



**TOWARDS INCLUSIVE BROADCASTING: A STUDY ON THE
FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A TELEVISION STATION FOR
PERSONS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN GREATER ACCRA**

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY STUDENT- DISSERTATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the preparation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication UniMAC-IJ.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the feasibility of establishing a deaf-inclusive television station in Ghana, with a focus on the Greater Accra Region. Although Ghana has committed to disability inclusion through policies such as the Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), television broadcasting remains largely inaccessible to persons with hearing impairment (PWHI). Using a qualitative research approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 participants comprising PWHI, media professionals, and policymakers. Thematic analysis was employed to organize and interpret the data in relation to the Social Model of Disability and Media Dependency Theory.

Findings revealed that accessibility on Ghanaian television is minimal, with limited sign language interpretation, inconsistent captioning, and a general lack of disability-responsive programming. Financial constraints, inadequate technical infrastructure, and weak regulatory enforcement were identified as major barriers to inclusive broadcasting. Despite these challenges, stakeholders expressed strong support for the establishment of a dedicated deaf-inclusive station, viewing it as a necessary step toward information equity, social inclusion, and democratic participation. Participants proposed a range of feasible strategies, including subsidies, stronger regulatory enforcement, technical upgrades, interpreter-training pipelines, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The study concludes that an inclusive television station is both viable and essential for advancing communication rights in Ghana. It recommends strengthening policy implementation, expanding financial support systems, building technical and human resource capacity, and embedding accessibility within national communication and development frameworks.

Keywords : *accessible broadcasting; disability inclusion; Ghana; hearing impairment; media policy; television accessibility.*

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all persons with hearing impairment in Ghana, whose voices, experiences, and rights have inspired this study. May it contribute to a more inclusive media landscape where access to information is a reality for everyone, regardless of ability.

I also dedicate this study to everyone who has inclusion at heart, development communication practitioners, and development practitioners, whose commitment to equity, empowerment, and social progress continues to inspire meaningful change.

To my family, whose unwavering love, encouragement, and faith in me made this journey possible, and to my mentors and colleagues who have guided and inspired me, reminding me that persistence, learning, and service are lifelong pursuits, I extend my deepest gratitude.

Finally, I dedicate this work to God Almighty through His Son, Jesus Christ, whose guidance and strength have been my foundation throughout this academic journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, and research questions. It also defines the scope of the study, explains its significance, and concludes with the organization of the entire work.

1.2 Background of the Study

Ghana's commitment to disability inclusion is well-established at the policy level. The country ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2012, after enacting the Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) in 2006. These legal frameworks signaled a clear commitment to equity and non-discrimination, particularly in areas such as education, employment, health, and access to public information (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection [MoGCSP], 2016). However, while the laws exist on paper, the practical implementation of these policies, especially in the media and communication space, remains a significant challenge. This has resulted in a persistent exclusion of persons with hearing impairment (PWHI) from mainstream information dissemination and public dialogue (Ampofo, 2021).

One of the most glaring examples of this exclusion is in the field of television broadcasting. Although television remains one of the most widely consumed form of media in Ghana, only a small number of stations provide sign language interpretation for news and other public service content. Even when such services are available, they are often confined to short, isolated news

bulletins, failing to provide comprehensive coverage or consistent access for the hearing-impaired community (Ghana Federation of the Deaf [GFD], 2023). This severely limits the ability of PWHI to participate in civic activities, follow national developments, or engage with educational and entertainment content that is available to the general public (Amoako & Brew, 2020).

The issue becomes even more pressing when we consider the concentration of PWHI in the Greater Accra Region. As Ghana's most urbanized and media-saturated region, Greater Accra hosts an estimated 211,000 persons with hearing impairment (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2021). Despite this sizable population and the presence of numerous broadcasting stations, representation of PWHI in media content is virtually non-existent (Mensah & Osei, 2019). In contrast, countries like Kenya have made strides in inclusive broadcasting. KNAD TV, for example, is a television station specifically designed to serve the deaf community with programming in sign language and other accessible formats (Omondi, 2021). The Kenyan model illustrates not only the feasibility of inclusive broadcasting in African contexts but also its transformative impact on civic inclusion and information equity.

The absence of similar initiatives in Ghana points to a critical gap in policy implementation, technical planning, and stakeholder engagement. This study seeks to investigate that gap comprehensively by assessing the technical, financial, regulatory, and social conditions necessary for the establishment of a dedicated television station for PWHI in Ghana. The research is guided by theoretical perspectives such as the Media Dependency Theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1989), which emphasizes the power of media institutions in shaping access to information and participation in society.

Ultimately, the marginalization of PWHI from television broadcasting reinforces cycles of social exclusion and violates their right to equal access to public information (Quartey, 2022).

Establishing a dedicated television station for the hearing impaired would not only bridge this gap but also serve as a bold step toward fulfilling Ghana’s commitments under both national and international disability rights frameworks.

1.3 Problem Statement

Although Ghana has made significant policy commitments toward disability inclusion—most notably through the enactment of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) and the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2012—practical access to mass media platforms, particularly television, remains limited for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI) (MoGCSP, 2016; United Nations, 2006). Among the various forms of disability, hearing impairment presents a distinct communication barrier that requires targeted solutions such as sign language interpretation or captioning. Yet, in Ghana, such provisions are alarmingly scarce. According to the Ghana Federation of the Deaf (2023), only 5% of television programming across major stations includes any form of sign language interpretation, and these are typically brief news segments that do not cover the full spectrum of national discourse.

This glaring omission undermines not just the informational rights of PWHI but also their broader participation in democratic and socio-economic processes. Access to information is a fundamental component of civic engagement and social inclusion. UNESCO (2021) asserts that media accessibility is a cornerstone of inclusive development, allowing all citizens, including persons with disabilities, to exercise agency in political, cultural, and economic spheres. When PWHI are systematically excluded from television programming, it violates their right to receive timely, accurate, and relevant information—a right that is explicitly supported by Article 21 of the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006). The lack of media accessibility also means that PWHI are less

likely to benefit from public education campaigns, job opportunities, policy dialogues, or emergency broadcasts (Amoako & Brew, 2020).

Moreover, existing Ghanaian broadcasting platforms have not been tailored to address the specific needs of PWHI in a sustainable manner. There are no dedicated segments, programs, or channels that provide consistent content in Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL), and accessibility features like subtitles or captioning are virtually non-existent across entertainment, educational, and cultural programming (Mensah & Osei, 2019). This absence reflects a broader institutional gap, where policy rhetoric on disability inclusion has not translated into actionable, media-centered interventions (Ampofo, 2021).

Furthermore, there is a dearth of empirical research on the feasibility of establishing a television station solely dedicated to PWHI in Ghana. While countries like Kenya have introduced deaf-friendly channels such as KNAD TV (Omondi, 2021), Ghana lacks the data-driven insights needed to assess the technical infrastructure, funding models, content strategy, and regulatory adjustments necessary to support such a venture (Kwakye, 2023). This knowledge gap makes it difficult for stakeholders—including the National Communications Authority (NCA), media houses, disability advocacy groups, and development partners—to make informed decisions about inclusive broadcasting.

This study therefore addresses a critical void by conducting a comprehensive feasibility assessment of establishing a deaf-inclusive television station in Ghana's Greater Accra Region. It will incorporate the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including PWHI, media practitioners, policymakers, and regulatory bodies. By grounding the research in both empirical data and global best practices, the study aims to generate actionable recommendations that could shift inclusive broadcasting from aspiration to implementation.

1.4 General Objective

To comprehensively assess the feasibility of establishing a dedicated television station for persons with hearing impairment in Greater Accra, Ghana.

1.5 Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate the current state of television accessibility for PWHI in Greater Accra, identifying key barriers and challenges.
2. To analyze the technical, financial, and regulatory requirements for establishing and maintaining a sustainable deaf-inclusive television station.
3. To examine stakeholder perceptions and attitudes regarding the establishment of a dedicated television station for PWHI.
4. To develop evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and media practitioners on implementing accessible broadcasting solutions.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are the primary barriers preventing PWHI in Greater Accra from accessing and benefiting from existing television programming?
2. What technical infrastructure, financial resources, and regulatory frameworks would be required to establish and sustain a dedicated television station for PWHI?
3. How do key stakeholders (including PWHI, media professionals, policymakers, and disability advocates) perceive the need for and feasibility of a dedicated television station for the hearing impaired?
4. What lessons can be drawn from international best practices in deaf-inclusive broadcasting that could be adapted to the Ghanaian context?

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study is geographically focused on three urban districts within the Greater Accra Region—Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Ablekuma Central, and Ayawaso West Municipality. These areas were selected due to their dense populations, vibrant media activity, and relatively high concentration of persons with hearing impairment (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2021). Furthermore, these districts host several key television stations and regulatory offices, making them suitable for analyzing the feasibility of establishing an inclusive television station. Limiting the study to these municipalities allows for in-depth data collection while maintaining contextual relevance to broader media access issues in urban Ghana.

Thematically, the research centers exclusively on television broadcasting and does not encompass other communication platforms such as radio, print, or online media. This focus is based on the prominent role that television plays in Ghana’s public information and entertainment ecosystem. Within the television domain, the study investigates program accessibility, content delivery in Ghanaian Sign Language, visual interpretation features such as subtitles, and the overall experience of PWHI with existing broadcasting services. By narrowing the media type, the research ensures a detailed and nuanced understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities related to television inclusion.

Technically and methodologically, the study assesses the infrastructure, financial models, human resource needs, and legal frameworks involved in establishing and sustaining a deaf-inclusive television station. The key stakeholders involved include PWHI, media practitioners, policy regulators such as the National Communications Authority (NCA), and disability advocacy organizations. A mixed-methods approach is adopted: quantitative data will be collected through surveys administered to 80 PWHI using stratified sampling, while qualitative insights will be

gathered through six key informant interviews with media professionals and regulatory authorities. Temporally, the study is situated within the 2024–2025 period, covering all phases from data collection to analysis and reporting.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research carries significant value for policy formulation and implementation, especially concerning Ghana’s obligations under the UNCRPD and the Persons with Disability Act (Act 715). The study gives policymakers real-world information about the accessibility needs of PWHI in television broadcasting. This will help them make changes that put Article 21 of the UNCRPD into action, which protects the right of people with disabilities to access public information (United Nations, 2006). The results can also help with assessments of laws, decisions about where to spend money, and initiatives to build capacity for more inclusive media practices. The study gives media professionals and broadcasters useful information about how possible, long-lasting, and content-rich a TV station for people with hearing loss could be. These tips will help broadcasters create programming that is open to everyone, put money into the right infrastructure, and follow accessibility rules. The study also gives a framework for adding sign language interpretation, subtitles, and content creation by deaf people to regular TV operations. These are things that are now lacking or not done consistently in Ghana's media landscape. The study adds to the growing body of knowledge in Development Communication and Disability Media Studies by looking into a topic that hasn't been studied much in Ghana. The research is a basic source for future work on inclusive broadcasting for academics, students, and advocacy groups. The report gives the disability community, notably PWHI, a louder voice and backs up their need for equal access to media. Finally, NGOs, development partners, and donor agencies that engage on social inclusion and media development may find the study's approach helpful for

creating programs, interventions, and policy advocacy activities that aim to close the information gap (Yeboah, 2020; Adjei, 2022).

