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SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY JOURNALISTS AND ITS IMPACT ON ETHICS: A CASE

STUDY OF NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA

BUGRIBA MARTINA

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UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY JOURNALISTS AND ITS IMPACT ON ETHICS: A CASE STUDY OF NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA

BY

BUGRIBA MARTINA

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, NYANKPALA IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE (MPHIL) IN INNOVATION COMMUNICATION

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DECEMBER, 2023

DECLARATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, Martina Bugriba, hereby declare that this thesis is wholly original with no publication history and that it hasn't been submitted anyplace for a degree. All references used in this work have been properly credited.

Signature ……………………… Date 27TH August, 2024

SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Signature ……………………… Date 27TH August, 2024

Dr. Eliasu Mumuni

(Main Supervisor)

Signature ……………………… Date 27TH August, 2024

Prof. Hudu Zakaria

(Co-Supervisor)

DEDICATION

This is for my dad. Thanks for believing in educating a girl child and not bowing to pressure to hand over your girls for marriage.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined social media use by journalists and its impact on ethics in Northern region of Ghana. This study employs a descriptive survey to guide its application of the research process with a sample of 100 participants and the use of closed-ended and open questions to collect data. The, 76.7% (46), 75% (45), 70% (42) and 53.3% (32) of the respondents agreed that they used Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp regularly for reporting. Again, this study revealed that, 75% (45) of the respondents agreed that, an individual's judgment or standard of journalism contributes to effective ethical behaviour is one the factors contributing to ethical journalism practice, 61.6% (37) of the respondents agreed that lack of knowledge of ethical journalism practices is one the factors contributing to non-ethical journalism practice. Furthermore, the study revealed that, 76.7% (46) of the respondents agreed that social media attracts a wider coverage audience for their media house, and 78.3% (47) of the respondents agreed that Social media makes journalism easier and efficient. However, the study concluded that; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, and WhatsApp were regularly used by the respondents for reporting. The study also concluded that; breach of confidentiality, Media manipulation of a journalist, Poor research support systems, and Lack of knowledge of ethical journalism practices are factors contributing to ethical and non-ethical journalism practice. However, it was concluded that, social media creates platforms for businessmen to market their products, and many other. Hence, the study advises media institutions and researchers in Ghana to tackle the utilisation of social media for journalistic objectives. Crucially, it is imperative to offer them consistent training on prudent utilisation of the technology. Furthermore, journalists should endeavour to acquire sufficient expertise in order to effectively utilise social media for professional objectives.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SMPs   -   Social Media Platforms

UDS   -   University for Development Studies

ICT   -   Information Communication Technology

IS   -   Information System

PNDC -   Provisional National Defense Council

MIS   -   Management Information System

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study's background and the problem statement are presented in this section. The study's objectives and questions are laid out in this section after considering the problem statement. Additionally, this section includes a justification for the study as well as definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

The longstanding phenomena of ethical concerns in journalism pertains to the veracity and public trust associated with journalistic activity. Nevertheless, there has been a resurgence of critical examination since an increasing number of individuals now favour social media over conventional media as their primary source of news consumption (Attkisson, 2014; Barthel, Mitchell & Holcomb, 2016; Davies, 2017and Fitzpatrick, 2018). The emerging media trends have transformed the dissemination of news through journalistic material in both print and online platforms. Recently, tablets and mobile phones have emerged as a new method of delivering information (Dimitrov, 2014).

What is the significance of ethics in journalism, given it is frequently a contentious topic among researchers and academia (Christensen, 2003)? Therefore, what is the prospective outlook for ethical journalism in the realm of social media platforms? According to a study conducted by Newsosaur in 2012, newspapers in the United States experienced a 31.5% decline in their proportion of the advertising industry, which was taken over by internet and mobile media. The Pew Research indicates a significant decrease in the readership of print newspapers in the US, with a reduction from 41% in 2002 to 23% in 2012 (PEJ, 2012). Gluyas (2012) and The Economist

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(2011) have observed comparable developments in Australia, Germany, and Japan, where there is a 94% subscription firewall.

Social media is commonly regarded as a democratic and participatory platform, often referred to as street journalism (Andrew, 2016; Radsch, 2013; Bowman & Willis, 2003). The researchers define social media as a platform through which individuals and groups of citizens engage in the gathering, reporting, and examination of news in order to offer impartial, trustworthy, precise, and pertinent information to its audience.

About 31.40 million people living in Ghana in January 2021, 15.70 million used the internet. In January 2021, 8.20 million people in Ghana used social media, accounting for 50.0% of the country's internet usage. Kemp, 11 February 2021. According to the 2018 Reuters Institute Digital News Report, there were 5.60 million active social media users and over 20 million mobile users in Ghana. This represents thirty percent of the app's users. With 28% of users, Facebook was the most popular platform, followed by YouTube with 15%, Facebook Messenger with 15%, and Instagram with 12%, according to the 2018 Reuters Institute Digital News Report. There were about 8.9 million Facebook users as of August 2021. However, as to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2021), the percentage of WhatsApp users in the nation did not exceed 83.9% of all internet users in the third quarter of 2020. In Ghana, the majority of social media platforms have consistently seen an increase in usage over time. Furthermore, mobile phones were used by 88% of all users, irrespective of gender, to access the network. Additionally, the data showed that there were 1.30 million monthly active Instagram users, 36% of whom were female and 64% of whom were male.

These figures suggest that social media is among the fastest ways to gather and share news. However, news organisations have to make sure they authenticate and thoroughly examine content

in addition to making sure they take into account other viewpoints prior to sharing it in order to maintain ethical standards (Radsch, 2013). According to Andrew (2016), social media is intrinsically incapable of verifying facts and limits the gatekeeping function. Direct distribution of raw material and information by the content provider constitutes this type of journalism (Radsch, 2013). Salawu (2014) points out that a number of words, including civic journalism and community journalism, have been used to characterise social media journalism as a result of journalists' discomfort with it. This has sparked questions regarding how professionalism should be applied in social media, as well as the vagueness around social media's definition and citizen journalists' identities (Glaser, 2014).

The confusion and misunderstanding that surround social media should not prevent it from emerging as a new kind of journalism that offers real-time narratives through user-generated content that is unfiltered and unedited (Kern & Nam, 2008). As a result, it implies that anybody can become journalists or citizen journalists without receiving a formal education, especially given the prevalence of social media use in this day and age. Therefore, it is essential to have the knowledge and abilities needed to use and manage the most basic social networking apps on smartphones and tablets. The purpose of this study is to investigate the variables that affect how journalists use social media and how those factors affect moral behaviour. As a case study, it will concentrate on Northern Region, Ghana.

1.2 Problem Statement

The significance of social media in contemporary communication and ethical journalism cannot be disregarded or ignored (Christensen, 2003). The incorporation of ethical journalism has significantly transformed the conventional practices of journalists, including their methods of operation and the manner in which they create and distribute their stories (Albertazzi & Cobley,

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2010). Despite its numerous effects on different aspects of human existence, social media has proven to be effective in its uses (Dwyer, 2010).

Social media has become the dominant method of sourcing information, surpassing traditional ethical journalism methods (Kern & Nam, 2008). Deuze's concept of journalism's perpetual self-reinvention is closely connected to the idea of "normalising". Singer (2005) established the latter concept in a study that examined how partisan journalism bloggers (j-bloggers) adapt their blogging to conform to traditional norms, beliefs, and practices. As journalists increasingly turn to social media for news gathering and audience engagement, they face challenges related to maintaining ethical standards, such as the accuracy of information, impartiality, and the preservation of journalistic integrity. Deuze's (2005) concept of journalism's perpetual self-reinvention highlights how these challenges are not entirely new, but rather, an evolution of ongoing debates around commercialization, new media technologies, and audience involvement. The rapid pace at which social media influences journalism necessitates a closer examination of how journalists are adapting to these changes, particularly in terms of ethical considerations (Deuze, 2005; Singer, 2005; Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). Through a content analysis of US j-blogs, she determines that journalists maintain their mindset as information providers even as they transition to the interactive online platform. Additionally, she finds that blogs are becoming more widely accepted as a part of traditional journalistic norms and practices, and in some cases, even improving upon them (192-193). Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton (2012) found comparable outcomes regarding journalists that use Twitter. Through an extensive analysis of the most popular journalists on Twitter, it was discovered that journalists have different approaches to using the platform. However, they seem to be adapting Twitter to their existing professional norms while also adjusting their norms to align with the changing practices of Twitter.

Journalists are becoming more skilled in their profession and are utilising social media as a diverse set of tools for gathering news (Ohaja, 2003). However, some traditional journalists are not at ease with or have a less favourable view of how social media impacts their journalistic practices, including their operations, interactions with their audience, and the calibre of their work (Lynne, 2010). The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of social media on professional journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana.

1.3   Main Research Objective

The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of social media practice on ethical journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana.

1.3.1   Specific Research Objective

1. To describe the various social media and ethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana.

2. To analyze factors contributing to ethical and non-ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana.

3. To determine the effect of social media on ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana.

4. To evaluates the strength and weaknesses of social media and traditional journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the various social media and ethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana?

2. What are the factors contributing to ethical and non-ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana?

3. What are the effects of social media on ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana?

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses between social media and traditional journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of social media and modern journalism by exploring the ethical challenges that arise from this relationship. By examining how social media influences journalistic practices in Ghana, particularly in the Northern Region, this research will provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of journalism in the digital age.

The findings of this study will not only illustrate the extent of social media's integration into journalism in Ghana but also highlight the ethical dilemmas journalists face as they navigate these new platforms. This will contribute to the field of journalism by offering a nuanced understanding of how traditional journalistic ethics are being challenged and redefined in the context of social media.

Furthermore, the study will inform the development of ethical guidelines and best practices for journalists who are increasingly reliant on social media for news gathering and dissemination. By bridging the gap between traditional journalism and social media, the research will foster a more cohesive and ethical approach to modern journalism, ultimately benefiting both practitioners and audiences.

The study's conclusions will serve as a foundational reference for prospective ethical journalists, emphasizing the importance of maintaining journalistic integrity while leveraging social media to reach broader audiences. Additionally, this research will benefit a diverse group of stakeholders, including media organizations, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and the general public, by providing evidence-based recommendations for navigating the ethical complexities of social media in journalism.

By contributing to the academic discourse on the relationship between social media and ethical journalism in Ghana, this study will not only enhance theoretical understanding but also serve as a valuable resource for scholars and researchers pursuing related inquiries. Ultimately, the study aims to strengthen the ethical framework within which journalism operates in the digital era, ensuring that the profession continues to uphold its core values in an increasingly connected world.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The investigation was geographically conducted in the Northern Region. The study examined the potential influence of social media usage on the ethical standards of journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study also delineated the diverse social media and ethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. It once again established the implementation of ethical journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study assessed the influence of social media on ethical journalistic practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. Furthermore, it examined the elements that contribute to the lack of ethical standards in journalism and the decrease in the veracity of news reporting in the Northern Region of Ghana. The Northern Region of Ghana was

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once again subjected to an evaluation of the merits and drawbacks of social media and traditional journalism techniques.

1.7 Definition of Key Concepts

a) **Social media**: Social media is the use of technology for interaction and communication. Social media is therefore well-liked because it enables individuals to come together in the virtual world to create a group, a forum, and a community where concepts and information can be shared without regard to distance (Sokoya, Onifade & Alabi, 2012).

b) **Communication**: To achieve mutual understanding, participants in this process produce and exchange information (Rogers, 2003). Consequently, the exchange of information and feedback.

c) **Internet**: Is the global network of computers around the world

d) **Technology:** This is the end result of accumulated information and the use of techniques, approaches, and procedures from both industrial production and academic research.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Conducting a study of this kind is impossible without some type of constraint. One restriction pertains to the difficulties encountered in literature, particularly in the context of social media. The limited comprehension and misinterpretation of social media and its influence on journalism as a profession posed obstacles to data gathering. Many people may view social media networks primarily as forums for casual conversation rather than spaces for serious journalistic endeavours. These impressions could potentially impact the reactions of the participants. Additional constraints such as time, financial resources, and bureaucratic processes in the media outlets presented a

formidable challenge. An additional obstacle arose in the form of meeting the required sample size for the study, as certain volunteers opted out due to work schedules and covid-19 guidelines.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters in accordance with the university's criteria. Chapter One provided a comprehensive explanation of the study's motivation by presenting the background information, narrating the problem, and justifying the study. In Chapter Two, the literature pertaining to the study's subject matter was examined and categorised according to the concept and definition, theoretical review, conceptual framework, and empirical evidence. In Chapter three, comprehensive techniques for data collection were provided, along with a description of the device used for collecting the data. Chapter four presented the outcomes and analysis of the discoveries. Chapter Five encompasses a concise overview of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two focused on the examination of concepts, definitions, and the establishment of a theoretical framework. The theoretical framework will analyse the existing research on news topics, the conventional concept of journalism and journalists, and the public, with a particular focus on their communication and interactivity. The main focus of this study will be on the impact of social media on professional journalism, as well as how journalists perceive and adapt to this shift. The study will be grounded in clear definitions of social media and journalism. This chapter also covers the conceptual framework, empirical evidence, and provides a summary. By drawing upon these prior investigations, a solid basis will be established for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of findings in the thesis.

2.1 Definition of Key Concepts

2.1.1 Social media

Scholars and academics often hold divergent perspectives regarding the interpretation and delineation of a concept. Occasionally, they reach a consensus, while at other times they have conflicting opinions regarding the interpretation of certain fundamental ideas, and this pattern persists in their understanding and characterization of social media.

Afko and Brake (2010) provided a concise definition of social media as the medium through which we engage in social interactions. Nevertheless, social media extends beyond mere sociability to encompass additional associated notions. Social media refers to the individual or collective actions

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and behaviours carried out on various communication platforms that facilitate the sharing of information. This encompasses the connection between the users and the cultural output. Howard and Parks (2012) justified this perspective by providing a justification for the inclusion of content creators, content consumers, and digital tools within the definition of social media.

Agbanu and Nwabueze (2011) define social network sites as online spaces where users can connect with one another and develop a public profile. These relationships may be one-to-one or arise from a web of relationships established by other users of the system. Take social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, for example. Social networking platforms pertain to an all-encompassing theoretical comprehension of diverse networked instruments that enable relationships between a minimum of two individuals. Qasim (2011) defines social media as an online platform that allows users to produce their own content. According to Albertazzi and Cobley (2010), is the outcome of software developments involving the application of enhanced web technologies denoted by numbers. For example, the versions of a technology can be identified by numbers, such 1.0 - 5.0, and so forth. Duarte Web 2.0 describes the built-in characteristics of websites that make it easier for users to contribute, share, and work together to spread information.

2.1.2 The Emergence of social media

Social media's widespread use has dramatically expedited and changed how information is shared, people interact with one another, and people work together in both private and public spheres. Social media first appeared and developed in the 1970s, and because of its many benefits, it has now permeated every element of our omnipresent daily lives (Morrison, 2015). Social media has profoundly changed how people obtain, share, and communicate information, which has strengthened societal interconnection. The origins of chat rooms and the first technological developments of newsgroups and listservs can be linked to this change (Morrison, 2015). Social

media history began with Six Degrees, a website that debuted in the middle of the 1990s. It set itself apart by encouraging the development of sincere bonds among its members, who voluntarily divulged their private information (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). Driven by the potential benefits of participation, users voluntarily shared their private and personal details and created accounts. Private information has been shared because social media has made it easier to develop personal connections. This disclosure offers a thorough picture of the person, giving the user profiles a genuine sense of status.

