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UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION
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A PROJECT WORK ON
**EXPLAINING THE CHALLENGES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF RADIO AND
TELEVISION FEMALE MANAGERS AND EDITORS IN GHANA.**

BY

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[MAMM24006]

**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA
STUDIES – INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE**

OF

MASTERS OF ARTS

IN

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

DECEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I solemnly affirm that, apart from duly acknowledged references to the work of others, this thesis is the product of my independent research. It has not, in whole or in part, been submitted previously for the award of any other degree or qualification.



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This thesis has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Project Work laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication UniMAC-GIJ.

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9th December 2025

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am profoundly grateful to the Lord my God for granting me the opportunity to pursue this course and for guiding me faithfully to this stage of completion.

My deepest appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr Timothy Quarshigah, whose guidance, patience, and invaluable suggestions have been instrumental throughout this journey.

I extend my sincere thanks to Mr Frank Ofose for his encouragement, support, and genuine concern during my post-graduate days at this university.

I am equally indebted to Alfred Kwame Offin, Francis Ofori, Colbert Seke, Khadijah Issifu, Alberta Boatemaa, Praisebel Larbi, Hannah Azarlekor, Wilhelmina Agyei Bekoe, and Emmanuel Adusei, whose steadfast support and kindness have greatly enriched my academic experience.

To all others who, in diverse ways, have contributed to my progress, I offer my heartfelt gratitude.

May God richly bless you all.

DEDICATION

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my mother, whose unwavering guidance and sacrifices have shaped my path; to my siblings and nibbling, whose encouragement has been a constant source of strength; and to my dear friends, whose love and support have carried me through this journey; especially Alfred Kwame Offin. To each of you, I owe a debt of gratitude for making the completion of this work possible.

God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the representation of women in media leadership in Ghana, focusing specifically on managers and editors in radio and television who occupy decision-making and role-assigning positions. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combined quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, analysed through selective coding to explore challenges and structural barriers affecting women's leadership progression. The findings reveal that, women's representation in leadership roles within Ghana's media has improved over the years, yet remains uneven and disproportionately low at the topmost levels. Quantitative results indicate that organizational leadership tends to favour men, while qualitative insights highlight institutional discrimination, cultural expectations, motherhood penalties, and newsroom politics as major constraints. The study also found that, women continue to face multiple barriers which influence their leadership experience in the media including gender bias, heavy domestic responsibilities, lack of recognition, and stereotyping. The research concludes that women possess the competence and qualifications for leadership roles, but structural and cultural constraints limit their upward mobility. The study recommends gender-sensitive HR policies, transparent promotion systems, mentorship programs, and policy reforms by regulatory bodies to promote greater gender equity in media leadership.

Keywords: Women in media, media leadership, gender representation, radio and television, newsroom politics, Ghana, mixed-methods, selective coding.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The media plays a crucial role in Ghana's democratic, cultural, and socio-economic growth. As a leading form of mass communication, radio and television shape national conversations, influence public opinions, and help set agendas. However, even though women are highly visible as reporters, presenters, and producers, their roles in decision-making remain disproportionately limited. Globally, women have faced challenges breaking the "glass ceiling" in the media industry, often because of structural and cultural barriers (Byerly, 2013).

In Ghana, this issue is clear in radio and television stations, where managerial and editorial roles such as those responsible for assigning tasks and setting editorial policies are mostly held by men (Gadzekpo, 2009). Although women make up a significant part of the media workforce, their chances to influence content and lead newsroom decisions are still limited.

Existing studies in Ghana have mostly examined the overall underrepresentation of women in the media workforce or how women are depicted in media content. However, little focus has been given to women in leadership roles such as managers and editors in radio and television, despite their vital influence in shaping newsroom structures and assigning roles. This oversight creates a gap in understanding the representation of women in these leadership positions and the unique challenges they face in achieving and maintaining such roles.

This study aims to address that gap by exploring the representation and challenges faced by women in leadership roles within Ghana's radio and television industry. Focusing specifically on women managers and editors, it will offer new insights into the barriers and opportunities that influence women's progression to decision-making positions in the media sector.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Since the liberalization of Ghana's media in 1996 (Media Foundation for West Africa, 2017), the media industry has experienced significant expansion. What began the nation's return to democracy in 1993 as a small industry with one national broadcaster (providing both TV and radio transmission services) and mostly state-owned newspapers is today a vibrant industry made up of more than 400 operational radio stations, over 100 TV stations (NCA, 2024), all mostly privately owned. In addition to these, there are other digital media offerings, which are widely available too, albeit with little reliable industry data on them.