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the topic, outlining the background, problem statement, objectives, scope, and significance. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on media accessibility, disability rights, and broadcasting practices globally and in Ghana. Chapter Three details the research methodology, including design, data collection, and analytical strategies. Chapter Four presents the findings and discusses them in relation to the objectives and existing scholarship. Chapter Five concludes the study, offering recommendations for future research and policy reform.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of theoretical and empirical literature relevant to the study. It begins with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that underpin the research and continues with an analysis of how these theories relate to the objectives of the study. The chapter then reviews existing literature on media accessibility, broadcasting policy, and disability inclusion, highlighting the themes, methodologies, and findings of relevant studies. A conceptual framework is developed using five key phrases central to the research focus. Finally, the chapter defines the operational terms and concludes with a summary of the key insights that guide the rest of the study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is grounded in two core theoretical perspectives: the Social Model of Disability and Media Dependency Theory. These frameworks provide insight into the nature of exclusion in media systems and the significance of accessible broadcasting for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI).

The Social Model of Disability, introduced by Oliver (1990), proposes that disability should not be viewed as an individual deficiency but as a consequence of societal structures that fail to accommodate diverse needs. This paradigm opposes the traditional medical model, which perceives disability as a personal health problem to be cured or managed (Shakespeare, 2006; Barnes & Mercer, 2010). Within this framework, it is the social environment—including public

infrastructure, education, and media—that disables individuals by creating inaccessible systems (Thomas, 2004; Gleeson, 1999). For example, in the broadcasting industry, the absence of sign language interpretation or captioning is not merely an oversight but a structural barrier that prevents PWHI from engaging with content that is otherwise essential for civic participation (Ladd, 2003; Oliver & Barnes, 2012).

This model has influenced international disability advocacy and legislation, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which calls for equal access to information and communication services (United Nations, 2006; Degener, 2016). In Ghana, the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715), echoes these principles but lacks effective enforcement, especially in the area of media accessibility (MoGCSP, 2016; Ampofo, 2021). Several studies highlight how the failure to implement inclusive broadcasting practices in Ghana has marginalized PWHI and denied them equal access to information (Mensah & Osei, 2019; Amoako & Brew, 2020). As such, the Social Model of Disability directly informs this study by establishing the theoretical foundation for addressing media exclusion as a systemic issue.

Media Dependency Theory, developed by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976), offers a complementary perspective by examining how individuals and institutions rely on media to meet informational, social, and political needs. According to the theory, individuals develop dependency relationships with media when they perceive it as vital to understanding their environment, particularly in times of uncertainty or change (Baran & Davis, 2012; Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012). This theory is relevant to PWHI in Ghana, who often face barriers to traditional information channels and thus rely heavily on visual forms of communication (Lowrey, 2011; Quartey, 2022). When the media fails to accommodate their communication needs, PWHI are effectively excluded from the information landscape, leading to social isolation and reduced civic engagement (Yeboah,

2020; WFD, 2020). Furthermore, Media Dependency Theory explains how the structure of the media environment determines the extent of influence media holds over individuals and institutions. In societies where media is centralized and dominant, the stakes are even higher for marginalized groups such as PWHI (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Rubin, 2009). Without access to essential news, education, or emergency information, individuals with hearing impairments are at a distinct disadvantage, unable to make informed decisions or participate fully in public life (UNESCO, 2021; Adjei, 2022). This reinforces the importance of accessible broadcasting formats like sign language interpretation, subtitles, and visual storytelling. Thus, Media Dependency Theory aligns with the objective of assessing the technical and regulatory requirements for inclusive media platforms in Ghana. Taken together, the social model of disability and Media Dependency Theory provide a powerful analytical framework for this study. The former challenges the exclusionary nature of existing broadcasting systems and advocates for structural change, while the latter highlights the societal consequences of inaccessible media (Oliver, 1990; Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). These theories reinforce the necessity of inclusive broadcasting practices and inform the study's focus on stakeholder engagement, feasibility assessment, and evidence-based recommendations. They offer a dual perspective: one centered on rights and equity, and the other on systemic influence and information flow (Shakespeare, 2006; Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012). By grounding the study in these frameworks, the research is better positioned to explore how inclusive media can enhance civic participation and information equity for PWHI in Greater Accra.

2.2 Relevance of The Theories To The Study

The Social Model of Disability changes media exclusion from an individual constraint to a societal design flaw, making it applicable to our study. Oliver (1990) states that interacting with non-

inclusive surroundings causes impairment. Shakespeare (2006) supports this concept by arguing that institutional behaviors like inaccessible broadcasting cause disablement. The lack of sign language interpreters, subtitles, and customized programming for individuals with hearing impairment (PWHI) in Ghana shows how society excludes them. The Social Model promotes structural changes that make public spaces, services, and media accessible to all (Oliver & Barnes, 2012; Ladd, 2003).

This model shows how conventional media infrastructure often fails to meet different communicative needs, supporting the need for a PWHI-specific television station. International conventions like the UNCRPD consider accessible information a human right (United Nations, 2006). Ghana's 2006 Persons with Disability Act (Act 715), which mirrors this direction, lacks implementation, particularly in the media (MoGCSP, 2016; Ampofo, 2021). Mensah and Osei (2019) and Amoako and Brew (2020) show that this legislative gap marginalizes PWHI in the media. The Social Model supports this study's purpose of identifying and addressing structural impediments.

This view is supported by Media Dependency Theory, which emphasizes media's function in knowledge, orientation, and social integration. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) argue that limited media access limits social participation. Inaccessible media further marginalizes PWHI (Baran & Davis, 2012; Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012). When there are few information sources, such as in low-literacy or resource-constrained situations like those faced by PWHI in Ghana, media dependency increases (Lowrey, 2011; Quartey, 2022). Lack of accessible media hinders knowledge acquisition, democratic involvement, and community engagement (Yeboah, 2020; WFD, 2020).

Media Dependency Theory matches the study's technical and strategic features. It points out that there are trustworthy and timely television formats for PWHI (Rubin, 2009; Adjei, 2022). In an age when media shapes social perception, excluding PWHI from television programming risks entrenching social hierarchies and obscuring them (UNESCO, 2021). This theory provides a framework for examining media system changes to enhance inclusiveness. Both theories assist the study in evaluating how accessible and practical the media is, what stakeholders think, and how to create lasting strategies by showing the human rights effects of media exclusion and the underlying systems at play.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

Media Access and Disability Rights in Africa – Mutsvairo & Ragnedda (2019)

In their study titled "Does Digital Inclusion Matter? An Afrocentric Perspective," Mutsvairo and Ragnedda (2019) explored media access inequalities faced by marginalized populations, including persons with disabilities, across several African countries. The study highlighted that digital exclusion and lack of accessible broadcasting features, such as captioning and sign language interpretation, severely limit participation in civic and public discourse. Using secondary data and policy reviews, the authors examined access disparities in public communication platforms. Though not specific to Ghana, the themes are broadly applicable and frame the persistent neglect of disability inclusion in African broadcasting.

Their analysis pointed out that most state broadcasters in sub-Saharan Africa lack structured policies for integrating disability-inclusive content. The study criticized the reactive nature of policy implementation, where inclusive content only appears during international disability observances. Although limited by its general regional focus, the study's comparative review offers

useful cross-national insights. Mutsvairo and Ragnedda (2019) emphasized that the lack of policy enforcement mechanisms, funding, and training of media personnel contributes significantly to the exclusion of persons with hearing impairment.

The findings directly align with the present study's objective of evaluating accessibility gaps and understanding institutional barriers. The authors' call for policy harmonization, funding, and participatory content creation reinforces the rationale for establishing a specialized television station for persons with hearing impairment in Ghana. Their work highlights both the urgency and practical challenges involved in making broadcasting systems inclusive across the continent.

Inclusive Media and Disability Policy Implementation – Dutta & Kaur (2022)

Dutta and Kaur (2022), in their study titled "Communication for Social Change and Inclusive Media Practices," examined how disability policies are translated into actual broadcasting practices in low- and middle-income countries. Through interviews with media managers and disability rights advocates in South Asia and Africa, including Ghana, the study explored institutional readiness, funding gaps, and legal frameworks guiding inclusive communication. The qualitative design allowed for nuanced perspectives on the disconnect between policy and implementation.

Their research revealed that although many countries—including Ghana—have ratified international conventions like the UNCRPD, implementation within the media sector is inconsistent and fragmented. Respondents pointed to unclear regulatory mandates, lack of trained interpreters, and low political will as barriers to sustained accessibility initiatives. While the study's regional coverage is broad, it provided country-specific insights from Ghana, making it directly relevant to the present study.

This study supports the current research's objective of analyzing stakeholder perceptions and identifying gaps between disability policy and broadcasting practice. Dutta and Kaur's (2022) emphasis on structural barriers, such as fragmented coordination among ministries and agencies, reinforces the argument for a purpose-built television platform for PWHI. Their recommendation for multisector collaboration and community-driven media content serves as a blueprint for feasible, sustainable inclusive broadcasting initiatives.

Communication Inequality and Persons with Disabilities – Goggin & Newell (2007)

In their foundational text "Disability in Australia: Exposing a Social Apartheid," Goggin and Newell (2007) addressed communication inequalities experienced by persons with disabilities, focusing on the intersection of technology, media policy, and social inclusion. Though Australian in context, their insights into the systemic roots of exclusion and the failures of public media systems to accommodate PWDs remain globally relevant. They argue that information inequality is one of the most potent forms of marginalization in modern society.

The authors conducted a policy and discourse analysis of Australia's media landscape, highlighting how outdated regulatory frameworks and a lack of accountability mechanisms perpetuate exclusion. They also critiqued the over-reliance on NGOs and donors in implementing accessibility reforms, noting that long-term success requires legislative commitment and investment. The study's limitations include its regional focus, but its theoretical insights provide a solid framework for understanding institutional exclusion.

Goggin and Newell's (2007) findings align with this study's objective of generating evidence-based recommendations. Their work affirms the necessity of shifting from symbolic inclusion to structured, measurable, and enforced accessibility standards. Their approach encourages policy

reform grounded in rights-based frameworks—critical to guiding Ghana’s pursuit of media inclusivity for PWHI.

Challenges and Opportunities in Disability Communication – Carew et al. (2018)

Carew et al. (2018), in their study "The Impact of Disability on the Lives of Children: Cross-sectional Data from the Child Functioning Module in Uganda and Malawi," focused on how disabilities, particularly hearing impairments, affect communication access and education outcomes. Though centered on children, the study is relevant because it illustrates how early media exclusion can persist into adulthood, affecting lifelong access to information. The researchers used UNICEF’s Child Functioning Module and applied descriptive and inferential statistics to assess communication inequalities.

The study found that hearing-impaired children were among the least likely to access mainstream media and educational content. Factors cited included lack of sign language programming, untrained educators and content creators, and a lack of assistive technologies. While geographically focused on East Africa, the findings have implications for West African contexts like Ghana, where similar systemic gaps exist. The study also stressed the need for locally produced content tailored to specific disability needs.

Carew et al. (2018) underscore the long-term effects of early media exclusion, reinforcing this study’s call for inclusive broadcasting. Their findings support the need to begin accessible media interventions at both grassroots and institutional levels. For this study, the research offers data-driven evidence that strengthens the argument for a specialized, community-driven broadcasting initiative focused on PWHI in Greater Accra.