Wikipedia was the first crowdsourced encyclopaedia, and the year 2001 signalled the start of an ongoing stream of social innovation (Morrison, 2015). After that, in 2004 Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook appeared, and in 2006 Twitter followed (Morrison, 2015). These social media platforms facilitate the knowledge and skill sharing process (Morrison, 2015). Additionally, some academics contend that social media makes it easier for people to share specialist information and life experiences with one another. Despite being the most popular social media sites, Facebook and Twitter, MySpace is still in silent operation and has undergone numerous changes (Morrison, 2015).

Social media's pervasive use has made it a necessary component of peoples' everyday life. The first social networking site to gain broad recognition was MySpace. After, Facebook, and YouTube gained popularity, these platforms soon eclipsed one another, leading to the formation of online communities devoted to information sharing (Baruah, 2012). A unique method for creating and organising networks of relationships resulted from this. Since its founding by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, Facebook has grown to be a well-known and significant social media network (Kapoor et al., 2018). Facebook has been a popular platform for businesses to advertise on and grow, even though it was founded after MySpace and Friendster (Baruah, 2012). According to Kapoor et al.

(2018), the ability to foster a complex web of entrepreneurial connections resulted in the development of strong ties for profitable business ventures.

Social networking is rapidly capturing the interest of a wide range of individuals worldwide and having a big impact on everyday activities, including conducting business (Boyd & Ellison, 2010; Bria, 2013). Applications for the internet were developed, such as online stores like Amazon and eBay. Bria (2013) also noted that a lot of businesses have realised they can interact directly and electronically with their customers online. Regardless of how committed or inactive their clients are, most internet businesses have grown significantly as a result of the relationships they have built with them (Boyd & Ellison, 2010; Bria, 2013). Mobile market platforms in Ghana, such as Tonaton, Kikuu, and Jumia, have experienced notable expansion due to their adept use of social media platforms, including Facebook, for customer engagement. Similar to this, corporate and business initiatives led to the introduction of social networking platforms like LinkedIn that are expressly intended for professionals in the business sphere (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). Social media users skillfully highlight their professional backgrounds, accomplishments, areas of expertise, and personal profiles using these platforms. According to Szwajca (2017), professional networking sites provide users with the opportunity to interact with people of a similar or higher status, thereby increasing their social capital. Furthermore, the process by which people disseminate information on topics and fields in which they are experts establishes and strengthens their credibility and integrity (Szwajca, 2017). In the modern world, it is essential to know about the most recent developments in social media and the ramifications of upholding a positive online reputation.

2.1.3. Features of Social media

Social media can be distinguished based on its attributes of connectivity, dialogue, transparency, engagement, and community (Hermida, 2012). The aforementioned attributes of social media demonstrate its formidable influence over traditional media. They exhibit a remarkable capacity for adaptation due to their alignment with the interconnected nature of the global modern civilization. Social networking platforms are readily available and entail minimal or no expenses for usage. It is user-friendly and facilitates seamless connectivity with others. Once content is published on social media, it becomes immediately available to all connected communities due to the rapid pace of the platform. Not only are posting responses not delayed, but they are also almost instantaneous. Interactivity, as a characteristic of social media, facilitates multi-directional communication. Users engage in interactive communication, where they inquire, provide feedback, exchange perspectives, and present alternative opinions.

Regarding longevity, social media content retains its accessibility for an extended duration due to the inherent characteristics of the medium, and it can also be modified or revised at any given moment. Lastly, reach refers to the extent to which any content posted on social media can be accessed by everyone, transcending traditional social interactions of the past but with some limitations imposed by restrictions.

2.1.4 Types of Social media

Several online social media platforms, including blogs, forums, magazines, weblogs, social bookmark, microblogging, photos, wikis, ratings, podcasts, and videos, were classified by Taprial and Kanwar (2012). However, in their widely regarded journal, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) divide

social media into six main categories: Wikipedia, Google+, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs. We'll look at the following extensive and common ones here:

The social networking site Facebook was founded in February 2004 by Harvard University student Mark Zuckerberg. The public was able to access it in 2006. When it comes to both global reach and the overall number of active users, Facebook is currently the most popular social networking service. Many people are already using Facebook as their go-to social media site since it offers a variety of social networking services all inside a single interface. According to data from the third quarter of 2012, there were one billion active Facebook members monthly. Those who have accessed their Facebook accounts in the last thirty days are considered active users in this context. Statistics (2018) states that during the most recent quarter, the company reported that 2.7 billion people used at least one of its core products on a monthly basis: Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, or Messenger. Approximately 85% of Facebook's total revenue comes from advertising. This is the platform's primary source of income. It also receives revenue from the creation of user-based data and direct commercial payments (O'Connell, 2018).

Major media outlets frequently use Twitter, a well-liked social networking site, to disseminate information rapidly. On a variety of devices and platforms, Twitter users can share their tweets and follow the tweets of other users. Tweets and retweets can be sent using desktop software, regular text messaging on mobile phones, or the Twitter.com website. The microblogging service has an average of 321 million monthly active users in the fourth quarter of 2018, according to a Statista analysis.

The term "blog" is derived from "web blog," which first appeared as a substitute media format in the 1990s. The classic diary has been changed into an interactive website and blog that allows

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people to share their daily experiences, voice their opinions, and express their thoughts. Moreover, it enables stimulating dialogues between users.

Since its founding in 2005, YouTube has supplanted VCD and DVD use as the most popular online video platform. It gives everyone the chance to post a video on the internet in a way that other users may view and comment on. During protests, YouTube regularly gives major media outlets in-depth video coverage. The social media site claims to have over 2.0 billion active users per month.

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn is a social networking service mostly utilised by academics and professionals. Unlike other forms of social media, it is the largest professional network available online. It serves as a networking and connection platform for professionals and individuals in need of their services. With over 600 million members and over 300 million active users each month, LinkedIn is a large membership platform. Forty percent of users use it every single day. The average person on LinkedIn spends only seventeen minutes a month on the site. A 2018 Pew Research Centre research found that college students overwhelmingly choose LinkedIn over other social networking platforms. A follow-up study discovered that whereas 50% of Americans with a degree who have finished their schooling are active users of LinkedIn, only 9% of those without a post-secondary education utilise the platform. Furthermore, 44% of LinkedIn members make more than $75,000 a year, which is more than the US national median. Despite having 133 million members overall, the United States is home to the largest percentage of LinkedIn users—70%— who are based outside of the country. Men make up 57% of LinkedIn's user population, and they are more popular than women, according to Osman (2019).

Wikipedia is a collaborative online resource where users are free to add, modify, and create material. Wikipedia is well-liked by many people since it provides succinct information. Because it doesn't run advertisements, it is often considered to be the most democratic platform. Google+: After attempting to join the social networking space with Google Talk, Buzz, and Wave in the past, Google launched its most recent venture.

2.1.5 Journalism

According to the Longman Dictionary, journalism refers to the act of producing written content for periodicals, newspapers, television, and radio. Lynne (2010) defines journalism as the occupation of composing, collecting, and distributing information in the form of opinions and news regarding societal events, utilising mass media. Lull (2002) contends that journalism, as a field of study, involves the gathering, analysing, confirming, and presenting of information pertaining to contemporary events, trends, and societal matters. Individuals who engage in the profession of journalism are commonly referred to as journalists. Journalism is a component of communication that involves the process of posing, documenting, and responding to inquiries on the aspects of what, who, when, where, why, and how (Obasi, 2012). Journalism, as a profession, aims to disseminate information about public matters that would otherwise be kept private, and to bring to light individuals with both positive and negative intentions to the wider society. Initially, journalists provide information, commentary, and expansion on subjects that are already widely known by the public. Qasim (2007) defines journalism as the intentional and mindful process of collecting information, organising and evaluating data in order to educate, inform, and engage the public, enabling them to make well-informed decisions.

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2.1.6 Concept of Modern Journalism

In the age of online journalism, modern journalism utilises the internet to achieve widespread influence. Currently, every reputable media organisation possesses an internet platform. Engaging actively in the activities of gathering, reporting, evaluating, and distributing information. Currently, there is a lack of news. Essentially, almost anything can be considered news (Dwyer, 2010). Radio, newspapers, periodicals, and television stations all have websites that provide access to documentaries, news items, and interviews that are presented in their offline counterparts, through the Internet. Dwyer's (2010) analysis found that about 70% of the material in large online news stories is exactly the same as the content in the offline version. Contemporary media companies have established Online Departments or Units to serve their readers via the Internet (Ganiyu & Qasim, 2011). Ohaja (2003) suggests that incorporating music, images, video, and text into their websites will facilitate their audience's access to media stories. Dwyer, again, examined the changing dynamics of content production, distribution, and consumption and evaluated evolving connections between producers and consumers.

2.1.7 Overview of Social media in Ghanaian Context

Based on the 2018 Reuters Institute Digital Data Report, the total number of active social media users in Ghana is 4.90 million, while the number of mobile users stands at 19.53 million. The social media platform that dominated the country was WhatsApp, a widely used text messaging service, which accumulated 5.60 million active users, or 19% of the total population. This accounts for 30% of the total user base of the application. The Reuters Institute Digital Data Report of 2018 revealed that Facebook possessed the largest user base, comprising 28% of the total. YouTube and Facebook Messenger followed with 15% and 15%, respectively, while Instagram held 12%.

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The findings of the survey unveiled a gender discrepancy in the frequency of engagement with the two preeminent social media platforms, Facebook and WhatsApp, with males outnumbering females. 36% of the 5.60 monthly active Facebook users specified their gender as female, while 64% of the users identified as male. Additionally, 88% of all site visitors utilised mobile devices, irrespective of gender. 36% of the 1.30 million monthly active Instagram users were female, while 64% were male.

2.1.8 Social media and Communication

2.1.8.1 Corporate Communication

According to Razmerita et al. (2014), the use of social media in business has brought about a variety of approaches for managing knowledge, social networking sites, and both treated and raw data in addition to supporting social processes. Furthermore, it has been noted that businesses are using social media to find creative ways to attract clients, which is greatly enhancing their success. Additionally, social media plays a vital role in organisations. Janhonen and Johnson (2011), cited by Razmerita et al. (2014), assert that social media can improve teamwork and ease the transfer of knowledge within businesses. Social media helps businesses, but there are drawbacks as well, including concerns about security, privacy, and intellectual property rights. Businesses have to create and maintain an inclusive working culture that values diversity in the workplace, encourages customers to share company expertise, and supports the use of media technologies for overall business growth (Razmerita et al., 2014).

Businesses rely on social media networks to interact with their target audience via multiple routes of communication, feedback, and reporting. According to Verhoeven et al. (2012), social media has been adopted by most research businesses in the UK for corporate communications. These businesses mostly employ social networking platforms, microblogging, and video sharing. It is

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essential to have a specific goal in mind when trying to get agreement from important stakeholders while using social media to spread information. Moreover, the increasing ubiquity of social media has required many companies to adapt and expand their communication strategies in order to reach a wider audience (Gómez & Chalmeta, 2013). Compared to traditional mainstream media, Gómez and Chalmeta (2013) claimed that social media offers a unique advantage since it allows users to create content and communicate ideas in creative ways. The book showcases a wide range of modern online information sources that have been created to improve communication (Gómez & Chalmeta, 2013). In order to learn about new goods, services, and brands, users produce, publish, share, and debate on online content (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004 as stated in Khan & Jan, 2015).

According to Mangold and Faulds (2010), cited by Khan and Jan (2015), social media can provide organisations with a competitive advantage, real-time communication, online archiving, and cost-effective collaboration. Social media is about the present as well as the future. Therefore, it is imperative to fully leverage social media for corporate communication needs and efforts. These programmes have the potential to improve the company's favourable standing with both its active stakeholders and rivals (Khan & Jan 2015). Additionally, businesses can use social media platforms to start and carry on deep dialogues with stakeholders. It is important to note that social media is still becoming more and more popular in some nations. Accordingly, leveraging public relations in company communication effectively requires a blend of conventional and online social media (Khan & Jan, 2015). To do this, statements posted on social media platforms need to be precise, brief, and engaging in order to reach a larger audience and build the most momentum.

2.1.8.2 Public Relations

When assessing the use of social media for publicity by non-profit organisations, Curtis et al. (2010) found that social media technologies have shown to be beneficial communication channels for PR officers. They also noticed that companies with well-established PR departments were adopting social media as a tool to achieve corporate objectives. As social media platforms can reliably provide information rapidly, public relations officers are using them more and more for a variety of purposes. According to Curtis et al. (2010), public relations professionals have acknowledged the effectiveness of social media in doing their jobs, and using it will expand the target audience's reach and speed up the development of communication campaigns.

According to Verhoeven et al. (2012), organisations in Europe are realising the value of social media in their PR campaigns more and more. They did concede, though, that print media continued to be the principal channel of communication for public relations professionals in Europe. Additionally, Verhoeven et al. (2012) predicted that in the coming years, online communication would probably overtake print media and take the lead in public communication. Similar to their American counterparts, European practitioners are comfortable using well-known social media platforms that fall under the category of digital communication, like web blogs and microblogs (Verhoeven et al., 2012). Verhoeven et al. (2012) and Skoric (2016) found a positive association between the perceived strategic effect of public relations firms and the use of social media in public relations.

In terms of the relationship between social media and public relations, it is clear that most businesses are using very different communication strategies. Public relations has been significantly shaped by social media. As per a noteworthy analysis conducted by eMarketer in 2011, 63.7% of US internet users and customers predominantly utilise social networks (Hellickson,

2011). Hellickson (2011) found that almost sixty-three percent of small businesses said social networking had a big impact on their revenue and sales. As a result, he concluded that social media has not only penetrated the field of public relations but also that public relations practitioners will need to improve their techniques to successfully engage audiences via social media platforms.

2.1.9. Impact of Social media on Journalism Profession

As a profession, journalism serves the public interest and keeps up with the ever changing requirements of society. According to Deuze (2005), the journalism industry is one that constantly reinvents itself in reaction to changing trends. Subsequently, Deuze outlined the five fundamental values of journalism, which are legitimacy, swiftness, autonomy, reliability, and public service. However, the challenges that social media use presents to journalistic standards are not new; the field has previously addressed topics like ownership concentration, new media technological advancements, audience participation, marketing, and bureaucracy (Deuze, 2005).

Social media, albeit still relatively new, has put journalism's long-standing conventions under pressure. Divergent views have been voiced by specialists who have examined the emerging platform with reference to social media's impact on journalism. These include the belief that social media has either positive or negative effects on the journalism industry. According to Harper (2009), Belair-Gagnon (2012), and Hermida (2012), social media has caused a review of the condition of journalism today, impacting and changing the industry. On the other hand, Deuze (2007) and Shirky (2008) claim that social networking has actually destroyed the journalistic industry. They underlined that social media is having a big impact on journalism, changing communication strategies and how information is produced, distributed, and consumed.

On the other hand, some claim that in the age of social media, journalism will maintain its professional position (Dimitrov, 2014). Huffington (2008) supported Dimitrov's viewpoint by stating that journalism will not only survive but thrive in the light of social media's increasing popularity. Tomno (2012) claims that social media is frequently seen as the apex of journalism history. Despite the perception that social media is replacing journalism, it actually offers the sector an opportunity to flourish (Newman, 2009; Montgomery, 2014). Social media has given them access to additional platforms for easy communication with news and information consumers, promoting dialogue and information dissemination. The emergence of social media poses a unique challenge to the field of journalism (Watt & Allan, 2013).

There is currently a battle between social media and journalism to see who can position themselves more favourably in modern culture. The majority of research agree that social media does affect the journalism profession, despite differing views on the extent of these effects. Perhaps for this reason above all others, journalism is starting to gain traction on social media networks. By using social media to give the public trustworthy information, this aims to support the journalism profession in staying relevant. Thus, the new rule for journalists in the new field is to have conversations and build relationships with the public (Fancher, 2009). The public's trust in journalism has been declining over the last few decades, but it may be rebuilt with the advent of public partnership as a new medium. Skoler (2009) asserts that social media serve as a tool for reestablishing contact with customers in order to stay relevant and add value in the rapidly changing journalism industry.