The Radio and Television industry has become a powerful platform over the years for shaping public opinion, promoting cultural narratives, and influencing development. Yet, despite more women entering journalism and communication fields in Ghana, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership and decision-making roles within media organizations. This gender gap raises important questions about institutional equality, inclusive representation, and the kind of content produced.

In the Ghanaian context, issues such as gender stereotypes, limited mentorship, cultural norms, and workplace discrimination continue to hinder women's upward mobility within the media. This imbalance in leadership affects not only gender equity but also the diversity of perspectives and content in media coverage. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the specific challenges faced by Ghanaian women in attaining leadership roles as media managers and editors in the radio and TV industry and how their representation affects the industry's development, credibility, and responsiveness to gender-sensitive issues.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

While a precise number of women in the media is difficult to pinpoint due to the vast and varied nature of the industry, several studies indicate that women are underrepresented in leadership positions and expert roles. According to Women in media dataset in 2025, globally, women make up around 49% of the media workforce but hold only 30% of CEO positions (Leonora R., (2025)).

Despite advancements in gender equality, leadership structures in media organizations are still mostly male-dominated. The barriers women encounter in reaching leadership roles are complex and multi-layered, often stemming from institutional, societal, and cultural influences. Geographically, Ghana remains insufficiently researched regarding women's leadership in the media industry.

Previous studies on gender and media in Ghana mainly focus on how women are portrayed in media content or their roles as reporters, presenters, and producers (Gadzekpo, 2009). While these studies offer valuable insights into gender dynamics, they overlook the experiences of women in decision-making positions within radio and television organizations. Similarly, global studies on women in media leadership (Byerly, 2013; Gallagher, 2015) often emphasize Western contexts, which limits their relevance to Ghana's unique cultural and organizational setting.

This creates a critical knowledge gap: little is known about the extent of women's representation in managerial and editorial roles in Ghanaian radio and television, nor the specific challenges they face in reaching and maintaining these positions. Without addressing this gap, efforts toward gender equality in media risk overlooking the structural and cultural barriers that prevent women from advancing to leadership roles.

This study aims to examine women's representation in media leadership within Ghana's radio and television sectors, specifically focusing on managers and editors, and to explore the challenges influencing their leadership experiences.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to examine the representation and challenges of women in media leadership in Ghana, focusing on managers and editors in radio and television.

1.3.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the current level of women's representation in managerial and editorial roles within Ghana's radio and television industry.
2. To identify the particular challenges women, encounter in achieving and excelling in leadership roles in radio and television.
3. To analyse how cultural, institutional, and organizational factors influence women's leadership experiences in the media.
4. To recommend strategies and interventions for improving women's representation and participation in managerial and editorial leadership in radio and television.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What is the current level of women's representation in managerial and editorial roles in Ghana's radio and television industry?
2. What particular challenges do women face in reaching and executing leadership roles in radio and television?
3. How do cultural, institutional, and organizational factors impact women's ability to access and succeed in media leadership roles?
4. What strategies and interventions can be implemented to improve women's representation and participation in managerial and editorial leadership roles in radio and television in Ghana?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will enrich scholarly and policy discussions about gender and media in Ghana. By identifying the structural and socio-cultural barriers to women's leadership in the sector, the research will provide practical solutions for media organizations, development communicators, and advocacy groups. It will also serve as a resource for gender mainstreaming and institutional reforms within Ghana's media industry.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study setting was in some well-known media houses located in the Greater Accra region and the Ashanti region, Accra and Kumasi to be precise. The study targeted women within Ghana's radio and television industry. Focusing specifically on women managers and editors, it will offer new insights into the barriers and opportunities that influence women's progression to decision-making positions in the media sector. It did not cover freelance media practitioners or those working outside formal institutions. The feminist media theory served as the theoretical framework for this research. Semi-structured interviews will be developed and used as a tool for collecting data from participants. The study was conducted for a period of six (6) months, starting from June 2025 to November 2025.

1.7 Organization of the study

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, chapter outline, and chapter summary. Chapter two presents a literature review on the topic, which is divided into three parts: theoretical literature related to the research and studies concerning the topic. Chapter three discusses the methodology, including the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter four covers data handling, analysis, and interpretation. Chapter five provides a summary and conclusion, along with recommendations for further research and references.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is categorized into two (2) main sections namely; theoretical construct and empirical literature. The Empirical literature review dealt with research work or study of other researchers that supported and also criticized the proposition of the study.