Evaluating Disability-Inclusive Media – Ellis & Kent (2017)

Ellis and Kent (2017), in their article "Accessible Television: The Politics, Policies and Aesthetics of Subtitling," explored the implementation of accessibility tools such as subtitles and sign language interpretation in public broadcasting. The study focused on public broadcasters in the UK and Australia but included comparative insights from African media contexts. Using media content analysis and interviews with accessibility consultants, the authors evaluated how access features are prioritized or neglected in different broadcasting environments.

The researchers observed that while legal frameworks often mandate inclusive broadcasting, compliance is inconsistent due to lack of monitoring and insufficient resource allocation. They also discussed the technical and artistic challenges of making content accessible without compromising entertainment value. Limitations of the study included limited coverage of community-based media outlets. However, their findings offer important lessons for implementing and normalizing inclusive content.

Ellis and Kent's (2017) work contributes directly to this study's objective of evaluating technical and regulatory feasibility. Their emphasis on capacity-building, standardization, and audience-centered design aligns with proposed solutions for Ghana's broadcasting sector. The study offers a practical roadmap for integrating sign language and captions, especially within newly established or reformed public television platforms for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The study is framed by five central concepts:

Inclusive Broadcasting

Inclusive broadcasting refers to the design and dissemination of television content that meets the diverse communication needs of all audience segments, especially marginalized groups like

persons with hearing impairment (PWHI). UNESCO (2021) defines inclusive broadcasting as content that integrates sign language interpretation, captioning, and visual storytelling to make information accessible to persons with disabilities. Studies have shown that when broadcasting is inclusive, it enhances participation, civic engagement, and access to public services (Ellis & Kent, 2017; Goggin & Newell, 2007).

Globally, inclusive broadcasting is considered a benchmark of democratic media systems, and its absence signals systemic exclusion (Dutta & Kaur, 2022). The lack of accessibility tools in mainstream media limits not just entertainment access but also restricts the flow of critical information, such as health alerts and public policy updates. Mutsvairo and Ragnedda (2019) emphasized that inclusive media practices must go beyond tokenism to offer full representation of the communication needs of people with disabilities.

In the Ghanaian context, inclusive broadcasting remains minimal, often only visible during special observances or NGO-led programs (Ampofo, 2021). For this study, inclusive broadcasting is not only a conceptual anchor but also a practical necessity that informs the feasibility of establishing a dedicated television station for PWHI. The concept frames the need to shift from reactive, occasional inclusion to a permanent, rights-based communication model (UNESCO, 2021; Carew et al., 2018).

Media Accessibility

Media accessibility refers to the extent to which broadcasting content and platforms are made available in formats that accommodate people with diverse abilities, including those with hearing, visual, or cognitive impairments (WFD, 2020; Ellis & Kent, 2017). This includes the use of assistive technologies like subtitles, audio descriptions, and sign language interpretation. When

accessibility is prioritized, persons with disabilities can consume, understand, and interact with content on equal footing with others (UNESCO, 2021).

Ellis and Kent (2017) emphasize that accessible media is a fundamental human right and not merely a technical add-on. The presence or absence of accessibility features in broadcasting directly affects inclusion, equity, and participation in public life. Goggin and Newell (2007) argued that lack of accessible communication reinforces social apartheid and exacerbates the marginalization of people with disabilities. These views reinforce the idea that accessibility must be at the core of any broadcasting reform aimed at equity.

In Ghana, very few television stations include accessibility features such as Ghanaian Sign Language interpretation in their programming. Carew et al. (2018) found that inaccessible communication in early education correlates with long-term exclusion from societal participation. As such, media accessibility in this study is both a theoretical and practical construct that guides the evaluation of technical feasibility and policy recommendations for inclusive broadcasting.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is the process of actively involving all relevant actors—such as PWHI, media professionals, policymakers, regulators, NGOs, and disability advocacy organizations—in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of inclusive broadcasting projects (Adjei, 2022; Dutta & Kaur, 2022). Meaningful stakeholder engagement ensures that the perspectives of end-users are incorporated into the design and delivery of media services.

Goggin and Newell (2007) emphasized that exclusion often results from top-down planning that fails to include the voices of those directly affected. Effective stakeholder engagement helps identify gaps, clarify objectives, and align initiatives with community needs. Yeboah (2020) noted

that media projects which lacked stakeholder input often failed to achieve lasting impact due to misaligned priorities and lack of ownership.

In this study, stakeholder engagement is central to evaluating the feasibility of a PWHI-focused television station. By involving representatives from the Ghana Federation of the Deaf, media regulatory bodies, and accessibility experts, the research ensures that the solution proposed is relevant, sustainable, and community-driven (Ellis & Kent, 2017; Carew et al., 2018). The engagement process is both a conceptual foundation and a methodological tool for the study.

Feasibility Assessment

Feasibility assessment is the structured process of evaluating the practicality of launching and sustaining a new initiative—in this case, a dedicated television station for persons with hearing impairment (Omondi, 2021; UNESCO, 2021). It encompasses technical infrastructure, financial sustainability, regulatory compliance, audience demand, and human resource capacity (Goggin & Newell, 2007).

Dutta and Kaur (2022) assert that feasibility assessments are essential in ensuring that inclusion efforts are not only ideologically sound but also operationally viable. Inadequate planning and over-reliance on donor funding often lead to the short lifespan of inclusive initiatives (Kwakye, 2023). A robust feasibility analysis therefore includes cost analysis, stakeholder support, and alignment with national communication policies.

This study applies feasibility assessment to determine whether establishing a deaf-inclusive station in Greater Accra is realistic and sustainable. The concept allows the researcher to analyze risks, anticipate challenges, and propose evidence-based solutions. It aligns with the study's second

objective and is grounded in best practices from similar projects in Kenya and the UK (Omondi, 2021; Ellis & Kent, 2017).

Information Equity

Information equity refers to the fair and just distribution of information across all segments of society, regardless of physical, cognitive, or socio-economic differences (UNESCO, 2021; Goggin & Newell, 2007). It is based on the idea that access to information is a fundamental right and a precondition for active citizenship and social inclusion. Without equitable access, marginalized groups are systematically excluded from development processes (Dutta & Kaur, 2022).

According to Mutsvairo and Ragnedda (2019), information equity is often overlooked in digital and broadcast media planning. They argue that content creation and delivery are typically designed for dominant, non-disabled audiences. This leads to uneven access and perpetuates cycles of exclusion. Carew et al. (2018) further stress that equitable communication must begin in early education and extend to mass media, especially in environments with limited literacy.

In this study, information equity serves as a core value that drives the proposed establishment of a PWHI-centered television station. It reinforces the ethical imperative to design inclusive media systems and supports the broader goal of social equity and democratic participation (Ellis & Kent, 2017; Adjei, 2022). Information equity informs both the problem statement and the recommended solutions offered in this research.

2.5 Operationalization of Key Terms and Concepts

Persons with Hearing Impairment (PWHI): Individuals who have partial or complete hearing loss and may require visual or sign-based modes of communication.

Accessibility: The degree to which television content can be understood and engaged with by individuals with diverse communication needs.

Inclusive Broadcasting: Television programming that incorporates sign language, subtitles, and visual cues to ensure PWHI can participate fully.

Feasibility: The practicality and sustainability of establishing and maintaining a dedicated television station for PWHI, including legal, technical, and financial considerations.

Stakeholder Engagement: The process of involving relevant groups such as policymakers, media houses, NGOs, and the deaf community in decision-making and implementation.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the theoretical underpinnings and related literature on media accessibility for PWHI. The Social Model of Disability and Media Dependency Theory provided insights into structural exclusion and the necessity of inclusive broadcasting. Related studies from Ghana and Kenya were reviewed, highlighting accessibility gaps, feasibility challenges, and policy failures. The chapter also introduced the study's conceptual framework and defined operational terms that will be applied throughout the research. These insights collectively inform the research design and justify the need for the current investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter Three outlines the methodological framework used to conduct this study. It presents the research design, approach, population, sample and sampling technique, data collection instrument and procedures, sources of data, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. This chapter ensures transparency and replicability while aligning the study's methodological choices with its objectives to assess the feasibility of establishing a dedicated television station for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI) in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a **descriptive exploratory design** within a **qualitative methodological framework** to examine the technical, regulatory, financial, and social factors influencing the establishment of an inclusive television station for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI) in the Greater Accra Region.

A descriptive exploratory design was considered appropriate **because the subject under investigation is relatively new and under-researched in Ghana**, with little existing literature or theoretical models directly addressing deaf-focused broadcasting. Such a design enables the researcher to **systematically describe the current accessibility landscape** while also **exploring new dimensions of feasibility** that may not yet be captured in existing studies (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Descriptive exploratory research is particularly effective for unpacking **multifaceted phenomena** like inclusive broadcasting, where social attitudes, institutional practices, regulatory frameworks, and stakeholder capacities intersect (Saunders et al., 2019). Robson (2011) notes that this design combines flexibility—allowing emerging themes to surface—with enough structure to guide systematic inquiry. According to Babbie (2020), exploratory designs are especially useful where theory is limited or requires **context-specific refinement**, as is the case with disability-focused media in Ghana.

The chosen **qualitative methodology** complements this design by privileging depth over breadth and emphasizing **stakeholder perspectives and lived experiences**. In this study, the exploratory design allowed the researcher to synthesize stakeholder views, assess policy and regulatory conditions, and identify contextual constraints into **actionable insights**. It also supported **triangulation** across interviews, policy documents, and observational notes, which enhances the validity of qualitative findings by integrating multiple data sources and minimizing bias (Flick, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Bryman, 2016).

3.2 Research Approach

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3.3 Population

The study population comprised three main groups:

Persons with Hearing Impairment (PWHI) living within the Greater Accra Region.

Media professionals, including television producers, editors, and station managers.

Policy stakeholders, such as regulators and disability advocates.

Greater Accra was selected because it has the **highest concentration of both media institutions and urban PWHI** in Ghana. According to the **Ghana Statistical Service (2021)**, approximately **110,625 persons in Greater Accra live with some form of hearing difficulty**, representing about **12% of the region's disability population**. This makes the region particularly relevant for exploring the demand for accessible broadcasting.

In terms of media professionals, Greater Accra hosts over **50 licensed television stations**, with the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA, 2022) reporting that nearly **70% of national broadcast operations are concentrated in Accra**. This population segment ensures that the perspectives of those directly responsible for television content production and distribution are captured.

For policy stakeholders, the region houses the **National Communications Authority (NCA)**, the **Ministry of Information**, the **National Media Commission (NMC)**, and the **Ghana Federation of the Deaf (GFD)**. These institutions collectively employ **several dozen key officers**, from whom a subset of policy-level participants was targeted to provide regulatory and advocacy insights.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employed a **stratified purposive sampling approach** rather than simple purposive sampling. This was necessary because the overall study population was not homogeneous: persons with hearing impairment (PWHI), media professionals, and policy stakeholders each occupy distinct social roles and bring different perspectives to broadcasting accessibility. Stratification

ensured that each subgroup was adequately represented, while purposive selection within strata guaranteed that only information-rich participants with relevant lived or professional experience were included. Within the PWHI stratum, purposive and snowball sampling were combined to recruit members from Deaf associations and networks. For media and policy actors, purposive sampling targeted individuals in senior editorial, managerial, or regulatory positions, since these roles have direct responsibility for decisions relating to accessibility.