According to the dominant opinion, production and distribution constraints were primarily to blame for the unidirectional news and information transfer that occurred in the past (Beckett, 2008). He argues that news should involve a conversation between the knowledgeable and the

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curious. Collaboratively produced news and programming with audience participation have greater depth and meaning-generating potential than those produced by a single journalist. Benkler (2006) asserts that the process of creating importance is highly decentralised and collaborative. Because of this, in the networked information economy, new information models are having a greater and greater impact on how we generate and comprehend meaning (knowledge, information, and culture) (Benkler, 2006).

Nevertheless, this does not imply that media organisations would readily adopt social media. The shift in attitude of media organisations towards utilising social media platforms occurs gradually, especially in countries with well-established and active media sectors (Newman et al, 2012). At that point, experts initiated discussions on preserving journalism, which serves as the foundation of democracy. Hermida (2012) outlines the significant effects that social media has had on journalism:

News gathering: Journalists utilise their social media presence to acquire ideas, stories, and sources, thereby gaining a distinct viewpoint on many subjects. By relying on audiences, they have been empowered not only as providers of news but also as detectors of news. Given the limitations of journalists' physical presence, social media platforms are primarily and extensively utilised for the dissemination of breaking news, including occurrences like natural disasters and terrorist acts.

News reporting is enhanced by social media, which allows for the dissemination of news as it happens, including eyewitness accounts, across different regions. However, research indicates that journalists and media organisations have not fully tapped into the capabilities of social media, as they are not effectively participating in online interactions with their viewers. The advent of social media has had a profound worldwide influence, revealing numerous previously unnoticed patterns

that will continue to emerge in the future. Given the permanence of social media, its impact on journalism will persist. Journalists actively contribute to the development and establishment of accepted professional standards for social media (Hermida, 2012).

2.2 Theoretical framework

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), theories comprise the fundamental concepts, principles, frameworks, and principles that establish the knowledge base pertaining to the subject under investigation. The preliminary section of the literature examined the concepts of journalism and social media, which are intricately connected to the subject under investigation. The theoretical portion will analyse the theories used to evaluate the research questions and findings.

2.2.1 The Diffusion of Innovations

This theory draws its foundations from Rogers' (1995) diffusion of innovations theory of communication and is derived from Gabriel Tarde's (1903) work titled "The Laws of Limitation," which was conducted in the 19th century and focused on sociology and legal studies. The theory posits that an innovation, such as a novel technique, technology, or idea, disseminates over a broader society following a specific pattern. The notion posits that innovation typically commences with a select few individuals who promptly become aware of it, while others will require a more extended period to experiment with the novel concept, and yet others will necessitate an even greater duration. Bryant and Thompson (2002) contend that the rapid adoption of a new media technology by a large number of individuals is referred to as an explosive emergence. Rogers, along with other diffusion scholars, has categorised the adoption of innovations into five distinct groups that encompass all individuals in a society. The following categories are included:

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1. **The innovators:** This group is characterised as those who are inclined to take risks and are willing to experiment with novel ideas. Unlike risk averse individuals, they have a more cosmopolitan approach to their social relationships. These groups have a tendency to communicate and develop cliques with one other, regardless of geographical distinctions (Rogers, 1995).

2. **The early adopters:** exhibit a more localised rather than cosmopolitan behaviour. Because of their essential role in the local community, this group of adopters generates the opinion leaders in every category. Typically, individuals who embrace new ideas at an early stage are interested in acquiring knowledge about innovations, and their opinions are highly regarded. Individuals in this adopter group garner the admiration of their community due to their accomplishments and their relentless pursuit of embracing novel ideas. Rogers (1995) noted that early adopters place great importance on earning the respect of others in their society, and their behaviour is consistently aimed at preserving that regard.

3. **The early majority:** This type of adopters pertains to individuals who exhibit a reluctance to be the initial adopters of novel concepts or technologies. Instead, they will intentionally procrastinate in making decisions regarding the adoption of a new idea or technology. This category typically validates an innovation by demonstrating to others that it is beneficial and necessary to adopt.

4. **The late majority:** refers to a group of individuals who are typically hesitant and critical when it comes to adopting new innovations, often questioning their practicality and value. They delay their adoption until the majority of individuals have attempted and embraced the innovation. Occasionally, individuals in this group are motivated by social forces or

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peer pressure. On occasion, they are compelled to embrace the advancements due to economic pressure.

5. **The laggards:** refer to those who are the last to accept an invention. The laggards are accustomed to conventional practices from the past and exhibit resistance towards embracing novelty. A significant number of these individuals engage with others who have similar perspectives. Once a slow adopter embraces an innovation, it signifies that the innovation has become obsolete and the rest of society has advanced far beyond it (Rogers, 1995).

The idea is relevant to the present study since social media represent novel instruments employed by journalists to fulfil their duties. However, certain individuals remain doubtful regarding their influence in the realm of journalism and consequently exhibit hesitancy in embracing and utilising them.

2.2.2 Theories of Social media
The term "social media" encompasses all web-based platforms that enable effective mutual communication and facilitate connection-building. Social media networking sites include but are not limited to the following: YouTube, blog sites, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and news delivery websites. Media richness theory is the most recent theoretical development in this field. The subsequent topics shall be expounded upon.

2.2.2.1 Social Presence Theory

Social Presence Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the impact of social media on journalism and the ethical challenges it presents. According to the theory, the effectiveness of a communication medium in conveying social presence—defined as the

perception of another's presence in an interaction—determines its social impact. In journalism, social presence is critical, as it influences the audience's connection with the news source and the perceived authenticity of the information.

Social media platforms, by their very nature, facilitate high levels of social presence by allowing immediate and interactive communication between journalists and their audiences. These platforms offer a sense of proximity, sensitivity, and personalization that traditional print media cannot match. The immediacy and intimacy facilitated by social media are key factors that enhance the connection between journalists and their audiences, making social media a powerful tool for news dissemination.

However, this increased social presence also brings about ethical challenges. The ease of interaction on social media can blur the lines between professional and personal communication, leading to potential conflicts with traditional journalistic norms. For instance, journalists may feel pressure to engage with their audience in ways that prioritize immediacy and emotional connection over objectivity and accuracy.

Moreover, Social Penetration Theory (SPT) suggests that the deeper emotional connection fostered by social media can lower individuals' emotional barriers, leading to a more profound impact on their perceptions and beliefs. This further underscores the societal influence of social media, as it has the capacity to shape public opinion more effectively than traditional media. In the context of this study, understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing the ethical implications of social media use in journalism, particularly in the Northern Region of Ghana.

By applying Social Presence Theory to this study, we can better understand how social media's ability to create a sense of presence and connection affects journalistic practices and ethics. This theoretical framework will help elucidate the ways in which social media is reshaping the ethical landscape of journalism, offering insights into how journalists can navigate these challenges while maintaining professional integrity.

2.2.2.2 Media Richness Theory

According to the Media Richness theory, communication channels are considered to have a significant degree of richness when they are capable of sending information to others in a timely and explicit manner (Sedigheh, 2014). According to the idea, the richness of a media is determined by four factors: (i) its capacity to enable quick feedback, (ii) its capacity to establish personal concentration, (iii) its capacity to use natural language, and (iv) its capacity to manage several information cues simultaneously (Sedigheh, 2014).

Thus, in relation to these characteristics, social media possesses a greater abundance of resources compared to traditional print media. The utilisation of multimedia tools allows for the delivery of information in a more precise, comprehensive, and visually appealing manner. This may be achieved by the incorporation of numerous sources and the utilisation of diverse forms of media, such as photos, videos, text, and emojis. Social media has the ability to provide material that is tailored to individual preferences and also offers a unique and instantaneous means of collecting input. Additionally, it enables users to create, comment on, exchange material, and engage in relevant debates (Kessler, 2013; Yu, 2017; Dabbous, 2017).

Meanwhile, print media is at a disadvantage when it comes to the traits outlined earlier in relation to social media. However, it is ultimately up to the publisher to decide whether to publish or disregard these remarks. If the publisher disregards your comment, it becomes a non-issue. Through social media, the user's comment is immediately made available to the general public, and everyone who signs in will be able to view this news item. Currently, social media has surpassed print media in popularity.

2.2.2.3 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

This theory offers a conceptual structure for comprehending how individuals actively influence and are influenced by their surroundings. This theory specifically explains the mechanisms of observational learning and modelling, as well as the impact of self-efficacy on behaviour production (Vinney, 2019). Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) posits that individuals acquire knowledge and skills through the process of seeing and emulating others, as well as through the experience of positive reinforcement. SCT asserts that changes in behaviour are driven not just by internal dispositions and personal characteristics, but also by external circumstances. According to Stefanone, Lackaff, and Rosen (2010), behavioural change is an intricate process that is impacted by both external and internal influences. Possessing a strong sense of self-efficacy hold optimistic expectations and firmly think that the results of their actions will be advantageous, efficient, and helpful for their own benefit. Individuals possess the ability to organise themselves, reflect on their actions, regulate their behaviour, take initiative, and are not solely influenced by external factors. Social cognitive theory is integral to cognitive, observational, introspective, and self-regulatory processes.

Social cognitive theory (SCT) elucidates the process by which individuals acquire and sustain specific habits through the act of modelling. This process entails observing, interpreting, and adapting one's own behaviour based on the actions observed in others (Khang, Ki, & Ye, 2014). According to SCT, persons incorporate something into their identity when they engage in it consistently. Over time, the act of regularly observing that specific social media platform gets ingrained in the individual and causes them to neglect traditional print media.

2.2.3 Theory of social media Versus Print Media

McLuhan's modified displacement hypothesis offers a compelling explanation for the impact of social media on traditional print media, particularly in relation to ethical journalism. According to this hypothesis, the advent of new media technologies displaces older forms of media by offering more efficient, accessible, and interactive alternatives. Social media, with its real-time communication capabilities and global reach, has significantly displaced print media in many aspects of news dissemination.

Unlike print media, where the correction of inaccurate information is often delayed and geographically limited, social media allows for immediate dissemination and correction of content. This immediacy reduces the risk of prolonged misinformation and enhances the ability to reach a broader audience quickly. However, this also poses ethical challenges, as the rapid spread of information on social media can amplify errors before they are corrected, potentially leading to widespread misinformation.

The theory of mass self-communication further elucidates the impact of social media on traditional media by highlighting the self-directed nature of online communication. In this digital environment, users not only consume content but also generate and disseminate their own information, often bypassing traditional journalistic gatekeeping processes. This shift has profound implications for journalistic ethics, as it challenges the control that traditional media outlets have over the accuracy and integrity of the information being shared.

In addition, McLuhan's theory of displacement emphasizes the transformation of media consumption patterns. The ease of accessing information through social media, even from decades ago, contrasts sharply with the difficulties associated with retrieving information from print media archives. This accessibility underscores the growing dominance of social media as a primary source of information, further displacing print media's role in society.

By applying McLuhan's modified displacement hypothesis and the theory of mass self-communication to this study, we can better understand the ethical implications of social media's influence on journalism in Ghana. These theories provide a framework for analyzing how social media is reshaping the practices and ethical considerations of journalism, particularly in the Northern Region of Ghana, where traditional media may still play a significant role. The study will explore how journalists navigate the ethical challenges posed by this displacement, such as maintaining accuracy, credibility, and accountability in an era where information is rapidly produced and consumed online.

Ultimately, this theoretical lens will help illuminate the complex relationship between social media and print media, offering insights into how journalists can uphold ethical standards while adapting to the evolving media landscape.

2.3 Conceptual Review

A conceptual framework, as defined by Huberman (1994), is a theoretical structure that consists of assumptions, principles, and rules that unify the ideas encompassing a comprehensive notion (Huberman, 1994). A conceptual framework is a fundamental structure composed of abstract components that symbolise the observable, experiential, and analytical/synthetic elements of a process or system being conceptualised. It is a collection of overarching concepts and principles derived from pertinent areas of study, which are then employed to organise a subsequent presentation. The correlation between independent and dependent variables establishes the structure for specific anticipated results.

This study incorporates multiple social media characteristics that have been previously examined to assess their influence on the journalism profession. The study has selected Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Wikipedia as independent variables, whereas the dependent variable is the Impact of the Journalism Profession.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables   Dependent Variable

Types of social media

Facebook

Twitter

YouTube

LinkedIn

Wikipedia

Ethical Journalism practices
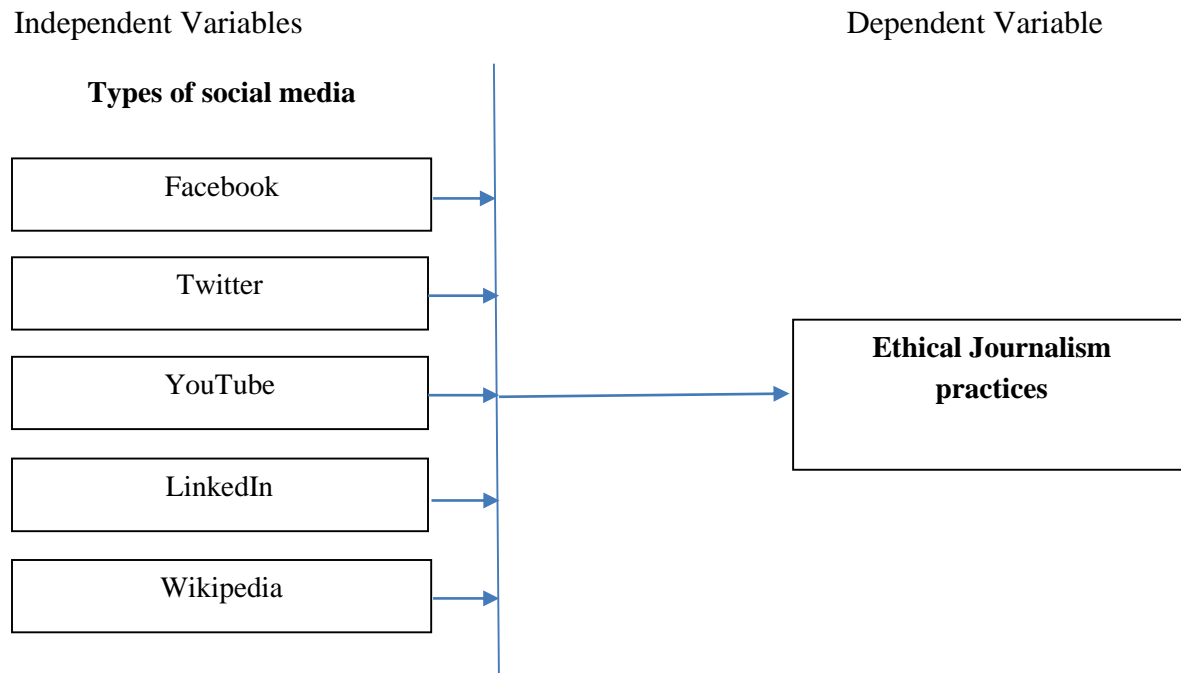
Source: Author, 2022

2.3.1 Concept of Modern Journalism

In the age of online journalism, modern journalism utilises the internet to achieve widespread influence. Currently, every reputable media organisation possesses an internet platform. Engaging actively in the activities of gathering, reporting, evaluating, and distributing information. Currently, there is a lack of news. Essentially, almost anything can be considered news (Dwyer, 2010). Radio, newspapers, periodicals, and television stations all have websites that provide access to documentaries, news items, and interviews that are presented in their offline counterparts, through the Internet.

