Commission (NMC)
- . Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)
- . Editors Forum
- . Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)

Here are the questions:

1. How often do you listen to radio news and programmes in Ghana?
.....
2. There are two major political parties in Ghana – NPP (incumbent) and NDC (opposition). In your observation, does any of the radio stations align to any of these parties?
.....
3. Do you support the claim that some radio station owners dictate to their workers what they should produce in favour of a political party?
.....
4. Has any journalist at a radio station ever complained or reported of political influence to your outfit?
.....
5. To what extent do you feel political influence could negatively affect the growth of journalism in Ghana?
.....
6. Do you feel journalists working in politically-owned radio stations owned by politicians are being threatened by Political influence in journalism?
.....

7. In general, do you feel Press Freedom (with regards to radio) is being threatened by Political influence?

.....

8. Are there any suggestions you have, in case there is the need to avert situations whereby journalism is seen as being threatened by political influence?

.....