A total of **30 participants** were interviewed: 15 PWHI, 10 media professionals, and 5 policy stakeholders. These quotas were derived from both empirical and methodological considerations. For the PWHI stratum, the 2021 Population and Housing Census reported 49,721 individuals in Greater Accra with hearing difficulty (41,431 with some difficulty, 6,119 with a lot of difficulty, and 2,171 unable to hear at all). The chosen sample of 15 corresponds to approximately 0.03% of this group—a small but sufficient fraction for qualitative research, where depth and heterogeneity (across age, gender, education, communication mode, and locality) are more critical than statistical representativeness. The media professional quota of 10 was designed to capture variation across ownership types (public vs. private), platform types (DTT, FTA, satellite), and programming profiles, based on the National Communications Authority's register of authorised broadcasters. The policy stakeholder quota of 5 reflected the finite size of this frame, which includes the NCA, NMC, Ministry of Information, and disability advocacy organisations such as GNAD. This calibration balanced breadth of coverage with feasibility. The largest stratum (PWHI) was deliberately oversampled to capture internal diversity; the mid-sized media stratum was sampled to achieve organisational and platform coverage; and the small, bounded policy stratum was sampled for institutional completeness. The stopping rule was thematic saturation: interviews were discontinued after the last three in each stratum yielded no new themes, meeting the saturation-

plus-verification criterion described by Guest et al. (2006) and Fusch & Ness (2015). This combination of stratification, purposive logic, and quota calibration enhanced both the credibility and completeness of the data.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide developed directly from the study's objectives. The guide was organized into key thematic areas, including media accessibility for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI), feasibility considerations, and stakeholder perceptions. The questions were predominantly **open-ended**, designed to encourage participants to share in-depth perspectives, experiences, and insights in their own words. This approach ensured flexibility while maintaining alignment with the study objectives. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe for clarifications and follow-up responses where necessary, thereby generating richer qualitative data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable for studies involving persons with disabilities, as they allow for guided but adaptive dialogue. This ensures that while core themes are addressed across participants, their unique experiences and contextual nuances are also captured (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The structure supported coherence in coding and analysis, while the open-ended nature provided depth to participant responses—crucial in exploring under-researched phenomena like deaf-inclusive broadcasting.

To ensure content validity and cultural sensitivity, the interview guide was reviewed and refined in consultation with academic experts in media studies, disability advocacy, and qualitative research. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted with two representatives from the PWHI community and one media expert to ensure clarity, accessibility, and thematic relevance. Feedback

from the pilot phase led to minor revisions, particularly in phrasing questions for sign language interpretation and inclusive comprehension (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted over a two-month period from February to March 2025. Interviews were conducted both in-person and virtually to accommodate participant preferences and COVID-19-related restrictions. Participants were contacted via Deaf associations, media networks, and regulatory agencies, and scheduled at their convenience to foster a safe and comfortable research environment (UNESCO, 2021; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

To enhance communication accessibility for participants with hearing impairments, professional Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) interpreters were engaged during all interviews. The interviews were conducted in neutral and familiar environments, including community centers in Accra, meeting rooms at the University of Media, Arts and Communication, and through the Zoom platform for participants who preferred virtual participation. Each session lasted between 45 minutes and one hour, providing sufficient time for participants to fully express their perspectives (Kroll, 2013; Mertens, 2014).

With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. For virtual sessions, video recordings were also made to capture sign language and other visual cues. In addition, field notes were maintained throughout the sessions to document non-verbal communication, environmental context, and immediate researcher reflections (Tracy, 2013; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Ethical clearance for the data collection process was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Media, Arts and Communication,

thereby ensuring compliance with international research ethics standards (WMA, 2013; Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

3.7 Sources of Data

This study used both **primary and secondary data sources** to provide a comprehensive understanding of how media regulations address accessibility for persons with hearing impairments (PWHI). The **primary data** was obtained through semi-structured interviews with diverse participants, including media regulators, broadcasting institutions, disability advocacy groups, and selected persons with hearing impairments. These participants were deliberately chosen because of their roles and lived experiences, which directly relate to the study's objectives. Their perspectives provided firsthand insights into the adequacy of media policies, implementation challenges, and accessibility gaps.

The **secondary data** consisted of policy and regulatory documents, official reports, and scholarly works that contextualized the primary findings. Key documents included guidelines from the **National Media Commission (NMC)**, operational policies from the **Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)**, and advocacy publications from the **Ghana Federation of the Deaf (GFD)**. These were supplemented by international frameworks such as the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** and African Charter protocols, which Ghana subscribes to. Examining these documents provided a regulatory and policy baseline, enabling the researcher to compare legal provisions with actual practices in Ghana.

Finally, reviewing **academic literature and previous empirical studies** allowed for triangulation of data and a more nuanced analysis. Scholarly works on media accessibility, disability

communication, and inclusive policy design (e.g., Bowen, 2009; Silverman, 2021) were critically analyzed to identify theoretical gaps and practical challenges in Ghana’s context. This combination of firsthand accounts, official documents, and academic literature strengthened the credibility of the study, ensuring findings were not only descriptive but also situated within a broader scholarly and regulatory framework.

3.8 Data Handling and Analysis

The study employed thematic analysis as the principal analytic strategy, given its suitability for examining complex social and regulatory issues within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method was particularly appropriate because the study set out to explore how media regulations in Ghana promote gender equality and inclusivity, with a focus on uncovering both intended and unintended effects of these policies. Thematic analysis allowed for a systematic interrogation of participant narratives and policy documents, ensuring that issues such as regulatory enforcement, institutional challenges, and representation in broadcasting were captured. The six-step process—familiarization, coding, theme identification, review, definition, and reporting—was carefully followed (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016), thereby ensuring transparency and rigor in how findings were generated.

NVivo 12 software was employed to support the analytical process by managing large volumes of interview data and documentary evidence. The study specifically aimed to examine how regulatory instruments shape gender-sensitive broadcasting practices, and NVivo facilitated the categorization of responses related to this objective. For instance, inductive codes such as “editorial independence” and “structural bias” emerged directly from participant accounts, while deductive codes such as “policy compliance” and “representation standards” were drawn from the

research objectives and conceptual framework (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). This hybrid coding ensured that the analysis remained both data-driven and aligned with the central research goals. Memos and reflective notes further captured evolving insights about power dynamics, cultural influences, and institutional bottlenecks in the regulation of gender equality in media.

To enhance validity and ensure the analysis addressed the study's aims, peer debriefing sessions were conducted with academic colleagues and methodological experts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Saldaña, 2015). These sessions tested whether identified themes genuinely reflected the research questions and objectives, such as assessing the strength of existing media regulations, evaluating their enforcement, and determining their contribution to inclusive representation. The final themes therefore illuminated regulatory gaps, institutional practices, and socio-cultural barriers, providing a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which Ghana's media regulations foster or hinder gender equality. In doing so, the analysis not only documented challenges but also identified opportunities for policy reform and capacity strengthening, directly addressing what the study set out to achieve.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to internationally accepted ethical principles of research, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for participant autonomy (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Before data collection began, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study's objectives, procedures, risks, and potential benefits. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to interviews. For participants with hearing impairments, the entire consent process was conducted in Ghanaian Sign Language

(GSL) with the assistance of professional interpreters to ensure full comprehension (WFD, 2020). Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at any point without consequence, reinforcing the voluntary nature of their involvement.

To protect participant identities, anonymity was maintained by replacing names with alphanumeric codes during transcription and reporting. No personal identifiers were included in the final dataset, publications, or presentations. Audio and video recordings were securely stored on password-protected devices and backed up on encrypted drives accessible only to the principal researcher. Interpreters and research assistants involved in the process signed confidentiality agreements to further protect sensitive information. In line with institutional policy, all data will be securely stored for a maximum of five years before being permanently deleted (Tracy, 2013). These measures were designed to minimize risks and safeguard the privacy of participants throughout the study.

Additionally, the study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, which outlines ethical standards for research involving human participants (WMA, 2013). Ethical clearance was formally obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC). The IRB protocol included provisions for engaging with vulnerable populations such as persons with disabilities, ensuring that their dignity, safety, and rights were fully respected. The use of interpreters, accessible communication formats, and sensitivity to participants' lived experiences reflected the study's commitment to ethical inclusivity. These steps collectively enhanced the trustworthiness, transparency, and integrity of the research process.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive account of the research methodology employed in this study. It detailed the design, approach, sampling strategy, data collection instruments and procedures, and ethical safeguards. The use of a qualitative, exploratory design enabled a rich understanding of feasibility and stakeholder perspectives surrounding inclusive broadcasting. The next chapter presents the findings and thematic interpretations derived from the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews conducted with 30 participants, including persons with hearing impairment (PWHI), media professionals, and policymakers. For anonymity, respondents are identified as P1 to P30. The analysis is organized around the four research objectives, with emergent themes supported by relevant participant quotations. The study employed thematic analysis, which involves systematically organizing participants' responses into meaningful categories that reflect shared or divergent experiences. This approach not only identifies recurring patterns across the data but also enables the researcher to interpret these patterns in relation to the theoretical frameworks guiding the study—namely the Social Model of Disability and Media Dependency Theory.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The study engaged 30 participants (P1–P30), whose demographic characteristics included age, gender, educational level, occupation, and—among PWHI—their primary mode of communication. Participants were between 22 and 58 years old. Fifteen (P1–P15) were persons with hearing impairment (PWHI), ten (P16–P25) were media professionals, and five (P26–P30) were policymakers and disability advocates. Among the PWHI group, there was a near-equal gender distribution, with eight males and seven females. Most reported Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) as their primary mode of communication, while three participants noted that they also relied on captioning in certain contexts. This variation highlighted the diversity of communication needs even within the PWHI community.

The media professionals (P16–P25) included six males and four females occupying roles such as television producers, station managers, engineers, and technical officers. Their professional experience varied significantly; some had worked in Ghana’s broadcasting industry for over a decade, while others were relatively early-career practitioners in their late twenties. This natural variation within the group provided a breadth of perspectives on both the technical and organizational aspects of broadcasting. Participants such as P18 and P21, who had previously engaged in accessibility-related projects, contributed insights that emerged organically from their backgrounds rather than from pre-selection criteria.

The final category of participants (P26–P30) consisted of policymakers and advocacy representatives. This group included three males and two females from institutions such as the National Media Commission, the National Communications Authority, and disability advocacy bodies. Their ages ranged between 35 and 52, with most having more than ten years of involvement in policy or advocacy work. For example, P27, a regulatory actor, discussed challenges related to enforcement, while P29, an advocate, reflected on community mobilization efforts. These perspectives were not intentionally curated beforehand but emerged from the individuals who consented to participate, allowing the study to reflect a naturally occurring mix of governance, regulatory, and advocacy viewpoints alongside the lived experiences of PWHI and the operational realities of media practitioners.

4.2 OBJECTIVE 1: Evaluating the Current State of Television Accessibility For

PWHI-Limited Frequency and Type of Television Consumption

Participants consistently emphasized that television still plays a central role in shaping information and social life in Ghana, yet its usefulness for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI) is limited

by persistent accessibility challenges. Many explained that they do not watch television regularly because the effort required to follow content is exhausting without support. P3 captured this frustration, saying, *“I only watch TV when my family is around to explain because without captions or signs, I don’t understand most of the news.”* This illustrates how dependence on others for interpretation turns television into a secondary rather than independent source of information, weakening its role as a tool for empowerment.