2.1 Conceptual or theoretical framework

Also in the study, the researcher chooses to use a theoretical construct as the pivot around which the whole study will revolve. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study (Abend G., 2008). Theories are formulated to explain, predict and understand phenomena and in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions (Abend G., 2008). The researcher employs the feminist media theory and the glass ceiling theory.

2.1.1 Feminist media theory

The Feminist media theory is an analytical framework that examines how media representations and practices shape and reflect gender dynamics and inequalities in society. This theory critiques traditional media portrayals of women and explores the influence of media on public perception of gender roles, often highlighting the impact of stereotypes that reinforce patriarchal norms and limit women's agency (Fiveable, 2024).

Feminist media theory relies on feminist theory. That is, it applies philosophies, concepts, and logics articulating feminist principles and concepts to media processes such as

hiring, production, and distribution; to patterns of representation in news and entertainment across platforms; and to reception (Steiner, L., 2014). Over the past few decades, feminist scholars have increasingly interrogated the media's role in constructing femininity and masculinity, controlling narratives about women's lives, and limiting women's agency within media structures (Van Zoonen, L., 1994; Byerly & Ross, 2006). Feminist media theory, therefore, not only critiques existing practices but also advocates for inclusive and transformative policies that empower women in decision-making roles. The evolution of Feminist Media Theory is closely tied to the broader feminist movement, especially the second-wave feminism of the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, scholars such as Laura Mulvey in 1975 introduced the notion of the "male gaze" in her seminal essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, arguing that mainstream cinema positions women as passive objects of male desire and spectatorship. Mulvey's psychoanalytic approach opened up debates on how visual media encode patriarchal ideologies (Guo, T., (2023)).

Feminist Media Theory guided the analysis by providing a critical lens to examine how gender power relations are constructed, maintained, or challenged within media leadership contexts. When reviewing interview transcripts, media policy documents, or news content, this theory will help identify:

- **Gendered narratives:** How women in leadership are framed in language, imagery, and organizational discourse.
- **Representation gaps:** The extent to which women's perspectives and leadership styles are visible or marginalized in decision-making processes.
- **Cultural reproduction of inequality:** How patriarchal norms are subtly reinforced in media work environments and professional expectations.

Building upon these foundations, early feminist media scholars examined the exclusion and misrepresentation of women in media content. Tuchman (1978) referred to this as the

"symbolic annihilation" of women in media, highlighting how women were either underrepresented or stereotypically depicted as mothers, sex objects, or victims. These critiques emphasized the need to reform both content and media institutions to allow for more authentic and diverse female representation.

2.1.2 Glass ceiling theory

The term 'glass ceiling' is a phrase that was first used by Marilyn Loden in 1978. The term "glass ceiling" refers to the sometimes-invisible barrier to success that many women come up against in their careers (B.B.C., 2017). The "glass" metaphor represents the fact that these barriers are not overtly visible but are embedded in organizational cultures, institutional practices, and social norms. This theory will therefore, be used to analyse invisible barriers that prevent qualified women from rising to top positions.

In the media industry, the glass ceiling often manifests in subtle ways which are from gendered newsroom cultures that side-line women in decision-making processes, to networking patterns that favour men, to limited access to high-profile assignments that could position women for promotions (Byerly, 2021). Studies from 2020–2025 continue to reveal that women are overrepresented in entry-level and mid-level media roles but remain significantly underrepresented in executive and editorial leadership positions (Amponsah & Owusu, 2022; Adams & Heijmans, 2021).

Glass Ceiling Theory guided the analysis by focusing on **structural and institutional barriers** rather than just cultural representations. In examining the data, this theory will be applied to identify:

- **Invisible barriers:** Patterns in promotion criteria, leadership recruitment, and task allocation that limit women's upward mobility.

- **Organizational culture:** How informal norms, networking patterns, and mentorship opportunities differ for men and women.
- **Career progression disparities:** Evidence from participants' experiences showing stagnation at middle-management levels despite high qualifications.

During analysis, instances of exclusion from decision-making, lack of access to leadership pipelines, or gendered gatekeeping will be categorized as indicators of the glass ceiling effect.