Dwyer's (2010) analysis found that about 70% of the material in large online news stories is exactly the same as the content in the offline version. Contemporary media companies have established

Online Departments or Units to serve their readers via the Internet (Ganiyu & Qasim, 2011). Ohaja (2003) suggests that incorporating music, images, video, and text into their websites will facilitate their audience's access to media stories. Dwyer, again, examined the changing dynamics of content production, distribution, and consumption and evaluated evolving connections between producers and consumers.

2.3.2 Facebook and Journalism Profession

Facebook presently holds the top position as the dominant social networking platform in terms of both the number of active users and its worldwide presence. Currently, a significant number of individuals are adopting Facebook as their preferred social media platform due to its provision of several social networking services under a single interface. As of the third quarter of 2012, Facebook had a total of one billion users that were active on a monthly basis. Facebook primarily generates money through advertising, which accounts for around 85% of its overall revenue. In addition, it also earns revenue from direct business payments and the development of user-based data (O'Connell, 2018).

The study utilised Facebook as a form of social media that influences the ethical standards of journalism due to its ability to provide rapid and immediate news updates. Facebook, with its extensive reach, has the ability to rapidly disseminate information to a vast number of users or audiences. Facebook's impact on the mainstream media, which journalists rely on extensively, is significant. As a result, journalists have been compelled to rely on Facebook as a means of collecting content, information, and disseminating it. One could argue that while Facebook improves journalism, it also undermines the conventional profession by reducing its user base, among other factors. Hence, it is crucial for contemporary journalists to embrace and integrate

Facebook as a social media platform in their reporting in order to efficiently disseminate timely and extensive news coverage.

2.3.3 Twitter and Journalism Profession

Twitter, in contrast to Facebook, is a microblogging platform that enables users to transmit messages using a maximum of 140 characters. Twitter is a popular social networking platform that is widely used by major media outlets to quickly share information. Twitter users have the ability to share tweets and monitor the tweets of other users across many devices and platforms. Tweets and replies to tweets can be transmitted via the Twitter.com website, through conventional cell phone text messages, or using desktop programmes. According to Statista (2018), the micro-blogging service has an average of 321 million monthly active users and 500 million Tweets sent every day in the fourth quarter of 2018.

According to Bernado (2018), Twitter is effective for reaching targeted consumers who are interested in a particular product. The 280-word limit facilitates the rapid and crisp capture of attention. It is a medium known for its rapidity and satisfactory effectiveness. This form of communication facilitates users in constantly encountering new individuals and exploring novel aspects of the world (Bernado, 2018). Without a doubt, the significance of Twitter as a social media platform cannot be overstated. A growing number of news enthusiasts increasingly depend on Twitter handles to exchange rapid and effective messages. An illustrative example of Twitter's capabilities in contrast to traditional journalism is the tweet sent by the UK High Commissioner to Ghana concerning the subsequent arrest of the primary advocate of the "Fix the Country" movement by the Ghana Police. Had the High Commissioner chosen to communicate through written publications in newspapers, it would have taken a considerable amount of time, possibly days or even weeks, for the general public to become aware of the information. However, because

to the rapid dissemination of Twitter, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) of Ghana promptly received and responded to the tweet.

2.3.4 YouTube and Journalism Profession

YouTube, as a prominent social media platform. However, it provides an opportunity for any anyone to upload a video in a manner that allows other users to access and provide comments on it. YouTube frequently provides video content to mainstream media organisations during protests. YouTube boasts a staggering monthly active user base over 2.0 billion on its social media platform. The current count of paying subscribers for YouTube TV exceeds 300,000, while the cumulative number of shared videos has surpassed 5 billion. Over 50 million users have contributed to the creation and sharing of content up to now.

The daily video consumption exceeds 5 billion views. Regarding user-generated material, the rate at which videos are posted every minute is 300 hours (Aslam, 2019). YouTube, to some extent, diminishes the prominence of traditional media in broadcasting news on television, as it can be readily accessed through social media platforms via YouTube. Consequently, individuals depend on social media platforms to post their videos and view content from others. This significantly impacts the field of journalism as journalists themselves utilise this platform to distribute material that includes videos.

2.3.5 LinkedIn and Journalism

This platform serves as a professional or academic social networking site, facilitating the interaction and knowledge-sharing among professionals, enabling them to exchange information about their accomplishments and experiences. With its vast user base and focus on professional connections, this online platform stands apart from other forms of social networking. It functions

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as a platform for professionals and those seeking their services to connect and network. LinkedIn boasts a member base of over 600 million, with a monthly active user count surpassing 300 million. Forty percent of consumers utilise it on a daily basis. LinkedIn users typically allocate approximately 17 minutes per month on the platform. According to research conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2018, LinkedIn is a widely used social media platform among college students.

Subsequent investigation found that 50% of individuals who have completed their education in the United States are active users of LinkedIn, but a mere 9% of individuals with a high school degree or lower participate on the site. Furthermore, a significant 44% of LinkedIn users earn an annual income exceeding $75,000, surpassing the median income in the United States. Despite the United States having the highest number of LinkedIn users, with a total of 133 million, the majority of LinkedIn users, accounting for 70%, are located outside of the US. According to Osman (2019), LinkedIn is predominantly favoured by men, who make up 57% of its user population. LinkedIn's popularity among professionals and academia renders it pertinent to journalists who also belong to the professional sphere. Journalists depend on LinkedIn to disseminate information to fellow professionals regarding global events.

2.3.6 Wikipedia and Journalism

Wikipedia is a publicly accessible website that allows users to collaboratively edit and generate online content. Wikipedia is widely accepted by a multitude of people, including journalists, due to its ability to deliver concise and condensed information. It is commonly referred to be the most democratic platform due to its lack of advertising. Wikipedia has emerged as a primary news resource for the majority of journalists when seeking information. Therefore, in order for journalists to function as democratic extensions of the government, they will have to depend on social media platforms such as Wikipedia and similar sources to disclose up-to-date news.

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2.3.7 Social media and its effect on Journalism Profession

As a profession, journalism helps the public and remains relevant to a society that is perpetually changing. Subsequently, Deuze expounded upon the philosophy of journalism, emphasising the following five fundamental values: credibility, swiftness, independence, dependability, and public service. Notwithstanding its relatively recent inception, social media has wielded a substantial global impact, specifically within the realm of journalism. However, the field of journalism has consistently faced challenges regarding the influence of social media on its established conventions. Deliberations within the field have encompassed concerns such as ownership concentration, the advent of novel media technologies, the endeavour to attract larger audiences, commercialization, and bureaucratization (Deuze, 2005). In support of Dimitrov's viewpoint, Huffington (2008) asserted that journalism will not only persist but thrive despite social media's increasing prominence. Social media has been described as the golden era of journalism, per Tomno (2012). In contrast to the perception that social media will supplant journalism, on the contrary, it offers an opportunity for the discipline to flourish (Newman, 2009; Montgomery, 2014). Social media platforms have offered them additional channels to engage in seamless communication with consumers of news and information, promote dialogue, and distribute knowledge. Journalism is confronted with an unprecedented challenge with the emergence of social media (Watt & Allan, 2013).

At present, journalism and social media are involved in a competitive struggle to establish a more favourable standing in modern society. Although scholars may hold divergent viewpoints regarding the degree of impact that social media has on journalism as a discipline, a consensus exists that social media does indeed have notable repercussions. This may be the most important factor contributing to the growing prominence of journalism on social media platforms. By

utilising social media, this is intended to assist the journalism profession in remaining relevant and providing the public with reliable information. Hence, journalists are now guided by the principle of establishing partnerships with the public and participating in discussions within the emerging field (Fancher, 2009). The advent of public partnership as an emerging journalism model possesses the capacity to bolster the public's trust in the discipline, which has been gradually eroding in recent decades. Skoler (2009) posits that social media platforms serve as a mechanism to interact with audiences and establish credibility and significance amidst the dynamic realm of journalism. Cooperation and public participation are crucial for the continued existence of journalism in the social media age. Additionally, they assist journalism in its mission to inform the public. The involvement of spectators in the development of news and programmes contributes to their greater complexity and significance, surpassing that of a product authored by a solitary journalist. As stated by Benkler (2006), the generation of significance is an exceptionally decentralised and collaborative undertaking. Consequently, in the networked information economy, emergent information models have a growing impact on the formulation of meaning production (including that which pertains to culture, information, and knowledge) (Benkler, 2006).

2.4 Empirical Review

Apeh (2016) evaluated how social media has affected modern journalism in the Nigerian metropolises of Abakaliki and Enugu. For this examination, the researcher used a qualitative research design. Desk research was the method used to generate the research data. Purposive sampling was used to choose 200 responders as the sample size. Those who used social media regularly were the respondents that were selected. A descriptive statistics technique was used in the data analysis. The study revealed social media's rise to prominence as a powerful force in Nigeria, as evidenced by the popularity of websites dedicated to citizen journalism. Based on the

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researcher's logical deduction, social media platforms have emerged as important news sources in the modern day, as users depend more and more on them to meet their information needs. The study suggested that in order to identify the most successful and efficient methods for modern journalism practices in the nation, a strategic partnership between social media and modern journalism is advised. Therefore, it is apparent that training Nigerian citizen journalists on the proper application of this emerging kind of journalism is a definite necessity. The study also recommended that when it comes to disseminating news, social media users should make an effort to respect the core values of conventional journalism, including objectivity and truth. Cheney (2013) investigates journalists' perspectives on how social media affects their work and how well they carry out their responsibilities. A series of interviews with journalists were conducted, and their opinions about the change in audience involvement were also looked into. His research also included the rise of citizen journalism, the degree of public participation, and the journalist's propensity for using social media. While opinions on whether social media has disrupted or strengthened journalism vary, the paper's findings demonstrate that the profession has undergone significant change.

Aun (2013) evaluated social media's impact on modern journalism in the Makurdi metropolitan area. The chi-square test and survey research methodology were used. Using the purposive sample technique, journalists in Makurdi, Benue State, were chosen as study participants. According to the survey, social media platforms have greatly increased the productivity of Makurdi metro journalists, who regularly use them for news gathering and other purposes. Therefore, the study recommended that journalists investigate the various social media platforms in order to choose reliable and trustworthy social networking sites that they may use to carry out their journalistic

duties. Research on the effects of social media on public opinion polls, public relations, advertising, and democracy upholding was also suggested in the report.

A study on the usage of social media by Ethiopian media outlets and journalists was carried out by Kalo (2015), with an emphasis on the relationship between social media and journalism. Descriptive statistics were used in the study to evaluate the quantitative data. According to the survey, journalists use social media for a variety of purposes, such as coming up with new ideas, staying connected throughout the world, and developing their careers and personal lives. However, there are barriers that prevent journalists from using social media for work-related purposes. They don't distinguish between using social media for personal and professional purposes and participate in social media arguments infrequently. Despite differences in their usage, the poll also revealed that media outlets were not utilising social media to its full potential. This was ascribed to a number of difficulties. Furthermore, the study found that social media's rise poses a serious challenge to Ethiopia's state-owned and commercial media industries. The research went on to suggest that journalists should put policies into place to adjust to the fast-changing global media landscape.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter primarily addressed the definition and elucidation of fundamental ideas related to the subject matter, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and an empirical examination of literature about the impact of social media on the journalism profession. The chapter explored the notion of social media and journalism, delving into the theoretical foundations of this emerging media phenomena.

The discourse additionally revolved around the ramifications of social media on conventional media with regards to operational protocols, methods of distribution, ethical implications, evolving audience preferences, diminishing circulation, prospective prospects and challenges, and the

distinctions and complementarities among diverse media platforms. Following that, an exhaustive analysis of current and seminal studies concerning the influence of social media on journalism was undertaken. The foundational review investigated the evolution of social media's influence on print media and its current ramifications on various aspects of conventional media, with a specific focus on newspapers. The literature review investigated recently published articles that investigated the journalistic implications of social media. The primary emphasis of the study was on the implications of social media for the journalism profession, including its integration into journalistic operations, impact on journalistic practice, citizen engagement, and news consumption. The assessment of recently published literature also encompassed the subsequent topics: the diverse array of social media platforms and their applications, the challenges and prospects they offer, approaches for publishers to maintain their relevance, and methods of distribution. The final element under consideration consists of the empirical evidence pertaining to the investigation. In Chapter three, a comprehensive overview of the research methodology was provided.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter examined the diverse approaches and techniques employed in data collection. It provides more details about the steps required for data collecting. The chapter also examined the process of analysing and reporting the acquired data in order to comprehend the stakeholders. The chapter is structured as follows: research design, study area profile, population of the study, sample frame, sample size determination, sampling techniques, sources of data, tools for data collection, data collecting processes, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Description of the Study Area

The subject of investigation pertains to social media and its influence on the field of journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study examined the methodologies employed by journalists in acquiring news, their operational procedures, the dissemination of news, and the impact of social media on these processes.

3.2 Research design

Study design is a systematic plan created by a researcher to direct their actions in accordance with the study process (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014) states that it provides guidance to researchers on the application of research principles. The text outlines the specific methods for gathering, analysing, and processing data pertaining to the subject matter, with the intention of producing a report (Madueme, 2010). This study utilises a descriptive survey to facilitate the implementation of the research process. The research will present its findings regarding the phenomenon without exerting any influence on the information (Acholonu, 2012).

Table 3.2 Sample Size Determination

Table 3 1: Sample Size Determination

Name of Station	Staff	Sample
Radio Savannah	16	16
North Star FM	6	6
Diamond FM	12	12
Radio Justice	17	17
Radio Simili	5	5
Bishara Radio	15	15
Radio Kitawul	6	6
Mighty FM	12	12
Zaa Radio	7	7
Kesmi FM	7	7
Neesim FM	7	7
123 FM	6	6
Angel FM	5	5
Radio Tamale	10	10
Gbangu FM	11	11
Radio Amana	11	11
Bead FM	6	6
ABC Radio	6	6

Tawasul CR	10	10
Dzata FM	8	8
Dasuma Radio	6	6
Filla FM	5	5
Sankara Radio	6	6
Gbewa Rad.	4	4
Radio Bimbilla	7	7
RIDGE FM	11	11
Grin FM	10	0
Dagbon Radio	6	6
Kpandai Star FM	5	5
Asase FM	8	8
Zaa TV	6	6
NTV	7	7
Total	**264**	**264**

Source, Author Construction, (2023)

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the process of choosing a smaller group of individuals or objects from a broader population, which is also called a sampling frame, in order to accurately represent a certain community (Neuman, 2011). The researcher employed discretion and sound discernment when choosing participants who had prior experience with the phenomenon under investigation. A

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sample of around 250 correspondents and editorial staff was selected using a random selection technique from both the offline and online editions of the news organisations. On the basis of their knowledge and direct experience regarding the influence of social media on journalism, these individuals were selected. By employing this methodology, an adequate quantity of pertinent data could be gathered in the restricted time period that was accessible for the research, thereby optimising data saturation.

3.6 Sources of Data Collection

Research instruments refer to the specific procedures and methods that have been devised to facilitate the collection of data. Data collecting instruments facilitate the acquisition of essential data by the researcher, enabling the derivation of results and conclusions. The study utilised primary data. Data was acquired through the use of a closed-ended questionnaire.

3.7 Tools for the Data Collection

3.7.1 Questionnaire

 The researcher employed a closed-ended questionnaire to gather data in accordance with the study's aims. The tool was specifically built to accurately represent the content of the study. The organisation was structured according to the study participants' academic goals and demographic characteristics. The tool comprised four sections encompassing participants' personal information. The tool was developed under the supervision and in collaboration with experts in the field of risk management. The tool utilised closed-ended questions, providing respondents with alternative options on a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This is due to the convenience of respondents in answering the questions, as well as the resolution of the issue of spending excessive time with the researcher, which could potentially interfere with the

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respondents' ability to manage their work schedule. Furthermore, the analysis is facilitated by the researcher's assignment of codes to the questions, which allows for straightforward identification and interpretation.