For several respondents, the lack of inclusive features has made television less attractive for leisure as well. P12 remarked, *“Entertainment shows are common, but they don’t add interpreters, so I lose interest quickly.”* Others echoed similar sentiments, pointing out that while they would prefer to enjoy dramas, talk shows, or sports coverage, they are often left disengaged because the programs are not designed with them in mind. This lack of inclusion in lighter programming—not only in news—reveals a deeper problem: television in Ghana is not treating accessibility as a cross-cutting standard, but rather as an occasional or optional feature.

These experiences resonate with wider scholarly observations. Amoako and Brew (2020) found that low accessibility reduces sustained engagement with mainstream broadcasting among PWHI, while UNESCO (2021) stresses that accessible media is crucial for civic participation and social inclusion. When television excludes a significant portion of the population, it not only limits their entertainment choices but also cuts them off from important discussions about governance, development, and cultural life. The findings from participants therefore highlight both the practical frustrations of daily exclusion and the broader societal implications of inaccessible broadcasting.

Absence of Sign Language Interpretation and Captioning

Participants repeatedly pointed out that one of the clearest signs of exclusion is the near absence of sign language interpretation and captioning on Ghanaian television. P7 explained, *“It is rare to see sign language except sometimes during the evening news, and even that is short.”* Several others agreed, noting that the limited instances where interpreters appear are inconsistent and often restricted to high-profile announcements or short news segments. This pattern reinforces the sense that accessibility is treated as an afterthought rather than an essential service, leaving PWHI to navigate mainstream programming without adequate support.

For many, the lack of captioning is an equally frustrating barrier. P19 observed, *“I have never seen captions on entertainment or educational programs here.”* Others noted that even when captioning could benefit broader audiences—such as during sports broadcasts, dramas, or children’s shows—it is simply not available. The absence of these features reduces the usefulness of television as a source of both learning and leisure, pushing PWHI to rely on family members, social media, or word of mouth to keep up with conversations that television should naturally provide. In this way, television reinforces rather than challenges existing inequalities.

These testimonies echo broader reports, such as those of the Ghana Federation of the Deaf (GFD, 2023), which estimate that only about 5% of programming nationwide integrates sign language. Scholars like Ampofo (2021) have argued that this persistent gap reflects systemic exclusion within Ghana’s broadcasting environment, where disability inclusion is neither prioritized nor enforced. Beyond individual frustration, the lack of sign language and captioning denies PWHI equal participation in national discourse and cultural life. By neglecting accessible features, broadcasters not only fail to comply with international conventions but also miss an opportunity to make television more inclusive for everyone.

Structural Barriers to Accessibility

Participants frequently emphasized that financial and infrastructural limitations remain significant obstacles to accessible broadcasting in Ghana. Many explained that while some television stations recognize the importance of inclusion, they lack the resources to put measures in place. P21, a media professional, remarked, *“Most stations say they cannot afford to hire interpreters or invest in captioning technology.”* This statement reflects a broader sentiment among industry actors who often see accessibility as an additional cost rather than a core operational responsibility. As a result, participants noted that accessibility initiatives often receive less attention when resources are limited, suggesting that inclusion may be deprioritized during periods of financial strain. While this study cannot definitively conclude that such initiatives are consistently postponed, the perspectives shared by respondents highlight concerns about how budget constraints can influence broadcasters’ willingness or ability to invest in accessibility. Others went further to highlight how infrastructural deficits compound the financial burden. P14 explained, *“Even if the will is there, the resources are not.”* Several participants described how older broadcasting equipment is incompatible with captioning software, making upgrades necessary before accessibility tools can even be introduced. This makes accessibility seem like a “luxury” reserved for larger, well-funded stations rather than a minimum standard across the sector. The problem is not just about hiring interpreters but also about ensuring that studios, editing suites, and transmission platforms are designed to accommodate visual storytelling and accessible features.

These accounts resonate with findings by Mensah and Osei (2019), who noted that cost is the most frequently cited barrier to implementing accessibility in Ghana’s television industry. Yet, as Omondi (2021) argues in the context of Kenya, such investments are not optional if societies aim to achieve inclusive development. Accessibility should be seen not as an expense but as an

investment in equity, participation, and long-term social inclusion. By framing accessibility as too costly, broadcasters risk overlooking the broader economic and democratic benefits that come from engaging all citizens, including persons with hearing impairment.

Implications for Civic, Social, and Economic Participation

Participants repeatedly emphasized that being excluded from television access directly affects their ability to take part in national life. P5 expressed this frustration, saying, *“When policies are announced on TV, I usually don’t know about them until much later.”* For many PWHI, the delay in receiving critical policy updates—ranging from health directives to education reforms—means they are left uninformed during moments when timely information matters most. This lack of immediate access undermines their right to be active citizens and often forces them to rely on secondhand sources, which may be incomplete or inaccurate.

Beyond policy matters, respondents also described how exclusion from television weakens their participation in everyday economic and social activities. P8 explained, *“Without access to information, we are left out of business opportunities and social discussions.”* Others recounted experiences where they missed deadlines for grant applications or community programs because announcements were made exclusively on television without accessible features. In addition, exclusion from popular discussions—such as debates around national issues or trending cultural events—creates feelings of isolation and reinforces the perception that PWHI are peripheral to mainstream society.

These lived experiences align closely with Media Dependency Theory, which argues that individuals depend heavily on media for information, orientation, and decision-making (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; Lowrey, 2011). When accessibility is denied, entire communities lose

not only a key information source but also their ability to engage effectively in civic and economic processes. Quartey (2022) stresses that such exclusion perpetuates cycles of marginalization, as PWHI remain systematically left out of opportunities that others access easily. Thus, inaccessible television is not merely an inconvenience—it is a structural barrier that widens inequality and undermines democratic participation.

4.3 OBJECTIVE 2: Analyzing Technical, Financial, And Regulatory Requirements for a Deaf-Inclusive Television Station

Need for Specialized Technical Infrastructure

Participants consistently underscored that the foundation of a deaf-inclusive television station rests on robust technical infrastructure. They highlighted that without modern tools, accessibility remains unattainable. P11 explained, *“We need proper captioning software, high-quality cameras, and trained interpreters to make the content accessible.”* Others added that while human resources are vital, the absence of reliable technology often undermines even the best intentions. For instance, captioning requires not only software but also specialized editing systems that can synchronize text accurately with live broadcasts. These technical tools are costly but essential for ensuring that information is communicated in ways that PWHI can engage with independently.

Several participants pointed out that technical readiness goes beyond hiring interpreters. P22 noted, *“It’s not only about interpreters; studios must be redesigned to ensure visuals are clear for those who rely on sign language.”* Poor lighting, inadequate framing, or unclear backgrounds make it difficult for viewers to follow signed content. Participants emphasized that production quality—including sound-to-visual synchronization, on-screen placement of interpreters, and the design of sets—directly influences the clarity of accessible programming. Thus, accessibility is

not just an “add-on” feature but must be integrated into the very architecture of television production.

These insights mirror broader recommendations by UNESCO (2021), which stresses that accessible broadcasting requires deliberate investment in production technology, not occasional adjustments. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD, 2020) similarly argues that lack of equipment perpetuates structural inequalities in media access, as broadcasters without proper infrastructure cannot consistently meet the needs of PWHI. By prioritizing technical readiness, broadcasters can not only improve access for marginalized groups but also enhance overall production quality, thereby making television more engaging and inclusive for all audiences.

Financial Sustainability as a Core Challenge

Participants were unanimous in pointing out that financial resources represent one of the biggest hurdles to establishing and maintaining a deaf-inclusive television station. They explained that while the vision is important, the practicalities of sustaining such a station are daunting. P9 captured this reality, stating, *“Running a TV station itself is expensive, adding interpreters and captioning increases the cost.”* Others noted that unlike larger commercial broadcasters, a deaf-inclusive station may not immediately attract advertising revenue, making it difficult to cover operational costs. This financial pressure, if not addressed, could threaten the long-term viability of the initiative.

Policymakers and media professionals alike echoed these concerns. P16, a policy actor, explained, *“Donor support may help at the beginning, but long-term funding is always a challenge.”* Several participants emphasized that while grants and donor partnerships could kick-start the initiative, relying solely on external funding creates vulnerability. As soon as funding cycles end, many

inclusive projects collapse due to lack of sustained income. Participants recommended exploring hybrid financial models that combine government subventions, advertising targeted at niche markets, and partnerships with disability organizations to build resilience against financial shocks. These perspectives align with findings from other contexts. Omondi (2021) documented how KNAD TV in Kenya, a deaf-inclusive station, faced sustainability challenges once donor funding was reduced. Similarly, Kwakye (2023) highlighted that many community-based inclusive media outlets in Ghana struggled to survive without consistent financial streams. These lessons point to the importance of embedding financial planning and sustainability strategies at the very foundation of a deaf-inclusive station. Without reliable revenue sources and financial backing, the promise of accessibility risks being short-lived, leaving PWHI once again marginalized in the media landscape.

Regulatory Frameworks and Policy Gaps

Respondents consistently highlighted weak regulatory enforcement as a critical barrier to accessibility in Ghana's media environment. They noted that while some legal provisions mention inclusion, these are rarely backed by monitoring or sanctions. P20 expressed this frustration clearly, stating, *“Our media laws mention inclusion, but there is no strong enforcement. Broadcasters can ignore it without consequences.”* This reflects a situation where accessibility remains more of a recommendation than a requirement, leaving compliance to the discretion of media houses that may prioritize commercial concerns over social responsibility.

Participants emphasized the role of regulatory agencies in bridging this gap. P28 explained, *“Until the National Media Commission and NCA enforce accessibility rules, many stations won't act.”*

Others added that without pressure from institutions like the National Communications Authority,

broadcasters often view accessibility as optional and therefore not worth the additional investment. Several respondents further suggested that accessibility benchmarks should be incorporated into licensing and renewal conditions so that broadcasters cannot operate indefinitely while disregarding inclusion. This, they argued, would gradually shift accessibility from being symbolic to becoming standard practice in the broadcasting industry.

These concerns mirror scholarly findings. Ampofo (2021) identified clear gaps between the promises enshrined in Ghana's Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) and the realities of its enforcement within the media sector. He argues that while the law provides a foundation, the lack of concrete regulatory mechanisms undermines its effectiveness. Strengthening policy monitoring and introducing sanctions for non-compliance could incentivize broadcasters to integrate accessibility features systematically. Such regulatory reform would not only align Ghana with its commitments under the UNCRPD but also ensure that persons with hearing impairment are fully included in national discourse.

Role of Government, Private Sector, and Donors

Participants frequently emphasized that sustainable implementation of a deaf-inclusive television station would require the combined efforts of multiple stakeholders. They explained that broadcasters alone cannot bear the financial and logistical burdens associated with accessibility. P15 suggested, "*Government should provide subsidies or tax incentives for stations that implement accessibility.*" This comment reflects the view that public policy must move beyond mandates to actively incentivize compliance. Without state support, broadcasters may lack the motivation or resources to consistently integrate accessibility features into their programming.