Using these two theories together allows for a **multi-layered analysis:**

- **Feminist Media Theory** reveals *how* gender inequalities are ideologically and culturally reproduced in media environments.
- **Glass Ceiling Theory** reveals *why* those inequalities persist structurally within leadership pathways.

This combined approach ensures that the research findings capture both discursive (representation) and institutional (barrier) dimensions of women's challenges in media leadership.

In this research, the Glass Ceiling Theory can complement Feminist Media Theory by focusing on the structural and institutional dimensions of gender inequality. While Feminist Media Theory critiques media content, representation, and ideological production, Glass Ceiling Theory explains why those inequalities persist in leadership hierarchies. Using both frameworks allows the study to examine not only how women are represented in media leadership discourse but also what systemic barriers block their progression.

2.2 Review of related studies

The empirical study of literature is an interdisciplinary field of research that includes psychology, sociology, philosophy, the contextual study of literature, and the history of reading literary texts.

2.2.1 Representation of women in media leadership

The representation of women in media leadership continues to be a subject of critical academic inquiry, especially in the context of gender equity and democratic communication. Despite increased advocacy for gender diversity in leadership, multiple studies show that women remain significantly underrepresented at decision-making levels in media institutions (Robertson, C., T., Selva, M., & Nielsen, R., K., 2021). This underrepresentation is often more pronounced in countries like Ghana, where traditional gender norms intersect with institutional hierarchies to reinforce male dominance in leadership roles. Despite strides in gender equality globally, the media landscape remains male-dominated, with significant underrepresentation of women in leadership roles and public discourse (Malik, B., 2025).

A study by Pinho-Gomes et al. on a topic, “Representation of Women Among Editors in Chief of Leading Medical Journals”, found that, overall women represent only about 1 in 5 editors in chief at top-ranked medical journals, with wide variation from 0 to 82% across medical specialties. This means that, a serious commitment from authors, editors, publishers, and the medical scientific community is required to tackle longstanding structural barriers and biases that underpin women’s underrepresentation in senior leadership roles in medical journals.

Also, in a report by Robertson, C. T., Selva, M., & Nielsen, R. K. (2021) on the topic, Women and leadership in the news media 2021 which was published as a factsheet by Reuters, it analysed the gender breakdown of top editors in a strategic sample of 240 major online and offline news outlets in twelve different markets across five continents. This report revealed

that, men make up the majority of top editors eleven out of twelve markets and that while there is a positive correlation between the percentage of women working in journalism and the percentage in top editorial positions, there remains unequal representation. Only 22% of the 180 top editors across the 240 brands covered are women, despite the fact that, on average, 40% of journalists in the 12 markets are women. The report also found that, large variation in the number of people who get news from outlets with a female top editor, along with no meaningful correlation between greater gender equality in society and the percentage of female top editors. The report concluded with the fact that, the clear majority of top editors across the sample are men, and only one market covered has a majority of women among top editors. While there is a positive correlation between the percentage of women working as journalists and the percentage of women among top editors, there is a lower proportion of women in top roles than women in the profession as a whole.

In Ghana, Osei and Anarfi (2023) conducted a study across ten major media houses and found that only 18% of leadership roles were held by women. Moreover, many of these women served in administrative or human resource departments rather than in editorial leadership where core decision-making occurs. This pattern reflects a broader issue of symbolic representation, where women are visible but have limited power (Nkansah & Boateng, 2022).

A recent study by Malik, B. (2025), which seeks to explore gender mainstreaming and representation in news production, delivery, and decision-making within selected television stations in Accra, Ghana revealed that, despite strides in gender equality globally, the media landscape remains male-dominated, with significant underrepresentation of women in leadership roles and public discourse. Using a critical theory, qualitative approach and a thematic analysis, the study also found that, progress in female participation, particularly in production roles, yet men predominantly hold top managerial positions. Women in media encounter gender-based challenges, including stereotyping, exclusion from key decision-

making processes, and role assignments influenced by societal biases. Although gender-sensitive policies exist, their implementation is limited, perpetuating disparities. The study recommended that, there is a need for deliberate efforts to enhance women's representation and influence in Ghanaian media. Promoting gender-sensitive policies, equitable opportunities, and inclusive practices can drive meaningful change.