3.7.2 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher formally corresponded with the University for Development Studies, seeking authorization to conduct the study. Nevertheless, the researcher enlists extra assistance to aid in the gathering of data. The research assistant received training on the methodologies employed for data collection. The data collection process spanned a duration of one month, after which data analysis ensued.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis methodology involves the examination of obtained data from surveys or experiments to derive deductions and inferences. The process involves carefully examining the obtained data and drawing logical conclusions (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The data was encoded and sanitised, prepared for analysis. The data was analysed using SPSS Version 23, a statistical software package specifically designed for social sciences. The analysis generated descriptive statistics, including the mean, frequencies, and percentages of replies.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Research ethics pertains to the specific agreement established between a researcher and their research participants. Adhering to ethical principles in research is crucial for upholding the dignity of individuals. This study adhered to ethical principles by ensuring confidentiality, treating respondents with respect, honesty, and following protocol throughout all stages. The researchers obtained the respondents' consent. Furthermore, the researchers reached a consensus with the

respondents regarding the utilisation of the data, as well as the manner in which its analysis will be documented and distributed. The preservation of respondents' anonymity was prioritised by ensuring that they refrained from disclosing their names in the questionnaire. In regards to confidentiality, measures were taken to maintain the privacy of the participants' responses. The participants were assured that their comments would remain anonymous, with no access granted to anyone familiar to them. Additionally, the study did not record the names of any respondents.

3.10 Summary and Conclusion

The method and procedure that were used to conduct a study in order to arrive at the final results. The study was divided into the following sections: research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, instrumentation, mode of data collection, method of data analysis, and ethical consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the survey results and associated findings regarding the influence of social media usage on ethical journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. The current chapter is subdivided into two primary sections, the first section encompasses the socio-demographic attributes of the participants, whereas the second section encompasses the primary findings of the study. Nevertheless, the discussions and findings of the study were provided in connection with the precise goals established for the study.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Profile of Participants
The section provides findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the study participants. This encompasses the participants' gender, respondents' age, marital status, educational attainment, and tenure as a journalist in the Northern Region of Ghana.

4.2.1 Gender of respondents
The study's findings indicate that out of the total participants, 243 (92.0%) were male, while 21 (8.0%) were female, as depicted in Table 4.1.

Table 4 1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	243	92
Female	21	8
Total	**264**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

The aforementioned findings indicate a higher proportion of male journalists compared to female journalists in the northern area of Ghana. These findings challenge the prevailing demographic pattern in Ghana, particularly in the northern region, where the female population was reported to be higher than the male population (PHC 2021). Nevertheless, the discovery aligns with the membership data of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) for the year 2021, which indicates that there were 245 registered women as active members compared to over 500 male journalists. AWMA 2020's unpublished study results indicate that women in media cycles were underrepresented in comparison to their male colleagues. This can be due to the fact that women were still encumbered with family duties. Consequently, the high enrollment numbers in journalism schools do not accurately reflect the actual circumstances. Another obstacle to increased female participation in journalism is associated with the aggression and harassment experienced by journalists.

4.2.2 Age of respondents

The study also examined the age distribution of the journalists. It found that 81.0% of the participants fell within the 20-40 age range, while 19.0% were between 41-50 years old, as shown in Table 4.1. This indicates that the majority of the responses were predominantly young in age.

This aligns with the findings of Morgan's (2012) research, which revealed that individuals in younger age groups exhibited a higher propensity to utilise social media for professional purposes. This finding supports the findings of the Internet Society (2013), which said that 42% of Kenyan journalists who used the Internet were within the age range of 35 to 39 years. According to their 2012 Global Internet User Survey, 70% of Internet users in the age bracket 30 – 34 in South Africa and 61% in India use the Internet multiple times every day. Statista (2013) reported that the age distribution of Internet users in Ghana mirrored the worldwide pattern.

Table 4 2: Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
20-30	58	22.0
31-40	156	59.0
41-50	50	19.0
Total	**264**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

4.2.3 Marital Status of respondents

Furthermore, regarding the marital status of the participants, the study reveals that a majority of them (66.0%) were married, while 31.0 percent were single, and 3% were divorced, as depicted in Figure 1 below.

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Figure 2 Marital Status of Respondents
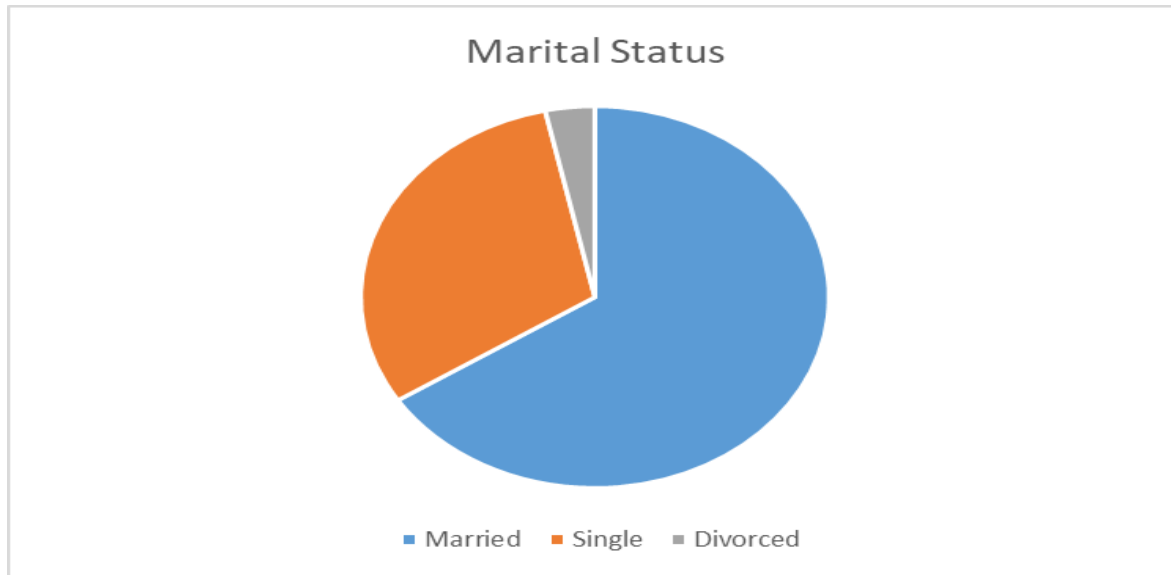
Source: Field Survey, (2023)

4.2.4 Education level of respondents

Regarding the respondent's educational level, 4.0 percent held a master's degree, 65 percent had

completed university education, and 31 percent were high school graduates, as illustrated in Figure

4. The majority of the participants possessed either a Diploma or a Bachelor's degree. Specifically,

172 individuals, accounting for 65% of the respondents, held tertiary degrees (Diploma/Bachelor),

while 4% had obtained a second degree. The remaining individuals possessed SHS certificates,

accounting for 31% of the total.

The aforementioned findings indicate that journalists in the Northern region of Ghana who possess

higher levels of education exhibit a greater propensity to utilise social media platforms compared

to their counterparts with lower levels of education. This observation aligns with the research

conducted by Seybert (2011) on internet usage among European journalists, which revealed that

European journalists with higher levels of education demonstrated a higher degree of internet

usage in comparison to those with lower levels of education. The data presented in Figure 4

indicates a significant degree of education among the respondents, with the majority demonstrating familiarity with various social media sites such as LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and others. An individual's level of education is anticipated to shape their behaviour in a beneficial manner, augment their comprehension of matters, and primarily enable their capacity to delve into subjects more extensively as necessitated by journalists.

Table 4 3: Level of education of respondents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Masters	11	4
Tertiary	172	65
SHS	81	31
Total	**264**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

4.2.5 Work experience

The study additionally examined the duration of participants' tenure in the field of journalism. The study reveals that 65.0% of the journalists had a work experience ranging from 1 to 10 years. Additionally, 21.0% of the participants worked as journalists for a period of 11 to 15 years, while just 3% of the journalists had more than 21 years of work experience. These findings are presented in Table 4.2. According to Mortlagh, Hassan, and Osman (2013), there is a positive correlation between the amount of work experience journalists have and their adherence to ethical standards.

Table 4 4: Number of years practice journalism

Years of Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	58	22
6-10 years	114	43
11-15 years	55	21
16-20 years	29	11
21+ years	8	3
Total	**264**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

4.2.6 Category of Media House

The study also examined the different categories of media organisations functioning in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study data showed that 60.0% of the respondents preferred radio, 21.0% preferred TV, and 19.0% preferred online, as displayed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 reveals that journalists in the Northern Region of Ghana predominantly collaborated with radio stations, surpassing other media categories. This trend can be linked to the prevalence of radio and TV as the primary media platforms among households in the Northern region (Afrifa, 2015). Shivarudrappa (2014) asserts that the radio exhibited reliability, credibility, and trustworthiness, while also offering valuable prospects for journalists. The limited number of participants involved in online media or journalism can be ascribed to Markozashvili's (2017) study, which highlighted online journalism as a distinct genre compared to other forms of journalism.

Despite the fact that internet journalism has been in common use for over fifteen years, just a small percentage (19%) of the participants in the research were employed in this profession. The study findings indicated that a considerable proportion of the individuals employed as online journalists did not had a background in journalism. This discovery contradicts the research conducted by Audu, Adeyeye, and Ogi (2012), whose findings indicated that over 73% of journalists in Nigeria were engaged in online journalism, which had a beneficial influence on the collection and distribution of news. The report also highlighted that journalists that utilise social media technologies, such as online journalism, are more knowledgeable and adaptable to the modern landscape of journalism compared to their counterparts who have not yet adopted these platforms. According to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2016), social media has significantly altered the way journalists work and has had a profound influence on them. Therefore, it was fitting for journalists to embrace online or other social media channels or tools in their journalistic endeavours.

Table 4 5: Category of Media House

Category of Media	Frequency	Valid Percent
Online	50	19.0
Radio	158	60.0
TV	55	21.0
Total	**264**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

4.3 Presentation of Findings

4.3.1 Various social media and ethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana

The primary aim of the study was to delineate the diverse social media and ethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. The data on this variable was acquired from the participants. The results are displayed in Tables 4.6 and 4.7, correspondingly.

Table 4 6: Various Social Media Used By Journalists

Statements	Disagree			Agree			
	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	S.D
As a journalist, I use Facebook regularly for reporting	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	16.7% (10)	40.0% (24)	36.7% (22)	4.03	0.991
As a journalist, I resort to the use of Twitter to gather content, information and broadcast the same	6.7% (4)	6.7% (4)	11.7% (7)	43.3% (26)	31.7% (19)	3.87	1.142
As a journalist, I use YouTube regularly for reporting	5.0% (3)	5.0% (3)	20.0% (12)	43.3% (26)	26.7% (16)	3.82	1.049
As a journalist, I resort to the use of LinkedIn to gather content, information and broadcast the same	5.0% (3)	15.0% (9)	18.3% (11)	43.3% (26)	18.3% (11)	3.55	1.111
As a journalist, I resort to the use of Wikipedia for research of certain historical facts.	1.7% (1)	8.3% (5)	11.7% (7)	40.0% (24)	38.3% (23)	4.05	0.999

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| As a journalist, I use WhatsApp regularly for reporting | 16.7% (10) | 20.0% (12) | 10.0% (6) | 40.0% (24) | 13.3% (8) | 3.13 | 1.346 |

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Table 4.6 above presents the findings from a survey pertaining to the claim that "As a journalist, I regularly use Facebook for reporting." 6.6% (4) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 16.7% (10) were undecided, and 76.7% (46) of the respondents agreed with it. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, 4.03 indicated that most respondents agreed with the statement. There was a 0.991 standard deviation.

75%(45) of the respondents agreed with the statement, "As a journalist, I use Twitter to collect data, content, and disseminate it," while 11.7%(7) and 13.4%(8) disagreed. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean of 3.87 and the standard deviation of 1.142.

Furthermore, of those surveyed, 70% (42) agreed with the statement "As a journalist, I regularly use YouTube for reporting," 20% (12) were unsure, and 10% (6) disagreed. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean score of 3.82 with a standard deviation of 1.049.

Moreover, with respect to the claim that "As a journalist, I use LinkedIn to gather content and information and share it," 61.6% (37) of the respondents concurred, 18.3% (11) expressed uncertainty, and 20% (12) expressed disagreement. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean of 3.55 and the standard deviation of 1.111.

For example, 78.3% (47) of the respondents agreed with the statement "As a journalist, I depend on Wikipedia to uncover certain significant facts," while 11.7% (7) were doubtful and 10% (6)

disagreed. The standard deviation was 0.999 and the mean was 4.05. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

Of those surveyed, 53.3% (32) agreed with the statement "As a journalist, I used WhatsApp regularly for reporting," 10.0% (6) were unsure, and 36.7% (22) disagreed. The standard deviation was 1.346 and the mean score was 3.13. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

These results corroborate the investigation of Alexa (2013a) which indicated that among Ghanaian journalists, Twitter.com was one of the least frequented social media platforms. Furthermore, according to Alexa (2013b), Twitter, LinkedIn, and Wikipedia are among the social media sites that Nigerians use the least. Similar circumstances existed in South Africa (Alexa, 2013b). According to Delzio (2015), Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook are the most popular social media sites in Kenya. Meeker & Wu (2013) did a study in which they compared Facebook to other social media platforms. According to the results, Twitter was closely trailed by YouTube as the second most popular social media network among the participants.

However, the findings contradict the study by Ruth (2010), which showed that Nigerian journalists preferred Facebook and Twitter as their preferred social media sites because of their reliability, validity, credibility, and opportunities.

Furthermore, the findings go counter to Beighton's (2016) research, which showed that YouTube was Ghanaians' second-most-liked social media platform behind Facebook. About 26 percent of Ghanaians who use social media indicated that they favour YouTube. The results of this study are consistent with a poll done by Frank N. Magid, as reported in the 2013 report by Meeker & Wu. 2,000 social media enthusiasts between the ages of 12 – 64 participated in the survey. According to the findings, YouTube was used as a social networking medium by 45% of the participants.

Ghana has a large YouTube following, which is consistent with YouTube's reported global statistics. According to a 2013 estimate by YouTube, over 1 billion unique users visit the site each month, watching an astounding 6 billion hours of video material. This means that every person on the earth could watch about an hour's worth of videos. Furthermore, 100 hours of video content are uploaded to YouTube every minute, and 80 percent of its traffic comes from countries other than the US. In addition, millions of people subscribe to YouTube every day.

Table 4 7: Ethical Journalism Practices

Statements	Disagree			Agree			
	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	S.D
Journalists keep the public honestly informed	10.0% (6)	13.3% (8)	10.0% (6)	36.7% (22)	30.0% (18)	3.63	1.314
Journalists serve as a vigilant monitor for instances of power abuse in both public and private spheres.	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	16.7% (10)	40.0% (24)	36.7% (22)	4.03	0.991
Journalists fostering an inclusive platform for the dissemination of ideas	6.7% (4)	3.3% (2)	15.0% (9)	50.0% (30)	25.0% (15)	3.83	1.060
Journalists are required to fulfil their societal responsibility by utilising their expertise to provide impartial and objective reporting.	6.7% (4)	5.0% (3)	13.3% (8)	35.0% (21)	40.0% (24)	3.97	1.164
Journalists must diligently pursue the truth, free from any external influence, while also taking care to prevent unnecessary harm.	1.7% (1)	5.0% (3)	15.0% (9)	46.7% (28)	31.7% (19)	4.02	0.911

Journalists must demonstrate a willingness to accept responsibility for their activities.	8.3% (5)	21.7% (13)	16.7% (10)	30.0% (18)	23.3% (14)	3.38	1.290
Journalists must possess a profound comprehension of the ethical principles and responsibilities inherent in their work.	25.0% (15)	16.7% (10)	11.7% (7)	30.0% (18)	16.7% (10)	2.97	1.473
Journalists strive to enhance and revamp standards while establishing new ones as needed.	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	16.7% (10)	40.0% (24)	36.7% (22)	4.03	0.991
Journalists exemplify ethical conduct by serving as a model for others.	6.7% (4)	6.7% (4)	11.7% (7)	43.3% (26)	31.7% (19)	3.87	1.142
Journalists possess the inclination to identify and expose instances of ethical misconduct in this, as well as other, sectors.	5.0% (3)	5.0% (3)	20.0% (12)	43.3% (26)	26.7% (16)	3.82	1.049

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Based on the information shown in Table 4.7, 66.7% (40) of the participants agreed that journalists keep the public accurately informed, whereas 10.0% (6) were unsure and 23.3% (14) disagreed. The responses had a mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 1.314. Given that the mean score is more than 3.0, this suggests that most respondents agreed with the statement.