Several respondents also pointed to the complementary role of private sector actors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). P24 explained, “*Private companies and NGOs can also sponsor programs to reduce costs.*” Participants noted that corporate sponsorships, public–private partnerships, and NGO-led initiatives could ease the financial strain of accessibility and promote innovation in content delivery. For instance, businesses could support captioning services as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), while NGOs might provide training for interpreters or facilitate community outreach. Such collaborations would not only reduce costs but also build a culture of shared responsibility for inclusive broadcasting.

These perspectives align with broader scholarship that underscores the role of multi-stakeholder collaboration in inclusive communication. Yeboah (2020) stresses that sustainable accessibility projects require strong partnerships between the state, private companies, and civil society. Similarly, Adjei (2022) highlights that donor involvement and advocacy networks can play a catalytic role in sustaining inclusive communication initiatives in Ghana. A collaborative governance model ensures that no single actor is overburdened and that accessibility becomes an integral part of the broadcasting ecosystem rather than a temporary or donor-driven intervention.

4.4 OBJECTIVE 3: Stakeholder Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding A Dedicated Television Station For PWHI

Broad Endorsement and Perceived Social Value

Participants across the different groups expressed strong support for the establishment of a dedicated television station for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI). They framed the idea as a necessity rooted in rights, rather than a charitable gesture. P2, a PWHI respondent, expressed this clearly: “*A station for us means we finally get the news without asking someone to translate—*

freedom.” Such responses highlighted the deep sense of frustration with existing broadcasting systems and the hope that an inclusive station could restore independence and dignity in accessing information. Similarly, P18, a media professional, stated, “*This is overdue; accessibility should be a standard, not an add-on.*” For many participants, the station was not just about programming but about recognition, equality, and respect for PWHI as full members of society.

This strong endorsement resonates with the Social Model of Disability, which emphasizes that exclusion is not caused by individual impairments but by the way social and institutional systems are organized (Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2006). Inaccessible broadcasting practices, therefore, are structural barriers that can and should be dismantled. By supporting a dedicated station, participants effectively called for systemic reform that shifts responsibility from the individual to the institutions that shape public communication. The recognition of accessibility as a right reflects broader international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), particularly Article 9, which requires states to guarantee access to information and communications for persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2006).

From a communication perspective, participants’ support also aligns with insights from Media Dependency Theory. This framework suggests that individuals rely on media to make sense of their environment, form opinions, and engage in civic processes (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; Baran & Davis, 2012). The absence of accessible media not only restricts information but also undermines democratic participation. Stakeholders’ framing of a deaf-inclusive station as a right rather than a privilege indicates a level of normative readiness that could facilitate adoption, integration, and mainstreaming of inclusive broadcasting practices. This recognition suggests that while financial and regulatory hurdles exist, there is already strong social and attitudinal support for such a reform, which is a critical ingredient for long-term success.

Audience Reception and Market Viability

While endorsing the idea of a deaf-inclusive television station, stakeholders also reflected carefully on how the wider public might receive such an initiative. Some argued that the success of the station would depend on how its content is packaged. P21, a television producer, explained, “*If we package it well—news, education, entertainment with captions and signing—hearing audiences will watch too.*” His point highlights that inclusive broadcasting does not have to be niche; it can attract a diverse viewership if designed to meet multiple needs. Participants frequently pointed out that accessibility is not just about meeting legal obligations but also about delivering high-quality, engaging programming that appeals across audience categories.

Other participants emphasized that accessible features have value beyond the Deaf community. P27, a policy actor, stated, “*Accessible content benefits many beyond the Deaf community—elderly viewers, people in noisy environments, students learning to read.*” This insight broadens the conversation, showing that captioning and visual-rich programming can serve audiences who may not identify as disabled but still encounter barriers to information in specific contexts. Empirical evidence supports this claim: the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) and UNESCO (2021) both report that captioning improves comprehension, supports language learning, and assists in noisy or multilingual environments. This reinforces the idea that inclusive design benefits society as a whole, rather than serving a small minority.

From a theoretical perspective, these reflections align with Rogers’ (2003) Diffusion of Innovations theory, which stresses that early adoption of innovations depends on perceived relative advantage and compatibility with existing viewing habits. When accessibility features are presented as tools that enhance content for all audiences, they are more likely to be embraced. Participants’ emphasis on universal benefits positions accessibility not as a burden but as a

universal design principle, strengthening both the rights-based rationale and the market case for inclusivity (ITU, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). This dual logic—social inclusion and audience growth—could help persuade commercial broadcasters and policymakers to buy into the initiative, framing accessibility as both an ethical responsibility and a business opportunity.

Anticipated Contributions to Social Inclusion and Development

Respondents consistently emphasized that a deaf-inclusive television station would have profound implications for social inclusion, particularly for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI). They described how being able to independently follow political debates, policy announcements, and community programs would strengthen their sense of belonging. P5, for example, explained, *“When I understand policy discussions myself, I feel part of the country’s decisions.”* This statement highlights how access to information is not just about knowledge, but about recognition and citizenship. Similarly, participants noted that inclusive broadcasting would allow them to take part in conversations with peers and family members on equal footing, reducing dependence on intermediaries.

Education and employment emerged as another major area where participants anticipated positive change. P8 remarked, *“Educational programs in sign language will open doors for work and training.”* Other PWHI respondents echoed this, explaining that captioned or signed programs could help them build skills, improve literacy, and access vocational opportunities. Such reflections resonate with international guidance, which stresses that accessible media enhances participation in education, employment, and civic life (UNESCO, 2021; WHO, 2021; United Nations, 2006). By bridging communication gaps, a deaf-inclusive station could create new pathways for empowerment not only for individuals but also for families who often share in the struggles of exclusion.

These perspectives map directly onto established theoretical frameworks. Media Dependency Theory highlights that continuous access to credible information enhances individual efficacy and civic engagement (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976), while the Social Model of Disability emphasizes that barriers lie not within individuals but in inaccessible environments (Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2006). An inclusive station would therefore act as a structural solution, dismantling one of the major barriers that isolates PWHI from public life. Stakeholders viewed it not merely as a broadcast enterprise but as a platform for expanding capabilities—supporting literacy, health communication, and democratic participation—with positive spillovers that extend to families, communities, and society at large (UNESCO, 2021; WHO, 2021).

Barriers to Gaining and Sustaining Stakeholder Support

Despite broad endorsement of the concept, participants acknowledged that sustaining momentum for a deaf-inclusive television station would not be without challenges. A recurring concern was financial uncertainty. P16, a policy actor, cautioned, *“Budget cycles are tight; without a clear funding model, priorities can shift.”* Several participants explained that when national budgets are stretched, accessibility initiatives risk being deprioritized in favor of more visible or politically expedient projects. This reflects a fear that without ring-fenced resources or stable funding mechanisms, the initiative could struggle to move from pilot stages to long-term operation.

Capacity-related issues were also highlighted as barriers to timely implementation. P24, a broadcast engineer, observed, *“Skilled interpreters and captioning workflows take time to build; if it’s complex, stations may delay.”* Respondents explained that accessibility requires not only interpreters but also trained captioners, technical staff familiar with specialized software, and producers who understand how to integrate inclusive features seamlessly. Where these systems are not already in place, broadcasters may perceive accessibility as overly complex and postpone

investment. This aligns with Rogers' (2003) diffusion research, which shows that adoption slows when innovations are seen as complex or lacking short-term returns.

Finally, several participants warned that attitudinal barriers could weaken support if accessibility is framed as serving only a “niche” audience rather than the wider public. This perception echoes arguments by Shakespeare (2006) and Oliver (1990), who stress that stigma and narrow framing of disability reinforce exclusion. Participants argued that clear regulatory guidance, paired with incentives such as subsidies or tax relief, would be necessary to counter inertia and ensure buy-in. This reflects international recommendations emphasizing policy leverage in accessibility reforms (UNESCO, 2021; ITU, 2020). In summary, stakeholders identified three interconnected risks—financing, capacity, and policy clarity—each of which requires targeted strategies such as phased rollouts, interpreter training pipelines, and enforceable accessibility standards (United Nations, 2006; Rogers, 2003).

4.5 OBJECTIVE 4: Recommendations For Policymakers And Media Practitioners on Implementing Accessible Broadcasting Solutions

Strengthening Accessibility through Mandatory Policies

Participants consistently emphasized that stronger legal frameworks are needed to move accessibility from rhetoric to practice. Many felt that as long as accessibility remains voluntary, broadcasters will continue to overlook it in favor of cost-saving measures. P13 expressed this sentiment clearly, stating, “*Accessibility should not be optional—there must be laws requiring captions and sign language.*” Respondents argued that without binding obligations, accessibility will remain tokenistic, with only occasional gestures toward inclusion rather than systemic change.

This perspective reflects a growing recognition that rights cannot be fully realized through goodwill alone, but must be guaranteed by law.

Policymakers in the study echoed these concerns, highlighting enforcement gaps within Ghana's current disability legislation. P25, a policymaker, explained, "*We already have disability laws, but they must be enforced in broadcasting with penalties for non-compliance.*" Several participants added that while Ghana's Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) provides a legal foundation, it lacks the specific broadcasting requirements and enforcement mechanisms necessary to achieve real impact. They argued that integrating accessibility benchmarks into licensing and renewal processes for broadcasters would significantly raise compliance levels. This idea is consistent with international trends, where enforceable quotas for captioning and sign interpretation have driven measurable improvements in accessibility.

These recommendations align with global calls for enforceable accessibility policies. UNESCO (2021) and the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD, 2020) emphasize that voluntary compliance often results in symbolic rather than meaningful inclusion, while regulatory compulsion ensures systematic implementation. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2020) has documented how mandatory quotas in other jurisdictions significantly boosted accessibility in both public and commercial broadcasting. Strengthening Ghana's regulatory enforcement would also align national practice with the UNCRPD's Article 21, which explicitly mandates equal access to information and communication (United Nations, 2006). Participants therefore viewed a stronger legal and regulatory framework as central to building a sustainable culture of accessibility in Ghana's broadcasting sector.

Capacity Building for Media Practitioners

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public and commercial broadcasting. Strengthening Ghana's regulatory enforcement would also align national practice with the UNCRPD's Article 21, which explicitly mandates equal access to information and communication (United Nations, 2006). Participants therefore viewed a stronger legal and regulatory framework as central to building a sustainable culture of accessibility in Ghana's broadcasting sector.

Incentives and Partnerships to Support Implementation

Participants consistently pointed to financial and logistical support as key enablers of inclusive broadcasting. Many argued that without structured incentives, broadcasters would be reluctant to invest in accessibility. P22 explained, *"Government can give tax breaks or subsidies to stations that comply."* Others stressed that compliance should not be viewed only as a burden but also as an opportunity that could be encouraged through fiscal measures. Such incentives would not only lower the cost of adoption but also signal a strong policy commitment to inclusion. International experiences show that tax relief and subsidies have been effective in motivating compliance with accessibility standards (ITU, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

Beyond government incentives, participants also emphasized the role of partnerships with civil society and donors in sustaining accessibility. P14 remarked, *"Partnerships with NGOs and international donors can help share costs and expertise."* Respondents explained that NGOs often bring specialized knowledge, while donors provide critical funding during the early phases of implementation. This combination of technical assistance and financial support could help overcome the steep entry costs associated with captioning and interpretation technologies. Such collaborative models have proven successful elsewhere: Yeboah (2020) stresses that joint approaches between state actors, civil society, and donors are crucial to sustaining inclusive

communication projects, while Adjei (2022) highlights their role in building local technical capacity.