In a nationwide survey of Ghanaian newsrooms that sought to establish the current status of women in the media by Yeboah-Banin et al. (2020) found that, women are yet to break the 'glass ceiling' when it comes to decision-making positions and are mostly found at the lower levels of the newsroom. Furthermore, the study revealed that women are struggling to juggle family responsibilities with their work, with little support from their organizations and face gender-based harassment at the workplace. Based on this findings, the study recommends that media managers must enact policies against gender-based discrimination and harassment.

Amakye, S. et al. (2021) in their study, "Beyond the glass ceiling: an exploration of the experiences of female corporate organizational leaders in Ghana", provided qualitative evidence of women leaders facing resistance and undermining in their roles. The findings of the study revealed that, women still face several challenges even after breaking the glass ceiling to attain leadership positions in corporate organizations in Ghana. The main challenges were raised around the issue of gender, discrimination, age, their roles as mothers and wives. The study concluded that, although women leaders' experiences are largely negative, older women leaders seemed to utilize their positions actively and creatively and perform pseudo-motherhood roles, which in turn helps them in the performance of their leadership roles.

2.2.2 CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN IN MEDIA LEADERSHIP

This review synthesizes empirical and theoretical work on the barriers that limit women's access to and effectiveness in media leadership roles especially managerial and editorial posts in radio and television. It draws on global syntheses, regional/African studies, and Ghana-specific monitoring and scholarship to identify recurring mechanisms: structural/institutional barriers, cultural norms, career-path bottlenecks (mentorship and networks), work–life conflict, exposure to gendered online/offline violence, and weak organizational policies. The review concludes by tying these challenges to the research gap your study addresses.

Women in media leadership face a host of challenges ranging from overt discrimination to subtle structural barriers. Despite growing awareness and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality, a significant leadership gap remains, indicating deep-seated systemic and cultural barriers. A recurring theme in the literature is the stark underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions across various media platforms. Studies consistently show that while women may constitute a significant portion of the journalism workforce, their presence at the executive level remains disproportionately low.

For instance, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's reports from 2024 and 2025 consistently reveal that only a fraction of top editors in major news outlets globally are women, despite women often making up 40% or more of working journalists (Reuters Institute, 2024, 2025). The 2025 report notes a slight increase in women in top editorial positions from 23% in 2020 to 28% in 2025, but this pace suggests gender parity would not be achieved until 2074 at current rates, highlighting the slow and often inconsistent progress (Reuters Institute, 2025). This disparity is not uniform across all regions, with some countries showing more progress than others, while others have even experienced a decrease in the percentage of women in top leadership roles (Reuters Institute, 2025). Research from specific contexts further corroborates this.

A study on gender mainstreaming in selected television stations in Accra, Ghana, found that despite progress in female participation, particularly in production roles, men predominantly hold top managerial positions (Malik, B. (2025)). Similarly, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and Canal France International (CFI) noted that women hold less than 30% of leadership positions in Ghanaian media organizations, with even fewer in senior roles like editor-in-chief or CEO (MFWA, 2025).

In another study, “Opportunities and Challenges for Women Journalist in Media Industry: A Critical Review” by Dhiman, B. (2023) which was published in the global media journal indicate that, women are often overlooked for promotions or relegated to "soft news" beats, limiting their opportunities for career advancement. The study therefore named gender discrimination as one major challenge faced by women journalists and also named bullying and harassments as other challenges women face. The study revealed that, Women are often excluded from leadership positions in media organizations, making it difficult for them to have their voices heard and advance in their careers. In conclusion the study recommended that, media organizations can offer training, mentorship programs, and other opportunities for professional development to women journalists. This can promote their skills and expertise and provide a path for career advancement.

Additionally, scholars note a persistent gendering of beats: women are often steered to “soft” beats (lifestyle, entertainment) while men dominate politics, business, and investigative reporting, the beats that build reputational capital for leadership (Silveirinha, 2024). In broadcast media, this matters because editorial leaders decide who covers what and who appears as experts; therefore, gendered beat allocation reduces women’s opportunities to develop the visible public portfolios that lead to managerial appointment. Ghanaian monitoring of program guests further shows that male experts outnumber women, reinforcing public perceptions of authority.