76.7% (46) of the participants agreed with the statement that "Journalists operate as a vigilant investigator in the cases of power abuse in public as well as private spheres," 16.7% (10) expressed ambiguity, while 6.6% (4) disagreed. Since the mean value was higher than 3.0, the data—a mean value of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 0.991—indicate that a sizable majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

The statement "Journalists upholding a public platform for free expression" was endorsed by 75% (45) of the respondents, 15% (9) were unsure, and 10% (6) disagreed. 3.83 was the average score, while the standard deviation was 1.060. Given that the mean score was more than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

On the statement that "Journalists are obligated to perform their socially mandated duty by using their expertise to offer unbiased and impartial reporting," 45 out of the participants (75%) agreed with the statement, 8 participants (13%) were unsure, and 7 people disagreed. The standard deviation was 1.164 and the mean score was 3.97. Given that the mean score was more than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

Of the participants, 78.4% (47) agreed with the statement "Journalists are obligated to pursue the truth in order to remain free from any form of influence, while preventing unnecessary hurt," 15.0% (9) were unsure, and 6.7% (4) disagreed. The majority of respondents agreed with the statement that the mean was higher than 3.0, as indicated by the mean of 4.02 and the standard deviation of 0.911.

Of those surveyed, 53.3% (32) agreed with the statement "Journalists must also be ready to be held accountable for their conduct," 16.7% (10) expressed uncertainty, and 30% (18) disagreed. Given that the mean value was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents seemed to agree with the statement, as indicated by the mean value of 3.38 and the standard deviation of 1.290. 46.7% (28) of the participants agreed with the statement that "Journalists must possess an in-depth understanding of the moral obligations associated with their profession," 11.7% (7) expressed uncertainty, and 41.7% (25) disagreed. The data set's standard deviation was 1.473 and its mean was 2.97. The fact that the mean score was higher than 3.0 suggests that most respondents agreed with the assertion.

As shown in the previously cited Table 4.7, In reference to the assertion that "journalists work to improve and update standards, as well as create new ones when necessary," Of those surveyed, 76.7% (46) agreed, 16.7% (10) were unsure, and 6.6% (4) disagreed. The standard deviation was 0.991 and the mean score was 4.03. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

The following were the replies to the statement, "Journalists promote ethical behaviour by acting as a role model": Of all the replies, 45 or 75% agreed with the statement, 7 % (or 7) were unsure, and 8 % (or 13%) disagreed. 3.87 was the mean and 1.142 was the standard deviation. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

70% (42) of the respondents agreed, 20% (12) were unsure, and 10% (6) disagreed with the statement that "journalists have a disposition to call out violations of ethics in this, and other, industries". Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean of 3.82 and the standard deviation of 1.049.

These results aligned with those of other academic articles. According to Manasvi and Mehak (2019), the media protects society. Delzio (2015) argues that due to citizens' heavy reliance on the media as their primary source of information, it is imperative for news to be grounded in factual accuracy in order to establish trust in the media. Journalists are required to present news articles in an unbiased manner, ensuring accuracy, factual correctness, inclusivity, and benefit to the population. Delzio's research determined that maintaining professional honesty and integrity is the most effective means of guaranteeing the presentation of true and fair news articles.

In a similar vein, Hussein's (2018) study revealed that nearly all of the participants concurred that a journalist should diligently verify facts, refrain from distorting statements, consider multiple

perspectives in reporting, avoid sharing links to harmful or illegal content, and prioritise and align news based on their significance and ethical principles prior to dissemination. Amegatcher (2014) found that in order to uphold journalistic standards, all social media sources were regarded as unconfirmed and so subjected to the verification and authentication procedure prior to publication. Bludov (2018) emphasised that social media stories are seen as social rather than empirical or factual narratives, and hence require verification to ascertain their legitimacy before being utilised. It is imperative to thoroughly verify social media stories to ensure that any content released adheres to the most rigorous standards and ethical considerations.

Hussein (2018) and Beighton (2016) assert that social media improves journalism standards and ethics. It was observed that Social Media functions as a feedback source, where media organisations like the Graphic Newspaper share work samples through social media platforms. This is done to ensure that the product aligns with the journalistic standards of the newspaper and the ethical guidelines set by the Ghana Journalist Association. According to Amegatcher (2014), the impact of social media on journalism has resulted in increased emphasis on ethics and standards. It is acknowledged that social media is linked to the dissemination of false information. Therefore, relying on it as a news and storytelling source necessitates heightened scrutiny of ethical considerations and standards. Melisande (2009) argued that media ethics aims to prevent the control of material distribution, diversity, and variation in media content by prioritising impartiality and addressing all elements of an issue. This approach enhances the accuracy of reporting. Journalists are required, as stated in Article 3 of The Code of Ethics for Electronic Media, to avoid using preconceptions and prejudices when reporting on a society. They should challenge the interlocutors who articulate preconceptions and prejudices during interviews and debates.

Moreover, Barger et al. (2016) underscored the need of ensuring the security and privacy of social media, particularly for media organisations that utilise social media platforms to interact with customers. As an example, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation generates and publishes content on its social media platforms. Teng, Khong, Goh, and Chong (2014) found that producing innovative social media material leads to immediate messaging and enhances the trustworthiness of followers, hence fostering engagement. This is crucial in ensuring that viewers receive content from reliable sources.

4.3.2 Factors contributing to ethical and non-ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana

The study's second purpose was to examine the elements that contribute to both ethical and non-ethical journalistic practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. The data on this variable was acquired from the participants. The findings are revealed in Tables 4.8 and 4.9, respectively.

Table 4 8: Factors Contributing To Ethical Journalism Practice

Statements	Disagree			Agree			
	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	S.D
An individual's judgment or standard of journalism contributes to effective ethical behaviour	6.7% (4)	6.7% (4)	11.7% (7)	43.3% (26)	31.7% (19)	3.87	1.142
Journalists in this media house respect the code of ethics of the profession	5.0% (3)	5.0% (3)	20.0% (12)	43.3% (26)	26.7% (16)	3.82	1.049

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Journalists in this media house act in an improper way during news reporting	5.0% (3)	15.0% (9)	18.3% (11)	43.3% (26)	18.3% (11)	3.55	1.111
Journalist in this media house make up lies about their competitor just to win a contract	1.7% (1)	8.3% (5)	11.7% (7)	40.0% (24)	38.3% (23)	4.05	0.999
Journalist in this media house reports fresh news based on the payment of money	16.7% (10)	20.0% (12)	10.0% (6)	40.0% (24)	13.3% (8)	3.13	1.346
Journalist in other media house in the Northern region reports fresh news based on the payment of money	11.7% (7)	18.3% (11)	20.0% (12)	35.0% (21)	15.0% (9)	3.23	1.254

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Table 4.2 presents research indicating a correlation between an individual's journalism proficiency or judgement and their capacity to demonstrate successful ethical behaviour. 75% (45) of the total respondents agreed with the statement, followed by 11.7% (7) who were unsure and 13.4% (8) who disagreed. 3.87 was the mean value, and 1.142 was the standard deviation. Given that the mean score was more than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

Of those surveyed, 70% (42) agreed with the statement "Journalists in this media house uphold the code of ethics of the profession," 20% (12) were undecided, and 10% (6) disagreed. 3.82 was

the average score, and 1.049 was the standard deviation. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

In addition, 61.6% (37) of the participants agreed with the statement that journalists in this media organisation behave badly when reporting news, 18.3% (11) expressed uncertainty, and 20% (12) disagreed. 3.55 was determined to be the mean value, and 1.111 was the standard deviation. The fact that the mean score was higher than 3.0 suggests that most respondents agreed with the assertion.

In reference to the assertion that "Journalists within this media organisation fabricate lies about their rivals to obtain a contract," 47.3% of respondents agreed, 7.7% expressed uncertainty, and 10% disagreed. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean score of 4.05 and the standard deviation of 0.999.

53.3% (32) of the participants agreed, 10.0% (6) were unsure, and 36.7% (22) disagreed with the statement that "Journalists in this media outlet report current news in exchange for money." The standard deviation was 1.346 and the mean score was 3.13. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

In response to the statement, "Journalists in other media houses in the Northern region report fresh news in exchange for money," thirty percent (18) agreed, twenty percent (12) were unsure, and fifty percent (30) disagreed. 3.23 was the mean and 1.254 was the standard deviation. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

This finding is consistent with the research done by Fengler et al. (2015), which highlighted how journalists all agreed on the importance of the journalistic code of ethics. Editors-in-chief, journalists, and both publishers' and journalists' associations unanimously confirmed that the code

of ethics is widely recognised and adhered to within the journalism profession in Finland. The discussion also highlighted the journalists' consideration on the impact of codes of ethics and self-regulation in their daily job. Hafez (2002) observed that the significant increase in the usage of social media by journalists creates numerous challenges in maintaining ethical standards across all levels. The obstacles he identified in maintaining media ethics include political issues, fluctuations in regulations, prioritisation of personal gain, and ensuring safety. Hafez (ibid) said that the media might contribute to conflict by inflicting harm on society through unethical or unprofessional practices.

Ala-Fossi et al. (2021) argue that showing preference for a certain organisation, political party, philosophy, or goal poses difficulties for journalism or media ethics. Striking a balance between ensuring the safety of journalists and delivering genuine and precise information to the public poses a challenge for the field of journalism ethics. The departure of media practitioners from established ethical standards and societal traditions has provoked the ire of critics, led to public protests and attacks on media organisations, and sparked several contentious problems for debate and discussion. The concerns of invasion of privacy, censorship, pornography, media violence, secrecy, impartiality, television and children, advertising, propaganda, and others are all consequences of breaching established media ethical rules and prevailing societal traditions in various ways.

Hora-Ishak & Thomass (2021) found that German journalists, in their interviews, connected adherence to ethical codes with a significant historical event that serves as a cautionary tale: the coverage of mass sexual offences during New Year's Eve 2015-2016. This event is seen as a source of inspiration to avoid repeating past mistakes. Adhering to ethical principles, journalists refrained from disclosing the origin of the wrongdoers due to insufficient information provided by the

police. However, this decision resulted in public outrage and allegations of concealing the truth. The journalists consequently developed a habit of referring to the section in the press code that pertains to disclosing ethnic or national origin with greater frequency (Hora-Ishak & Thomass, 2021).

Padovani et al. (2021) highlighted a significant concern with the concept of a journalistic code of conduct: whether it should adopt a negative or positive approach. This entails deciding whether the focus should be on discouraging unethical behaviour or encouraging ethical behaviour. He observed that journalism ethics should encompass more than just codes of behaviour or standards to be adhered to. The focus should primarily revolve on principles pertaining to ethical standards of human behaviour, principles that are grounded in logical reasoning and so may be applied objectively and impartially. However, it is important to note that while we acknowledge the existence of ethical principles, we do not possess a complete understanding of what these principles entail. The ongoing pursuit and improvement of these principles will persist as long as humans exist to engage in debates and discussions. It is crucial to recognise that the rational and democratic nature of these deliberations distinguishes ethical principles from rigid and unquestionable statements. Ethical principles, as Jonathan Glover has proposed, bear some resemblance to scientific theories. They are not bestowed by an authority and must instead be uncovered through the clever interaction of human reason and experience. This ongoing and imperfect process yields valuable outcomes in both science and ethics.

Fenton (2014) suggested that ethical decisions in the media should be considered within their own context. He contended that it would be unjust to enforce society's ethical standards onto the media. Journalists and media professionals often operate in demanding conditions, as they are tasked with the responsibility of delivering accurate information and serving as the moral compass of society.

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Capilla (2012) stated that in the era of new media, where individuals take on the role of media creators, it is essential for all participants to assume the duty of making ethical choices. Since citizens who use the new media platform are not professionals, they will rely on the ethical rules established by society. Certain academicians endorsed the idea of applying the ideals of society to citizen journalism. Kenney and Ozkan (2011) contend that the values that should be cherished and incorporated into journalistic practice are not the ones that have been ingrained within the exclusive group of journalists, who have intentionally distanced themselves from the community, but rather the values that are collectively shared by the community.

Table 4 9: Factors Contributing To Non-Ethical Journalism Practice

Statements	Disagree			Agree			
	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	S.D
Breach of confidentiality	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	16.7% (10)	40.0% (24)	36.7% (22)	4.03	0.991
Media manipulation of a journalist	6.7% (4)	6.7% (4)	11.7% (7)	43.3% (26)	31.7% (19)	3.87	1.142
Poor research support systems	5.0% (3)	5.0% (3)	20.0% (12)	43.3% (26)	26.7% (16)	3.82	1.049
Lack of knowledge of ethical journalism practices	5.0% (3)	15.0% (9)	18.3% (11)	43.3% (26)	18.3% (11)	3.55	1.111
Emphasize the personal characteristics of the target and not the subject of investigation	1.7% (1)	8.3% (5)	11.7% (7)	40.0% (24)	38.3% (23)	4.05	0.999

Lack of accuracy, fairness and independent journalism	16.7% (10)	20.0% (12)	10.0% (6)	40.0% (24)	13.3% (8)	3.13	1.346

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

According to Table 4.9, 76.7% (46) of the participants expressed agreement with the statement "Breach of privacy", whereas 16.7% (10) expressed uncertainty and 6.6% (4) disagreed. The standard deviation was 0.991 and the mean score was 4.03. The fact that the mean score was higher than 3.0 indicates that most respondents agreed with the statement.

The following comments were made in reaction to the remark "Journalist manipulation by the media": Of those surveyed, 75% (45) agreed, 11.7% (7) were unsure, and 13.4% (8) disagreed. 3.87 was the average response, while the standard deviation was 1.142. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

Of those surveyed, 70% (42) agreed with the statement "Poor research support systems," 20% (12) were unsure, and 10% (6) disagreed. 3.82 was the mean and 1.049 was the standard deviation. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

In addition, 61.6% (37) of the participants agreed with the statement "Lack of understanding of ethical journalism practices," 18.3% (11) expressed confusion, and 20% (12) disagreed with it. 3.55 was the mean value, and 1.111 was the standard deviation. The fact that the mean score was higher than 3.0 suggests that most respondents agreed with the assertion.

78.3% (47) of the respondents agreed with the statement "Focus on the personal characteristics of the person being investigated rather than the subject matter of investigation," while 11.7% (7) were unsure and 10% (6) disagreed. The standard deviation was 0.999 and the mean was 4.05. Given

that the mean was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

In response to the statement "Lack of accuracy, fairness, and independent journalism," 53.3% (32) of the participants agreed, 10.0% (6) were uncertain, and 36.7% (22) disagreed. The mean score was 3.13, with a standard deviation of 1.346. This indicates that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as the mean score was above 3.0.