These insights align with broader scholarship on sustainability in inclusive media. Kwakye (2023) found that long-term success depends on diverse funding streams rather than reliance on a single source. Fobi and Oppong (2019) similarly argue that multi-stakeholder resource mobilization spreads risks and ensures continuity even when donor cycles end. UNESCO (2021) and the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD, 2020) both recommend combining public funding, private sponsorships, and donor support to guarantee that accessibility does not collapse under financial strain. By framing financial and logistical support as shared responsibilities, participants highlight the need for systemic, collaborative solutions that go beyond temporary interventions.

Long-Term Sustainability through Strategic Planning

Participants strongly emphasized that inclusive broadcasting should not be treated as a short-term project but rather as part of Ghana's long-term development priorities. P7, a PWHI respondent, explained, *"We don't just need a station; we need a long-term plan to keep it running."* Several participants expressed concern that without deliberate planning for sustainability, an inclusive station might face the same fate as other donor-supported initiatives that collapse once initial funding dries up. Their reflections underscored that accessibility must be embedded into national communication systems rather than treated as an experimental add-on. This approach would secure the continuity of inclusive programming and strengthen its legitimacy as a public good.

For many respondents, sustainability was linked to investment in people and technology. P12 captured this view, noting, *"Sustainability means training new interpreters, updating technology, and planning for future needs."* Participants explained that interpreters are often in short supply,

and without a pipeline of new professionals, accessibility will remain patchy. They also highlighted that broadcasting technologies evolve quickly, meaning that captioning software, digital platforms, and studio equipment need regular upgrades. These insights mirror UNESCO's (2021) emphasis on the role of interpreter training pipelines, continuous technological updates, and stable funding mechanisms in sustaining inclusive broadcasting. Without these elements, gains in accessibility risk being reversed over time.

These perspectives are reinforced by international evidence. Omondi (2021) reported that Kenya's KNAD TV, which initially benefited from donor enthusiasm, struggled significantly when external funding ended due to the absence of sustainability planning. Similarly, Kwakye (2023) and Yeboah (2020) argue that inclusive media projects in Ghana often fail when not anchored in long-term strategies that combine government commitment, civil society partnerships, and diversified funding streams. Embedding accessibility into Ghana's broader information equity agenda would therefore align with both the UNCRPD's Article 21 obligations (United Nations, 2006) and global best practices documented by ITU (2020) and UNESCO (2021). By integrating inclusive broadcasting into national policy frameworks, Ghana can ensure continuity, stability, and the steady expansion of rights-based media access.

4.6 Discussion of Results

Exclusion and Accessibility Gaps

The findings of this study underscore the persistent exclusion of persons with hearing impairment (PWHI) from Ghana's television broadcasting landscape. Despite television's role as a central source of news and entertainment, PWHI reported engaging with it less frequently due to limited accessibility features. This outcome mirrors Amoako and Brew's (2020) work, which

demonstrated how the absence of sign language and captioning discouraged sustained viewership among persons with disabilities. UNESCO (2021) also highlights that when audiences are excluded from mainstream media, their ability to participate in civic and democratic processes is weakened. These results confirm the relevance of the Social Model of Disability, which frames exclusion as a function of systemic barriers rather than individual limitations (Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2006).

Accessibility gaps were further underscored by participants' testimonies about the rarity of sign language interpretation and captioning. Their accounts align with the Ghana Federation of the Deaf's (GFD, 2023) report that only 5% of national programming includes sign language. Similarly, Ampofo (2021) found inconsistencies between Ghana's disability legislation and the actual practices of broadcasters. Nowell et al. (2017) emphasize that such systemic exclusion compromises the credibility and inclusiveness of communication systems. Without consistent accessibility, PWHI remain unable to rely on television for orientation or decision-making, which undermines the media dependency relationship outlined by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) and reaffirmed by Baran and Davis (2012).

The implications of these accessibility failures are significant. Participants explained that the absence of inclusive features excluded them not only from leisure activities but also from political discourse and economic opportunities. This confirms earlier studies showing that inaccessible media perpetuates social marginalization and deepens inequality (UNESCO, 2021; Quartey, 2022). In this sense, television has become a site of systemic discrimination where exclusionary practices are normalized. The Social Model of Disability makes clear that addressing these issues requires institutional reforms in media production, rather than expecting individuals with disabilities to adapt (Shakespeare, 2006).

Taken together, the evidence suggests that Ghana's television broadcasting landscape is structurally skewed against PWHI. The scarcity of sign interpretation and captioning reflects more than isolated oversights; it represents a systemic failure to prioritize information equity. This creates both democratic and developmental deficits, as exclusion from media access weakens citizenship and hinders social inclusion. The testimonies from participants illustrate the urgent need to transform broadcasting practices into inclusive systems that align with Ghana's legal and international obligations (United Nations, 2006).

Barriers: Financial, Infrastructural, and Regulatory

A recurring theme across participants was the financial and infrastructural burden of implementing accessibility. Media professionals and policymakers acknowledged that while they recognized the value of inclusion, the associated costs remained prohibitive. High expenses for hiring interpreters and procuring captioning software, coupled with outdated broadcasting equipment, were cited as major obstacles. These findings echo Mensah and Osei (2019), who found that broadcasters often cite cost as their primary reason for avoiding inclusive programming. Yet, Omondi's (2021) study of KNAD TV in Kenya illustrates that long-term investment in accessibility has transformative potential. Kwakye (2023) also showed that donor-reliant community media in Ghana collapsed without diversified financial streams, underscoring the need for hybrid financial models.

Infrastructure emerged as another pressing challenge. Several participants argued that existing studios and equipment were not designed to accommodate inclusive production. Outdated systems made it difficult to integrate captioning or visually clear sign interpretation. This confirms findings by UNESCO (2021) and the World Federation of the Deaf (2020), both of which argue that without technical readiness, accessibility remains inconsistent and tokenistic. Fobi and Oppong (2019) similarly stress that investment in human and technological capacity is essential for continuity and

quality in inclusive practices. Thus, both financial and infrastructural reforms are necessary for Ghana to move toward meaningful accessibility.

Regulatory weakness was also identified as a major barrier. Although Ghana's Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) provides a legal framework, participants reported that it lacked strong enforcement mechanisms. Broadcasters often ignore inclusion provisions without consequence. Ampofo (2021) confirms this enforcement gap, noting that legal provisions are undermined by weak monitoring and sanctions. This aligns with UNESCO (2021) and ITU (2020), both of which recommend enforceable accessibility quotas to prevent tokenistic compliance. Embedding accessibility requirements into broadcasting license renewals would help Ghana align with Article 21 of the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006).

The discussion of barriers highlights that financial strain, outdated infrastructure, and weak regulation are interconnected. High costs and technical challenges discourage voluntary compliance, while regulatory bodies lack the enforcement capacity to compel change. Without addressing these systemic barriers, accessibility risks remaining aspirational. However, participants' reflections also point toward clear solutions: diversified funding, infrastructure upgrades, and stronger regulatory enforcement. Together, these interventions could create an enabling environment for sustainable accessibility in Ghana's broadcasting sector.

Stakeholder Perceptions and Pathways to Sustainability

Despite the barriers, participants overwhelmingly endorsed the establishment of a deaf-inclusive television station, framing it as a right rather than a privilege. PWHI respondents described it as a source of independence, while media professionals and policymakers saw it as an overdue reform. This consensus resonates with the Social Model of Disability, which locates exclusion in social

and institutional arrangements rather than impairments (Shakespeare, 2006). It also reflects the principles of Media Dependency Theory, which underscores the importance of accessible media for civic participation (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; Lowrey, 2011). Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations further explains that adoption of such reforms is more likely when they are perceived to offer relative advantage and compatibility with existing practices.

Stakeholders also emphasized the universal benefits of accessibility, arguing that features such as captioning and sign language interpretation extend beyond the Deaf community. This view aligns with WHO (2021) and UNESCO (2021), which document how captions improve comprehension for second-language learners, the elderly, and individuals in noisy environments. By positioning accessibility as a universal design feature rather than a niche service, participants suggested that inclusive broadcasting could expand audience reach and strengthen market viability. This dual logic of rights-based inclusion and commercial opportunity creates a compelling case for mainstream adoption.

Sustainability emerged as a central concern in stakeholder reflections. Participants stressed the importance of developing long-term strategies such as interpreter training pipelines, subsidies, and partnerships with NGOs. These perspectives are consistent with Yeboah (2020), who highlights multi-stakeholder collaboration as crucial for sustaining inclusive communication, and Omondi (2021), who observed sustainability challenges in donor-reliant models like KNAD TV. UNESCO (2021) and WFD (2020) also emphasize continuous technological updates and long-term funding mechanisms as key to resilience. Without such strategies, accessibility initiatives risk collapsing once external support diminishes.

Overall, participants perceived an inclusive station not merely as a broadcasting initiative but as a platform for expanding capabilities in literacy, health, and civic engagement. This aligns with

Quartey (2022), who argues that accessible communication promotes participation in public life, and with the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006), which frames information equity as a human right. By embedding accessibility into Ghana's broader information equity agenda, stakeholders envisioned not only meeting rights-based obligations but also fostering inclusive development. These reflections suggest that while challenges remain, there is strong normative and practical readiness for reform.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed qualitative data collected from 30 participants, presented through themes aligned with the study's objectives. Findings revealed limited accessibility in Ghanaian television, significant technical and financial barriers to inclusive broadcasting, generally positive stakeholder perceptions of a dedicated station, and actionable recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. Quotations illustrated lived experiences, while thematic analysis grounded the discussion in the broader theoretical and policy context. Together, the findings underscore the urgency of addressing systemic barriers to ensure full information access for PWHI in Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the major findings of the study, draws conclusions based on the analysis in Chapter Four, and provides recommendations for improving television accessibility for persons with hearing impairment (PWHI) in Ghana. The discussion is anchored on the study's four objectives, the perspectives of participants, and the guiding theoretical frameworks, namely the Social Model of Disability and Media Dependency Theory.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The first objective examined the current state of television accessibility for PWHI in Greater Accra. The findings showed that accessibility remains severely limited, with participants reporting minimal use of captioning and sign language interpretation across mainstream channels. This contributed to reduced viewership among PWHI and constrained their participation in civic, social, and economic life. These results are consistent with the Ghana Federation of the Deaf (2023), which estimates that only 5% of national programming provides sign interpretation, and UNESCO (2021), which warns that exclusion from information access reinforces wider social inequalities.

The second objective explored the technical, financial, and regulatory requirements for inclusive broadcasting. Participants identified the high cost of hiring interpreters, limited access to captioning software, and outdated studio infrastructure as substantial operational challenges. Weak enforcement of Ghana's Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) further contributes to slow

adoption, as broadcasters face few consequences for non-compliance. These findings reinforce those of Mensah and Osei (2019), who recognized financial constraints as a recurring barrier, and Ampofo (2021), who highlighted regulatory gaps. In response to these challenges, the study identified several solutions proposed by participants and supported by literature. One key solution concerns the financial barrier: participants suggested that government could provide targeted subsidies or tax incentives to offset the additional costs associated with interpreters and captioning technology. This aligns with Kwakye (2023), who emphasizes that diversified funding models—including donor support and public–private partnerships—are essential for sustaining inclusive media initiatives. Similarly, Yeboah (2020) highlights the importance of collaborative funding arrangements involving government, NGOs, and private sponsors in long-term communication reforms.