Another challenge facing women in the media space when it comes to leadership is gender bias and stereotyping. A study by Arputharaj, B., C. (2025) indicates, women leaders are frequently subjected to gendered portrayals in media coverage, which emphasize their appearance or personal lives over their professional achievements and competence. Biased language, using adjectives like "emotional" or "bossy" for women, compared to "strong" or "decisive" for men, further undermines their credibility. This perpetuates the notion that women are less capable of leadership and diverts attention from their substantive contributions. These gender biases weaken the credibility of women leaders and continue gendered assumptions about leadership qualities. Women leaders are frequently depicted in less powerful poses or settings compared to their male counterparts, subtly conveying the message that they are less authoritative or capable of leading. The study therefore recommended that, to promote balanced media representation of women leaders, it is essential to foster diverse and inclusive newsrooms, avoid gendered language and imagery, and focus on professional achievements and policies. Media outlets should critically examine and challenge double standards, provide opportunities for women leaders to share their perspectives, and address online harassment and abuse on social media platforms.

Furthermore, recent studies document patterns of tokenism and “glass cliff” appointments: women are sometimes promoted into leadership roles only in precarious situations, or where success is unlikely, which then reinforces stereotypes about incompetence when outcomes falter. A study by, Kempton (2025), *From the Classroom to the Newsroom: Exploring Leadership Trajectories for Women in Journalism*, per the findings reveals that many women news leaders experience sexism, most women journalists favor collaboration in their leadership approach, and women journalism students want more leadership training opportunities. This study, employed a mixed-method approach of qualitative interviews with women broadcast news leaders and focus groups with women journalism students to explore, understand, and analyze the leadership trajectories of women in the broadcast news industry.

Token appointments without real authority or support do not alter underlying power relations; instead, they risk setting women up for failure and reinforcing male dominance in editorial decision-making. Such practices have been observed in comparative newsroom studies and are relevant to Ghana, where formal equality measures may not be matched by substantive workplace change.

2.2.3 Strategies and Policy Responses

The underrepresentation of women in media leadership positions is a global concern that has triggered various strategies and policy responses aimed at promoting gender equality. In response to these challenges, several efforts have been made to enhance women's inclusion in media leadership. UNESCO (2021) recommends the adoption of gender-sensitive indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track progress.

In Ghana, the Dikan Center launched HerPress, a ground-breaking three-month fellowship program designed to equip and empower 20 women journalists in Ghana. (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation 2025). According to GBC, the initiative by Dikan Center aims to tackle some of the most pressing challenges faced by women in the media, including gender bias, workplace harassment, unequal pay, and limited access to leadership roles. It also revealed that by this initiative women journalists will gain skills in investigative journalism, ethical reporting, leadership, and journalist safety through targeted training, mentorship, and community-building. There is growing recognition of the need to promote and support women in leadership roles, especially in sectors where they remain underrepresented such as the media.

In an article by Lyon, A., L. (2025), "Seven Ways to Promote and Support Women in Leadership Roles" published in the Printing Impressions website, suggests networking and community building as a strategy to support women for leadership roles. According to her,

initiatives that foster communities for women in media, such as the Colorways summit for women of color in printing, can provide invaluable peer support and professional connections. Also, she talks about highlighting female leaders and role models as a way of supporting women in underrepresented areas such as the media. In her article she asserts that, Showcasing women in various leadership roles within the organization, beyond just the very top, can inspire and provide tangible proof of advancement opportunities.

In conclusion, the journey towards gender parity in media leadership is ongoing. While significant challenges persist, including deeply ingrained biases, work-life balance issues, and a lack of sponsorship, the literature highlights a range of effective strategies and policy responses. These include fostering inclusive organizational cultures, implementing gender-sensitive policies, providing targeted leadership development and mentorship programs, and leveraging international frameworks and initiatives (Kobeissi, A. (2024)). Moving forward, a comprehensive and sustained effort from individuals, media organizations, and policymakers is essential to dismantle existing barriers and create a truly equitable and representative media landscape. This will not only empower women but also enrich the media content and strengthen its role in fostering informed and diverse societies.

2.3 Summary of Gaps in Literature

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that women are underrepresented in media leadership globally, regionally, and nationally. However, in Ghana, most studies have concentrated on women's general visibility in media content or their roles as journalists and presenters, with far less emphasis on their presence in managerial and editorial leadership in radio and television. Recent research (Nyarko, 2022; Boateng, 2023) acknowledges challenges faced by women in Ghanaian media but does not provide a focused exploration of

women managers and editors those who directly assign roles and shape content in broadcasting.