These findings align with Kalo's (2015) research, which discovered that journalists utilise social media for multiple purposes, including generating new ideas, staying connected to the world, and personal and professional growth. However, the professional use of social media by journalists is hindered by various challenges. The study determined that several factors contribute to unethical journalism practices in Ghana, including breaches of confidentiality, manipulation of journalists by the media, inadequate research support systems, insufficient knowledge of ethical journalism practices, focus on personal characteristics rather than the subject of investigation, personal biases of journalists, cultural, religious, and tribal influences, public pressure, and a lack of accuracy, fairness, and independent journalism. Similarly, Oduro's (2019) research uncovered that the utilisation of social media presents difficulties in terms of ethical concerns, content piracy, the reliability and genuineness of content, and the emphasis on unique and all-encompassing content.

4.3.3 Effect of social media on ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana
The third objective of the study was to determine the effect of social media on ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana. The information on this variable was obtained from the respondents. The findings are presented in Tables 4.10

Table 4 10: Effect of Social Media on Ethical Journalism Practice

Statement	Disagree			Agree			
	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	S.D
Social media attracts a wider coverage audience for our media house	3.3% (2)	3.3% (2)	16.7% (10)	40.0% (24)	36.7% (22)	4.03	0.991
Social media help jounalists to gather and articulate contents or information rapidly.	6.7% (4)	6.7% (4)	11.7% (7)	43.3% (26)	31.7% (19)	3.87	1.142
Social media use helps our media house to gather genuine content or information.	5.0% (3)	5.0% (3)	20.0% (12)	43.3% (26)	26.7% (16)	3.82	1.049
Majority of our audience are found in Social media platforms	5.0% (3)	15.0% (9)	18.3% (11)	43.3% (26)	18.3% (11)	3.55	1.111
Social media makes journalism easier and efficient	1.7% (1)	8.3% (5)	11.7% (7)	40.0% (24)	38.3% (23)	4.05	0.999
Social media helps in spreading contents or information to audience without any form of stress and also reduces cost of expenditure	16.7% (10)	20.0% (12)	10.0% (6)	40.0% (24)	13.3% (8)	3.13	1.346

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Based on the information shown in Table 4.10, 76.7% (46) of the participants agreed that "Social media generates more diverse audience for our media house," whereas 6.6% (4) disagreed and 16.7% (10) were unclear. 4.03 was the mean value, and 0.991 was the standard deviation. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

The following was said when it was said that "Social media helps journalists in efficiently acquiring and presenting content or information": 75% (45) of the total respondents agreed with the statement, followed by 11.7% (7) who were unsure and 13.4% (8) who disagreed. The replies had a mean value of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 1.142. Given that the mean score was more than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

Social media use aids our media outlet in gathering authentic content or information, according to 70% (42) of respondents, 20% (12) of whom were unsure, and 10% (6) of whom disagreed. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean of 3.82 and the standard deviation of 1.049.

61.6% (37) of the respondents agreed with the statement "Most of our audience is located in social media platforms," 18.3% (11) expressed uncertainty, while 20% (12) disagreed. 3.55 was the mean and 1.111 was the standard deviation. Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

78.3% (47) of the participants agreed with the statement "Social media makes journalism simpler and more efficient," 11.7% (7) were undecided, and 10% (6) disagreed. Given that the mean score was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean score of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.999.

53.3% (32) of the respondents agreed, 10.0% (6) were undecided, and 36.7% (22) disagreed with the statement that "Social media assists with disseminating news or information to the audience without any challenges and also reduces costs." Given that the mean was higher than 3.0, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, as indicated by the mean of 3.13 and the standard deviation of 1.346.

These results are consistent with Mozee's (2012) study on the benefits of social media, which include improved social interaction, more access to sources and information, user creativity, a sense of community, and the development of social media users' technological proficiency.

4.3.4 Evaluates the strength and weaknesses of social media and traditional journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana

The fourth objective of the study was to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of social media and traditional journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana.

4.3.4.1 Some strengths of journalism practices in media houses

What are some of the strengths of journalism practices in your media houses in the Northern Region of Ghana? The study presented various strengths of journalism practices in media houses in the Northern Region of Ghana. The findings came out with some of the strengths as follows;

i.   It engenders trust between the people and the media house, It creates platforms for businessmen to market their products, and many others

ii. Use of social media, especially WhatsApp and YouTube, research and investigations, and content production.

iii. A limited kind of journalism due to the political affiliations

iv. Ability to reach wider audiences in far places where the traditional media coverage could not reach

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v. Cross-checking of news, news gathering and reporting, feature articles, Community voices before publishing

vi. Effective communication and accurate information

vii. Ethical Professional Verifying Contents Before Publication

viii. Fact-checking is not compromised at any point

ix. Fair, balance and accuracy

x. Maintaining discipline in information gathering, gets you closer to the consumers, Easily tracks progress Real-time monitoring

4.3.4.2 The shortcomings of social media journalism practices in media houses

The study examined the deficiencies in social media journalism practices within media organisations in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study revealed the following weaknesses of social media journalism practices in media houses;

i. Fake News and unethical practices

ii. A lot of untrained journalists practice

iii. Acts of conflicts of interest

iv. Cost of Internet bundle

v. Cross-checking facts

vi. Difficulty in getting facts

vii. False publication

viii. Inadequate feedback and limited accuracy

ix. Integrity crisis

x. Internet connectivity interruption

xi. It brings about failed reportage

xii.   It is sometimes not a fact-checking the information

xiii.   It is time-consuming as it will take a while processing and checking

4.3 Discussion

Regarding the diverse social media platforms and ethical journalism standards in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study uncovered that journalists in the region possess a clear focus and purpose but lack a formalised system for news processing routines. This discovery has prompted a range of new inquiries into the established practices and principles of journalism. Additionally, it was shown that becoming a social media journalist does not need possessing the essential investigative abilities needed to critically examine government actions, promptly verify the credibility of news, or analyse intricate societal issues during the news producing process. These findings align with the argument that social media has prompted a critical examination of the established practices and principles of journalism, leading to its evolution and transformation (Harper, 2009; BelairGagnon, 2012; Hermida, 2012). In contrast, Deuze (2007) and Shirky (2008) assert that social media undermines the traditional profession of journalism.

The study concluded that social media journalism lacks ethical standards, as there is no platform for an editorial board to review news articles before they are published. Social media journalists prioritise gaining likes and being the first to publish a story, rather than focusing on educating, informing, and entertaining their audience, as mainstream media does. They also disregard the accuracy of information and the credibility of their sources in their efforts to deliver a story. Confidentiality of information is not regarded as a significant aspect of social media journalism, and the discipline of verification is not practiced. The argument made by Deuze (2005) contradicts these findings, since he observed that journalism is a profession that continuously aligns with evolving trends. Deuze also identified five core characteristics that define journalism ideology:

legitimacy, immediacy, autonomy, credibility, and public service. Despite being a relatively new medium, social media has had a significant worldwide influence, particularly in the field of journalism.

The study found that ethical journalism involves journalists providing honest information to the public, acting as a watchdog against abuses of power in both public and private spheres, creating a platform for free expression, actively pursuing the truth without being influenced, avoiding unnecessary harm, being willing to be held accountable for their actions, and having a thorough understanding of the ethical responsibilities of their profession. Journalists uphold ethical conduct by serving as exemplars. Journalists possess the inclination to identify and expose ethical misconduct in this and other businesses. Journalists in the northern area are obligated to uphold honesty and integrity. They fulfil their commitment by actively serving the public good and taking care to avoid causing unnecessary harm.

The study determined that there is a favourable association between ethical journalism practice (FCEJ) and a journalist's principles, morality, personal goals, personality, and cultural norms. The study additionally determined that the journalist's principles, morality, personal aims, personality, and cultural norms explained about 51.7% of the variation in ethical journalism practice (FCEJ) in the Northern Region of Ghana. Furthermore, the journalist's personal ambitions and adherence to cultural norms had a good impact, but it was not statistically significant. On the other hand, the journalist's morality and personality had a favourable effect, which was statistically significant. The results align with those of Aun (2013), whose research demonstrated that social media platforms have bolstered the efficiency of journalists in the Makurdi metropolitan. Additionally, a significant proportion of journalists utilise these platforms to gather news and do other tasks.

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Factors influencing unethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found a positive correlation between non-ethical journalism practice (FCEJ) and various negative outcomes, including breach of confidentiality, media manipulation of journalists, inadequate research support systems, lack of knowledge of ethical journalism practices, focus on personal characteristics rather than the subject of investigation, personal interests of journalists, cultural, religious, and tribal biases, public pressure, and lack of accuracy, fairness, and independent journal These findings align with Kalo's (2015) discovery that journalists utilise social media for multiple purposes, including generating new ideas, staying connected to the world, and personal and professional growth. However, the professional use of social media by journalists is hindered by challenges.

Furthermore, they determined that factors such as violation of confidentiality, manipulation of journalists by the media, inadequate research support systems, insufficient understanding of ethical journalism practices, prioritising personal attributes of the target rather than the subject of investigation, personal biases of the journalist, cultural, religious, and tribal beliefs, public pressure, and a lack of accuracy, fairness, and independent journalism were responsible for over 67.1% of the observed instances of unethical journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. Furthermore, the study determined that a lack of understanding of ethical journalism principles leads to a focus on the personal traits of the individual being investigated rather than the subject of the investigation. The personal motivations of the journalist and their belief systems (including culture, religion, and tribalism) were found to have a negative impact, although this impact was not statistically significant. These findings align with the results of Oduro's (2019) study, which demonstrated that social media is extensively incorporated into the functioning of Graphic

newspapers. It has a positive impact on the newspaper's operations by providing the opportunity to reach a large audience and accelerating its processes. Nevertheless, it presents some ethical issues, such as content piracy, and raises concerns about the reliability, authenticity, and emphasis on exclusive and comprehensive content.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five provides a concise overview of the discoveries, final thoughts, and suggestions for individuals or groups with an interest in the matter. This study examines the influence of social media usage on the ethical standards of journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. The text provides an account of the diverse social media platforms and ethical principles followed in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study conducts a comprehensive examination of the elements that contribute to both ethical and non-ethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. Additionally, it assesses the impact of social media on the implementation of ethical journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. It assesses the merits and drawbacks of social media and traditional journalism techniques in the Northern Region of Ghana.

5.2 Summary of Findings

These findings were presented based on the research objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Various social media and ethical journalism practices

The primary aim of the study was to provide a comprehensive account of the many social media platforms and ethical journalism methods employed in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found that 76.7% (46) of the respondents agreed with the statement "As a journalist, I use Facebook regularly for reporting", while 16.7% (10) were unsure and 6.6% (4) disagreed with the statement. The statement "As a journalist, I use Twitter to collect content, information, and share it" received agreement from 75% (45) of the respondents, 11.7% (7) were uncertain, and 13.4% (8) disagreed with the statement. Regarding the statement "As a journalist, I frequently utilise YouTube for

reporting," 70% (42) of the participants concurred, 20.0% (12) expressed uncertainty, and 10% (6) disagreed. In addition, regarding the statement "As a journalist, I frequently utilise WhatsApp for reporting", 53.3% (32) of the participants concurred with the statement, 10.0% (6) were uncertain, and 36.7% (22) of the participants disagreed with the statement.

Examining the ethical practices of journalism, the survey found that 66.7% (40) of the respondents agreed with the statement "Journalists keep the public honestly informed," while 10.0% (6) were uncertain and 23.3% (14) disagreed with the statement. Regarding the assertion that "Journalists serve as a vigilant observer for instances of power abuse in both public and private spheres," 76.7% (46) of the participants concurred, 16.7% (10) expressed uncertainty, and 6.6% (4) disagreed. Regarding the statement "Journalists maintaining an open forum for free expression," 75% (45) of the participants agreed, 15.0% (9) were uncertain, and 10% (6) disagreed. In addition, regarding the assertion that "Journalists are expected to fulfil their socially mandated duty to utilise their expertise in providing impartial and unbiased reporting," 75% (45) of the participants agreed, 13.3% (8) were uncertain, and 11.7% (7) disagreed.

5.2.2 Factors contributing to ethical and non-ethical journalism practice

The second aim of the study was to examine the elements that contribute to both ethical and non-ethical journalistic practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study findings indicated that 75% (45) of the respondents agreed with the statement, "An individual's judgement or standard of journalism contributes to effective, ethical behaviour." Meanwhile, 11.7% (7) of the respondents were uncertain, and 13.4% (8) disagreed with the statement. In response to the statement "Journalists in this media house respect the code of ethics of the profession," 70% (42) of the respondents agreed, 20.0% (12) were uncertain, and 10% (6) disagreed. Regarding the statement "Journalists in this media house act in an improper way during news reporting," 61.6% (37) of the

respondents agreed, 18.3% (11) were uncertain, and 20% (12) disagreed. at addition, regarding the statement "Journalists in this media organisation fabricate falsehoods about their rival in order to secure a contract," 78.3% (47) of the participants concurred with the statement, 11.7% (7) were uncertain, and 10% (6) of the participants disagreed with the statement.

The survey concluded that 76.7% (46) of the respondents agreed with the phrase "Breach of privacy," while 16.7% (10) were unsure and 6.6% (4) disagreed. The study also looked at the elements that influence ethical and non-ethical media. The statement "Media manipulation of a journalist" had the following responses: 75% (45) of the respondents agreed, 11.7% (7) were uncertain, and 13.4% (8) disagreed. In relation to the statement "Poor research support systems", 70% (42) of the participants expressed agreement, 20.0% (12) were uncertain, and 10% (6) disagreed. In addition, regarding the assertion "Insufficient understanding of ethical journalism principles", 61.6% (37) of the participants concurred, 18.3% (11) were uncertain, and 20% (12) of the respondents expressed disagreement with the statement.

5.2.3 Effect of social media on ethical journalism practice

The study's third purpose aimed to ascertain the impact of social media on the implementation of ethical journalism in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found that 76.7% (46) of the respondents agreed with the statement "Social media attracts a wider coverage audience for our media house," while 16.7% (10) were uncertain and 6.6% (4) disagreed with the statement. The statement "Social media facilitate the rapid gathering and articulation of content or information by journalists" had the following responses: 75% (45) of the respondents agreed, 11.7% (7) were uncertain, and 13.4% (8) disagreed. Regarding the statement "Social media use helps our media house to gather genuine content or information," 70% (42) of the respondents agreed, 20.0% (12) were uncertain, and 10% (6) disagreed. Regarding the statement "Social media makes journalism

easier and more efficient," 78.3% (47) of the participants agreed, 11.7% (7) were uncertain, and 10% (6) disagreed. Regarding the statement "Social media facilitates the dissemination of content or information to the audience effortlessly and also reduces expenses," 53.3% (32) of the participants agreed, 10.0% (6) were uncertain, and 36.7% (22) disagreed.

5.2.4 Strengths and weaknesses between social media and traditional journalism practices
The fourth aim of the study was to assess the merits and drawbacks of social media and conventional journalistic techniques in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found that journalism practices in media houses in the Northern Region of Ghana have several strengths. These include fostering trust between the people and the media house, providing platforms for businessmen to market their products, conducting research and investigations, creating and producing content, reaching wider audiences in remote areas, verifying news through cross-checking, gathering and reporting, publishing feature articles, incorporating community voices, ensuring effective communication and accurate information, adhering to ethical professional standards by verifying contents before publication, maintaining uncompromised fact-checking, ensuring fairness, balance, and accuracy, bringing journalists closer to consumers, enabling real-time monitoring of progress, and emphasising accuracy and timeliness in social media journalism. Regarding the deficiencies in social media journalism techniques within media organisations in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study identified several weaknesses in social media journalism practices within media organisations in the Northern Region of Ghana, as reported by the participants. These weaknesses include the dissemination of fake news and engagement in unethical practices, a prevalence of untrained journalists, conflicts of interest, insufficient fact-checking, challenges in obtaining accurate information, the publication of false information,

limited feedback and accuracy, integrity issues, interruptions in internet connectivity, the potential for inaccurate reporting, and the time-consuming nature of the fact-checking process.