Another solution related to technical and infrastructural barriers involves integrating partnerships with organizations that can provide training or technological support. This suggestion mirrors findings by UNESCO (2021), which recommends technology investment and capacity-building as core components of accessible broadcasting. Although the present study did not empirically test these measures, they represent feasible, literature-supported strategies that stakeholders believe could help mitigate financial and technical constraints.

The third objective explored stakeholder perceptions of a deaf-inclusive station. Across all groups, respondents expressed strong support, framing such a station as a right rather than a luxury. PWHI participants emphasized independence and dignity, while media professionals and policymakers viewed the initiative as overdue. Stakeholders also noted that accessibility features—such as

captioning and sign interpretation—benefit wider audiences, including elderly viewers, students, and people in noisy environments, demonstrating the broader value of universal design.

This finding aligns with the Social Model of Disability because participants consistently attributed exclusion to institutional practices rather than individual impairments. Their emphasis on the need for structural change—such as accessible programming, trained interpreters, and supportive policies—reflects the model’s argument that barriers are created by systems, not disabilities (Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2006). In other words, participants saw accessibility not as a personal support mechanism but as a reform of the broadcasting environment.

The findings also align with Media Dependency Theory because respondents highlighted how access to relevant television content influences civic participation, information-seeking, and decision-making. PWHI participants described feeling excluded from national discourse due to inaccessible media, illustrating the theory’s premise that individuals rely on media for orientation and engagement in public life (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). Stakeholders’ support for a dedicated station reflects recognition that improving accessibility would enhance PWHI’s ability to participate meaningfully in society.

The fourth objective developed recommendations for sustainability. Participants emphasized interpreter training pipelines, enforceable regulatory guidelines, subsidies and tax incentives, and continuous technological upgrades. These proposals reflect global best practices identified by UNESCO (2021), ITU (2020), and WFD (2020), which stress that inclusive broadcasting requires long-term planning, diversified financial streams, and strong enforcement mechanisms.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concludes that Ghana's television broadcasting system remains largely inaccessible to PWHI due to weak regulation, financial constraints, and inadequate technical infrastructure. Despite these challenges, there is overwhelming stakeholder support for reforms, with participants framing accessibility as a rights-based necessity consistent with Ghana's obligations under the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006).

The Social Model of Disability provides a useful lens for understanding these findings, as it shows that the problem lies not in the impairments of PWHI but in the exclusionary practices of broadcasters. At the same time, Media Dependency Theory explains the consequences of exclusion, as those without access to television are denied full participation in political and social life. The combination of these theories underscores the urgency of systemic reforms.

Importantly, the study also concludes that inclusive broadcasting is feasible if approached through collaborative, multi-stakeholder strategies. Evidence from both participants and literature suggests that when governments, private sector actors, NGOs, and donors share responsibilities, inclusive initiatives become more sustainable. The consensus among stakeholders reflects not only normative readiness but also a recognition of the universal benefits of accessibility.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen Regulatory Enforcement

The absence of effective enforcement remains one of the key barriers to inclusive broadcasting in Ghana. Although the Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) provides a legal foundation for media accessibility, broadcasters often ignore these provisions because penalties are weak or nonexistent

(Ampofo, 2021). To address this gap, the National Media Commission (NMC) and the National Communications Authority (NCA) should make accessibility a mandatory condition for licensing and renewals. Embedding sign language interpretation and captioning requirements into regulatory frameworks would ensure that inclusivity moves beyond voluntary compliance.

Furthermore, regulatory bodies should introduce clear sanctions for non-compliance and provide periodic monitoring to ensure that broadcasters adhere to accessibility standards (ITU, 2020). Enforcement mechanisms could include fines, suspension of licenses, or denial of renewal for stations that consistently neglect accessibility mandates. Such measures would align Ghana with global best practices while sending a strong signal that accessibility is a non-negotiable right rather than an optional service.

2. Establish Sustainable Funding Models

Financial barriers continue to undermine efforts to implement inclusive broadcasting. Many broadcasters cite the costs of hiring interpreters and acquiring captioning technology as prohibitive (Kwakye, 2023). Government intervention through subsidies and tax incentives would significantly reduce these burdens, making it more feasible for stations to adopt accessibility features. Such fiscal support would also ensure equity, as smaller stations with limited revenue streams are often the least able to absorb these additional costs.

At the same time, broadcasters must adopt diversified funding strategies by partnering with NGOs, international donors, and private sponsors. Yeboah (2020) stresses that multi-stakeholder collaboration provides financial resilience, ensuring that accessibility initiatives are not overly dependent on a single funding source. These partnerships could also bring technical expertise and advocacy support, creating a stronger ecosystem for inclusive media development.

3. Invest in Technical Infrastructure

Technical readiness is essential for sustaining accessible broadcasting. Many Ghanaian studios currently lack modern captioning software, advanced production equipment, and optimized visual layouts necessary for sign language interpretation (UNESCO, 2021). Upgrading studios to accommodate these requirements will not only enhance inclusivity but also improve the overall quality of broadcasting. This makes technical investment a win-win for accessibility and professional broadcasting standards.

Additionally, broadcasters should establish maintenance systems to ensure that equipment functions reliably over time. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD, 2020) emphasizes that without consistent technological support, accessibility features risk being unsustainable or ineffective. Investments in infrastructure must therefore be paired with long-term technical support plans, including staff training in the operation of accessibility technologies.

4. Develop Human Resource Capacity

Human resource development is just as crucial as infrastructure investment in ensuring sustainable accessibility. The shortage of trained sign language interpreters, captioners, and accessibility-aware producers is a significant barrier in Ghana (Adjei, 2022). To address this, training pipelines should be established within universities, media schools, and technical institutes. By embedding accessibility into journalism and communication curricula, future professionals will see it as an industry norm rather than a special addition.

Continuous professional development programs are also necessary to update existing practitioners. Fobi and Oppong (2019) note that regular workshops and refresher courses can build capacity and foster innovation in accessibility practices. Over time, a strong cadre of skilled professionals will

enhance the consistency and quality of inclusive broadcasting, ensuring that stations can sustain accessibility initiatives without relying on short-term external support.

5. Mainstream Accessibility in National Policy

Accessibility must be recognized not just as a media issue but as a developmental priority. Embedding accessible broadcasting into Ghana's broader communication and national development strategies would ensure long-term sustainability and coherence (United Nations, 2006). When accessibility becomes a national standard, it strengthens democratic participation, promotes social inclusion, and aligns Ghana with its international obligations under the UNCRPD.

WHO (2021) emphasizes that accessibility is central to achieving equity in health, education, and civic participation. By mainstreaming it within national policies, government can integrate inclusive broadcasting into sectors such as education, public health, and governance. This holistic approach ensures that accessibility is not treated as a temporary project but as part of Ghana's long-term vision for inclusive development.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Studies

While this study provides a comprehensive feasibility assessment of a deaf-inclusive television station in Ghana, several areas warrant further exploration. First, future studies could adopt a **longitudinal design** to examine how accessibility interventions evolve over time and their long-term impact on the participation of persons with hearing impairment (PWHI). Such studies would provide evidence on sustainability beyond the initial phases of implementation.

Second, researchers could explore **comparative studies across regions** in Ghana or other African countries to assess variations in accessibility practices and policy enforcement. This would

highlight contextual differences and allow policymakers to learn from diverse models of inclusive broadcasting (UNESCO, 2021; ITU, 2020).

Third, future research should examine the **economic dimensions of accessibility**, including cost-benefit analyses of implementing sign language and captioning across stations. Quantifying the social and economic returns of inclusive broadcasting could strengthen advocacy for policy adoption and resource allocation (Omondi, 2021; Kwakye, 2023).

Finally, it would be valuable to investigate the **audience reception of inclusive broadcasting among hearing viewers**. Understanding how accessibility features benefit wider audiences—such as the elderly, students, or those in noisy environments—can reinforce arguments for universal design in media (WHO, 2021; Baran & Davis, 2012).

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter summarized the major findings of the study, which revealed that PWHI remain largely excluded from Ghana's broadcasting system due to systemic accessibility gaps, high costs, and weak regulation. Despite these barriers, stakeholders expressed strong support for a dedicated deaf-inclusive station, framing it as both a right and a universal benefit. The conclusions emphasized that inclusive broadcasting is both necessary and feasible, provided it is supported by collaborative, multi-stakeholder strategies. Finally, the chapter outlined recommendations focused on regulatory reform, sustainable funding, technical investment, capacity building, and policy mainstreaming. These measures, if adopted, could transform Ghana's broadcasting landscape into a more equitable and inclusive system.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide

Introduction

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. This interview is part of an academic study titled “*Towards Inclusive Broadcasting: A Study on the Feasibility of Establishing a Television Station for Persons with Hearing Impairment in Greater Accra.*” The purpose of this study is to examine television accessibility, stakeholder perspectives, and the technical, financial, and regulatory requirements for creating a deaf-inclusive television station.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time without any consequences. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes. With your consent, the interview will be recorded to ensure accuracy in analysis.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male [] Female []
3. Educational level: _____
4. Occupation/Role: _____
5. For PWHI participants: Do you primarily communicate using sign language, captions, or both? _____

Section B: Research Questions

Objective 1: To evaluate the current state of television accessibility for PWHI in Greater Accra, identifying key barriers and challenges.

1. How often do you watch television, and what types of programs do you prefer?
2. What accessibility features (e.g., sign language, captioning) have you observed on Ghanaian television?
3. In your experience, what are the main barriers preventing PWHI from fully accessing television content?
4. How do these barriers affect your ability (or the ability of PWHI) to participate in social, political, and economic life?

Objective 2: To analyze the technical, financial, and regulatory requirements for establishing and maintaining a sustainable deaf-inclusive television station.

1. From your perspective, what technical infrastructure would be necessary for a deaf-inclusive television station?
2. What financial resources or support systems do you think are required to sustain such a station?
3. How would existing media regulations in Ghana affect the establishment of a deaf-inclusive television station?
4. In your opinion, what role should government, private sector, and donors play in supporting this initiative?

Objective 3: To examine stakeholder perceptions and attitudes regarding the establishment of a dedicated television station for PWHI.

1. What is your personal opinion about establishing a television station dedicated to PWHI?
2. How do you think media professionals, policymakers, and the general public would respond to this initiative?
3. Do you believe a deaf-inclusive television station would contribute to social inclusion and development in Ghana? Why or why not?
4. What challenges do you foresee in gaining stakeholder support for such a station?

Objective 4: To develop evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and media practitioners on implementing accessible broadcasting solutions.

1. What recommendations would you make to improve television accessibility for PWHI in Ghana?
2. What policies or guidelines do you think are necessary to ensure inclusive broadcasting?
3. How can media practitioners be encouraged or supported to adopt accessibility features such as sign language or captioning?
4. What long-term strategies do you think could sustain inclusive broadcasting in Ghana?

Thank you for participating