This study therefore, addresses a critical gap by examining the representation and challenges of women in radio and television managerial and editorial leadership in Ghana. By focusing specifically on individuals who assign roles and direct newsroom operations, the research contributes new insights into gender dynamics in Ghana's media leadership.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology adopted to examine the representation and challenges of women in media leadership within Ghana's radio and television sector. It outlines the research design, population, sampling techniques, instruments, data collection procedures, analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

The study adopted a mixed methods research design, specifically a convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This design integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's representation and experiences in media leadership.

Qualitative research design is a flexible approach that focuses on understanding and interpreting the complexity of human phenomena, often exploring subjective meanings and perspectives. And moreover the respondents that were used in the research were ten (10) and this method is suitable in terms of gathering rich, detailed data that can reveal hidden insights and perspectives. The choice of qualitative research aligns with the feminist theoretical framework, which values voice, experience, and subjectivity in understanding power relations

(Byerly, 2020). A phenomenological lens allows the study to uncover how women interpret their roles, navigate institutional barriers, and perceive their own representation in leadership.

Generally, instead of just knowing "what" happened, qualitative research helps uncover the "why" and "how" by exploring motivations, beliefs, experiences, and perceptions. This results in data that is full of context and meaning, often providing insights that quantitative data alone cannot.

The quantitative component enabled the researcher to measure the extent of women's representation across radio and television stations in Ghana. The qualitative component, guided by Grounded Theory and selective coding, explored the lived experiences, challenges, and strategies of women in leadership roles.

Using both approaches allowed the researcher to triangulate numerical trends with in-depth perspectives, enhancing the validity and richness of the findings.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population consisted of women in managerial and editorial leadership roles in selected radio and television stations in Ghana. These include individuals such as station managers, editors, news directors, and program coordinators, who have the authority to assign roles and influence editorial direction.

3.3 Setting and sample method

The research will be conducted within the media space, preferably well-known Radio and television media houses in Accra and Kumasi. For the qualitative phase, the study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that enables the researcher to select participants who have relevant knowledge and experience (Palinkas et al., 2015). Since the focus is on women in leadership positions, purposive sampling ensured that only those

holding decision-making authority in radio and television were included. According to Bullard, E., (2024), Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique where researchers intentionally select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to their study. This method contrasts with random sampling, which aims to include participants from varied backgrounds to minimize bias and ensure representation across the broader population. The study uses this sampling method because it allows for the collection of in-depth, detailed, and relevant data from information-rich cases.

For the quantitative phase, a stratified random sampling technique was used. Media houses were categorized into radio and television strata, from which respondents were randomly selected. A total of 10 respondents (5 from radio and 5 from television) were targeted for the survey.

This combination of sampling strategies ensured representation and depth (Palinkas et al., 2015).

3.4 Data collection instruments

For the qualitative aspect, data were collected mainly through semi-structured interviews. This approach allowed flexibility to explore participants' responses more deeply while ensuring that key themes, such as representation, challenges, and coping strategies, were addressed (Kallio et al., 2016).

Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and one hour and was conducted either face-to-face or via online platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, depending on participants' availability. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

At the quantitative section of data collection, a structured questionnaire was designed to collect numerical data on gender distribution in leadership roles, professional experiences, and perceptions of gender equality. The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions and demographic sections.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and assurances of confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used in the reporting of findings to protect identities, particularly given the sensitivity of corruption and conflict-related reporting. Ethical clearance was obtained from the university's research directorate (Directorate of Research, Innovation and Development (DRID)).

3.6 Authenticity and Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility, the researcher employed member-checking, allowing participants to review their transcripts for accuracy. Transferability was enhanced through thick descriptions of the context. Dependability and confirmability were ensured by maintaining an audit trail, documenting all decisions made during the research process.

3.7 Data analysis

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) were used to summarize representation patterns. Cross-tabulations compared men's and women's

distribution in leadership positions. Visual representations such as bar charts and pie graphs were used to present findings.

3.6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis (Selective Coding)

The study applied Grounded Theory coding procedures, specifically open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2014):

- **Open Coding:** Transcripts were read line-by-line to identify initial codes (e.g., “promotion bias,” “family expectations,” “limited mentorship”).
- **Axial Coding:** Codes were grouped into categories by exploring relationships among them. For example, “family expectations” and “workload imbalance” were grouped under work–life balance constraints.
- **Selective Coding:** A core category was developed around which all other categories were integrated. In this study, the emerging core category could be conceptualized as “structural and cultural barriers to women’s leadership in Ghanaian broadcasting.”

The selective coding stage thus produced a central storyline, connecting representation, challenges, and coping strategies into an integrated theoretical framework.