5.3 Conclusion
5.3.1 Various social media and ethical journalism practices

The primary aim of the study was to delineate the diverse social media and ethical journalism practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found that participants frequently utilised Facebook for reporting purposes. In addition, they employed Twitter as a means to collect content information and disseminate it. Once again, they frequently utilised YouTube for reporting purposes. In addition, they frequently utilised WhatsApp for reporting purposes.

Examining ethical journalism, the study concluded that journalists fulfil the crucial role of providing honest and accurate information to the public. They act as vigilant guardians against the misuse of power in both public and private spheres. Journalists also create a platform for open and unrestricted expression of ideas. They diligently pursue the truth independently, without succumbing to external influences, and strive to minimise any potential harm caused by their work. Journalists willingly accept responsibility for their actions and possess a profound understanding of the ethical obligations associated with their profession. They actively promote ethical conduct and serve as exemplars. Furthermore, journalists demonstrate the courage to expose ethical violations in various industries, including their own. In the northern region, journalists are bound by a duty to uphold honesty and integrity. They remain committed to their promises and actively contribute to the betterment of society, while ensuring that undue harm is avoided.

Finally, the study determined that journalists in the region possess focus and direction, but lack formal news processing routines. This raises various new inquiries regarding the practices and values deeply rooted in journalism. Social media journalists do not necessitate investigative skills,

which are essential for scrutinising government decisions and promptly verifying news credibility during the news production process and analysis of intricate societal issues.

5.3.2 Factors contributing to ethical and non-ethical journalism practice

The study's second purpose was to evaluate the elements that contribute to both ethical and non-ethical journalistic practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study determined that an individual's discernment or criterion of journalism plays a role in promoting ethical conduct. Once again, the journalists at this media organisation adhere to the professional code of ethics. Furthermore, journalists at this media organisation exhibit unprofessional behaviour while reporting the news. Moreover, journalists at this media organisation fabricate falsehoods about their rivals solely to secure a contract. Examining the elements that contribute to both ethical and unethical journalism practices. The study determined that ethical and non-ethical journalism practices are influenced by several factors, including breach of confidentiality, manipulation of journalists by the media, inadequate research support systems, and a lack of information regarding ethical journalism practices.

5.3.3 Effect of social media on ethical journalism practice

The study's third purpose was to ascertain the impact of social media on ethical journalistic practices in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found that social media has a broad reach, attracting a larger audience for our media house. Additionally, social media enables journalists to quickly gather and present content, facilitating the acquisition of authentic information. Moreover, social media streamlines and enhances the efficiency of journalism.

5.3.4 Strengths and weaknesses between social media and traditional journalism practices

The fourth purpose of the study aimed to assess the efficacy and limitations of social media and traditional journalism techniques in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found that social

media journalism practices in media houses are effective in various ways. These practices foster trust between the public and the media, provide platforms for businesses to promote their products, enable research and investigations, facilitate content creation and production, reach wider audiences in remote areas, verify news and gather information, publish feature articles, incorporate community voices, ensure effective communication and accurate information, adhere to ethical professional standards, verify content before publication, prioritise fact-checking, maintain fairness, balance, and accuracy, bring journalists closer to consumers, allow for real-time monitoring of progress, and emphasise the importance of accuracy and timeliness in reporting stories.

Regarding the deficiencies in social media journalism techniques within media organisations in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study found that social media journalism practices in a media house in the Northern Region of Ghana are ineffective. The participants identified several weaknesses in these practices, including the spread of Fake News and unethical behaviour, the presence of untrained journalists, conflicts of interest, a lack of fact-checking, difficulty in obtaining accurate information, false publication, inadequate feedback and limited accuracy, integrity issues, internet connectivity problems, the promotion of false reporting, and the time-consuming nature of the fact-checking process. Based on the robust journalistic ethics employed by media organisations in the Northern Region of Ghana.

5.4 Recommendations

The study's conclusions propose the following recommendations for stakeholders to tackle the problem of journalists' overuse of social media:

1. Journalists and news management should reduce the emphasis on the commercialization of news items, as it serves as a means to exploit individuals for financial gain. To prevent

inducement, it is imperative to decline gifts, free lunches, and other complimentary items at the point of duty.

2. The code of ethics should be compiled into a guidebook for journalists, allowing them to easily reference and internalise its principles at all times. Sanctions should be imposed on journalists who violate the code of ethics.

3. The Ghanaian government should establish explicit regulations and legislation to regulate the utilisation of social media for information dissemination, so ensuring that individuals who misuse social media can be held responsible.

4. Media organisations and media researchers in Ghana should focus on examining the utilisation of social media for journalistic endeavours. Equally vital is the provision of continuous training to ensure their adeptness in utilising the technology wisely.

5. Journalists should endeavour to acquire sufficient expertise to effectively utilise social media for professional objectives.

6. Relevant organisations are actively working together to tackle the issues that arise when journalists in the Ghanaian media industries utilise social media for journalistic objectives.

7. Media institutions must undertake a thorough evaluation of their longstanding and currently active editorial stance. Amendments are necessary to maintain relevance in the public's perception, particularly in the era of social media.

8. This study implies that media organisations must prioritise social media in order to stay pertinent and recapture significance in the current era dominated by social media, and capitalise on the opportunities it has presented.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE

Dear Respondent

I am a student at the University for Development Studies, where I am studying. As part of the requirement for the award of the certificate in Masters of Science in Business and Data Analytics, I am conducting a study on **"Social Media Use by Journalists and its Impact on Ethics: A Case Study of Northern Region of Ghana".** You have been selected to be part of the people to respond to questions on the subject matter. Your frankness and honesty about the issues are required for the researcher to have a fair report on the subject matter.

It will take 25-30 minutes to respond to all the questions. In responding to the questions, you can feel free to ask any question you have on the subject matter or refuse to answer any question you are uncomfortable with. You also can withdraw from participating in the study whenever you are no longer interested in the subject.

Thank you.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Personal Information

1. GENDER Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age of participants? 20-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41-50 [ ] 51-60 [ ]

3. Marital Status? Married [ ] Single [ ] Divorce [ ] Widow [ ] Cohabitating [ ]   4. Educational Level?

   Diploma [] HND [ ] First Degree [ ] Masters [ ] PhD [ ]

Others Specify …………….

5.   Work Experience? 1-5 years [ ] 6-10 years [ ] 11-15 years [ ] 16-20 years 21+ years [ ]

6.   Occupation/career?

7.   Dependents?

8.   Media house/organisation?

9.   Category of media house

       radio

       Tv

       Online

10. How long have you been practising journalism?

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11. Social media accounts used (multiple selection allowed)?

      Facebook

      TikTok

      WhatsApp

      Instagram

      Twitter

      LinkedIn

      YouTube

      Pinterest Others

      ……………….

12. Location?

13. How do you access social media?

      mobile phone

      desktop

      tablet

      laptop

Public café

Office

14. Internet Provider?

    Mtn

      Vodafone

      Airtel Tigo

    Others……

15. Who Provides The Internet?

      Media House

    Self

    Others…….

16. A Registered Member Of The Gja?

    Yes

    No

17. Other Professional Associations?......................

18. Are You Aware Of The Gja Code Of Ethics?

    Yes

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No

19. Which Ones Do You Remember and Apply All the Time?

………………..………………..………………..

20. DO YOU YOUR MEDIA HOUSE HAVE A GATEKEEPING POLICY?

YES

NO

21. HOW ARE THE GATEKEEPING POLICIES APPLIED?

……………………

Section B: Social media and ethical journalism practices.

B1 Social media journalism practices

Using the scale below (1–5), Please tick (√) the levels of agreement in each of the items below concerning social media journalism practices.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
No formal way of news-gathering					
No focus and direction					
No formal way of news processing routines which raised an array of new questions about practices and values entrenched in journalism practice					
Social media journalists do not require investigative skills that are crucial in scrutinising government decisions and timely verification of news credibility on the news production process and analysis of complex issues in society.					
Social media journalism does not value the ethics of the profession					
No forum for the editorial board to scrutinise the news item before publication					
Social media journalists compete for likes and first to publish stories and not to educate, inform and entertain as the mainstream media					
Social media journalism does not care about misleading information and their sources in the process of trying to tell the story to their audiences.					
Originality in terms of reporting is considered an important element of social media journalism					

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Confidentiality of information is not considered as an important part of social media journalism					
Social media Journalists' first obligation is not concerned with the truth.					
The first loyalty of social media journalism is not to the citizens.					
Social media journalism is not disciplined for the verification of facts					
Its practitioners do not exercise their conscience					

B2 Ethical Journalism Practices

Using the scale below (1–5), Please tick (√) the levels of agreement in each of the items below concerning Ethical journalism practices.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SA), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Journalists keep the public honestly informed					
Journalists serve as a vigilant monitor for instances of power abuse in both public and private spheres.					
Journalists fostering an inclusive platform for the dissemination of ideas					
Journalists are required to fulfil their societal responsibility by utilising their expertise to provide impartial and objective reporting.					
Journalists must diligently pursue the truth, free from any external influence, while also taking care to prevent unnecessary harm.					

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Journalists must demonstrate a willingness to accept responsibility for their activities.					
Journalists must possess a profound comprehension of the ethical principles and responsibilities inherent in their work.					
Journalists strive to enhance and revamp standards while establishing new ones as needed.					
Journalists exemplify ethical conduct by serving as a model for others.					

Section C: Factors contributing to ethical and non-ethical journalism practice.

C1 Factors Contributing To Ethical Journalism Practice

Using the scale below (1–5), Please tick (√) the levels of agreement in each of the items below-concerning factors contributing to ethical journalism practice.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Values					
An individual's judgment or standard of journalism contributes to effective ethical behaviour					
Journalists in this media house respect the code of ethics of the profession					
Journalists in this media house act in an improper way during news reporting					

Journalist in this media house make up lies about their competitor just to win a contract					
Journalist in this media house reports fresh news based on the payment of money					
Journalist in other media house in the Northern region reports fresh news based on the payment of money					
Morals					
Journalist in this media house do not respect the source of their news					
Journalist in other media houses in the Northern region do not respect their source of information					
Most of the journalist in the Northern region reports on other media house stories without their concern					
Some journalists in our media house do not respect other people's views on their stories					
Some journalist in our media house cheat to have their stories published					
Personal goals					
Some of the journalists in our media house think they are the best and will want to be on top all the time					
Some of the journalists work towards achieving their personal goals and not the goal of the media house					
The majority of the journalists want to gain rank ahead of other staff					
Some of the journalist aims to become the best journalist of the year and not the interest of the media house					

Some journalists in our media house will do anything to become the best journalist or be favoured by management for juice assignment					
The personality of a journalist					
A journalist's personality plays an important factor in determining his/her ethical behaviour.					
The character of the journalist influences his ethical behaviour					
Individual journalists in our media house who prefer to show up have a higher chance of unethical conduct					
Journalists who usually dress at work easily influenced by money					
Journalist in our media house who respect authority and dress formally perform their duties ethically.					
Cultural norms					
The cultures of some journalist influence their behaviour in responding to issues of unethical					
The issue "soli" might be unethical to you but considered an acceptable norm in other media houses					
Journalist request for a bribe to conduct business in my media house is not a problem					
Journalist request for a bribe to conduct business in other media house in the Northern region is not a problem					
As a journalist, my religion forbids me to collect bribes for conducting business.					

C2 Factors contributing to non-ethical journalism practice

Using the scale below (1–5), please tick (√) the levels of agreement in each of the items below-

concerning factors contributing to non-ethical journalism practice.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SA), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Breach of confidentiality					
Media manipulation of journalist					
Poor research support systems					
Lack of knowledge of ethical journalism practices					
Emphasize the personal characteristics of the target and not the subject of investigation					
Personal interest of the journalist					
Beliefs systems (culture, religion, and tribalism)					
Public pressure					
Lack of accuracy, fairness and independent journalism					

Section D: Effect of social media on ethical journalism practice.

Using the scale below (1–5), Please tick (√) the levels of agreement in each of the items below concerning the effect of social media on ethical journalism practice in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook					
Facebook is a type of social media that impacts the ethics of journalism since most quick and fast news can be gotten from the media.					
As a journalist, I use Facebook regularly for reporting					
The majority of our audiences are based on Facebook					
As a journalist, I resort to the use of Facebook to gather content, and information and broadcast the same					
Facebook attracts a wider coverage audience for our media house					
Twitter					
Twitter is a type of social media that impacts the ethics of journalism since most quick and fast news can be gotten from the media					
As a journalist, I use Twitter regularly for reporting					
The majority of our audiences are based on Twitter					

As a journalist, I resort to the use of Twitter to get gather content, and information and broadcast the same					
Twitter attracts a wider coverage audience for our media house					
YouTube					
YouTube is a type of social media that impacts the ethics of journalism since most quick and fast news can be gotten from the media					
As a journalist, I use YouTube regularly for reporting					
The majority of our audiences are based on YouTube					
As a journalist, I resort to the use of YouTube to gather content and information and broadcast the same					
YouTube attracts a wider coverage audience for our media house					
LinkedIn					
LinkedIn is a type of social media that impacts the ethics of journalism since most quick and fast news can be gotten from the media					
As a journalist, I use LinkedIn regularly for reporting					
The majority of our audiences are based on LinkedIn					
As a journalist, I resort to the use of LinkedIn to gather content and information and broadcast the same					
LinkedIn attracts a wider coverage audience for our media house					
Wikipedia					
Wikipedia is a free online encyclopaedia, created and edited by volunteers around the world.					
As a journalist, I use it as a tool for confirmation of facts around the globe.					

As a journalist, I resort to the use of Wikipedia for research of certain historical facts.					
WhatsApp					
WhatsApp is a type of social media that impacts the ethics of journalism since most quick and fast news can be gotten from the media					
As a journalist, I use WhatsApp regularly for reporting					
The majority of our audiences are based on WhatsApp					
As a journalist, I resort to the use of WhatsApp to gather content and information and broadcast the same					
WhatsApp attracts a wider coverage audience for our media house					

Section E: Strengths and Weaknesses between Social Media and Traditional Journalism Practice.

E1. How will you rate the strength of social media journalism practices in your media house

Very effective [ ] effective [ ] not sure [ ] not effective [ ] not very effective [ ]

E2. What are some of the strengths of social media journalism practices in your media house?

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E3. How would you rate the weaknesses of social media journalism practices in your media house Very

weak [ ] weak [ ] not sure [ ] not weak [ ] not very weak [ ]

E4. What are some of the weaknesses of social media journalism practices in your media house?

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E5. How will you rate the strength of traditional journalism practices in your media house?

Very effective [ ] effective [ ] not sure [ ] not effective [ ] not very effective [ ]

E6. What are some of the strengths of traditional journalism practices in your media house?

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E7. How will you rate the weaknesses of traditional journalism practices in your media house?   Very weak [ ] weak [ ] not sure [ ] not weak [ ] not very weak [ ]

E8. What are some of the weaknesses of traditional journalism practices in your media house?

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THREATS TO YOUR PRACTICE?

WELFARE SUPPORT BY YOUR MEDIA HOUSE?

DO YOUR MEDIA HOUSE OFFER YOUR SUPPORT/PROTECTION IN THE EVENT OF A THREAT?

DOES YOUR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMPEL YOU TO APPLY ETHICS COMPARED TO YOUR MEDIA HOUSE?

Yes

No

IF YES, HOW?