After separate analyses, quantitative and qualitative results were merged during interpretation. Convergent points and divergences were compared to produce a holistic understanding of women’s representation and challenges in radio and television leadership (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the mixed methods design adopted for the study. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data through a convergent approach provided a robust framework for exploring both the extent and the lived experiences of women’s representation

in Ghanaian radio and television leadership. The next chapter presents the findings from both data strands and their integrated analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the mixed-methods approach employed. The chapter combines evidence from both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's representation and experiences in leadership roles within Ghana's media industry. The findings are organized thematically and supported with the descriptive statistics of the quantitative section to reveal key patterns, challenges and opportunities that emerged from the data.

4.1 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative section presents findings from in-depth interviews conducted with five female leaders working across radio and television organizations in Ghana. This section explores their lived experiences, perceptions and reflections on the structural, cultural and institutional factors that shape women's leadership journeys in the media. Seven (7) themes emerged from the transcribed interviews. The themes developed from the interviews reveal the complexity of navigating leadership roles within male-dominated environments and provide rich contextual understanding that complements the quantitative findings.

4.1.1 Theme 1: Increasing but Uneven Representation of Women in Media Leadership

The interview data reveal a shared observation across all five participants that the representation of women in media leadership within Ghana has improved over recent years. However, this improvement is neither even nor complete and women remain significantly underrepresented at senior editorial and executive levels. The accounts of the interviewees highlight a gradual transformation where women are becoming more visible in decision making roles, yet the leadership landscape continues to reflect longstanding structural inequalities.

Interviewee 1 explained that the gender composition of leadership in her organization has changed noticeably in the past few years. She described how *“most of the top roles were held by men but now we have a more balanced mix”*. Despite this improvement, she was clear that equality has not yet been reached and emphasized that *“it is still not equal”*, although the progress is *“noticeable”*. Her account demonstrates the subtle but steady shift in organizational culture where women are slowly gaining presence in influential roles such as production, news editing, and managerial positions. This suggests that the improvement is meaningful but incremental and that women must still overcome earlier imbalances.

Interviewee 2 also echoed this sense of progress. She observed that *“the leadership of women has increased over the years”* and attributed this partly to changing societal perceptions about women’s abilities. She noted that historically women were seen as *“owners of the home”* rather than professional leaders. Her reflections indicate that shifting cultural attitudes has played a role in enabling more women to enter leadership positions within media organizations. However, while her tone was optimistic, she refrained from suggesting that women are now proportionately represented. Her perspective portrays a media environment that has opened its doors to women but still houses deep rooted gender dynamics that influence who reaches the very top.

Interviewee 3 provided a more historical comparison based on her experience within a major media group. She stated that when she joined the organization over a decade ago *“there were*

no women in senior editorial roles". She then emphasized the contrast with the present situation by explaining that the editorial leadership team now includes women in key roles. She described this as a gradual shift driven partly by awareness campaigns and advocacy for gender inclusion. Her recollections highlight both the institutional history of exclusion and the efforts that have been made to correct it. Despite this change, she admitted that while many women enter journalism, fewer rise to decision making positions. Her description reinforces the existence of a leadership pipeline that narrows sharply at higher levels.

Interviewee 4 similarly confirmed that although women are now more visible in leadership, the field remains predominantly controlled by men. She described her organization's current gender composition as "*a 60 to 40 situation*" in favor of men and emphasized that they have "*never gotten to a 50 to 50*" balance. Her account conveys an industry in which numerical improvement has not yet translated into parity. She also mentioned that the distribution has fluctuated over the years but has consistently leaned towards male dominance. This reflects a broader media culture where women's representation is unstable and often depends on the presence of specific supportive leaders rather than systematic structural change.

Interviewee 5 provided a more statistical perspective by noting that women constitute "*just under a third of our leadership team*". She linked the underrepresentation of women at executive levels to a pipeline challenge and explained that although many women occupy mid-level editorial roles, far fewer progress into higher authority. She attributed this partly to reduced visibility and to fewer opportunities for women to handle assignments that demonstrate leadership readiness. Her comments suggest that the selection and promotion environment within the media industry continues to reward men more consistently than women.

Across all interviews, women's increasing presence in leadership is recognized as a positive and necessary development, yet it is consistently framed as a journey that is far from complete. Several interviewees view this rise as a source of encouragement for younger women. For

instance, Interviewee 2 noted that the progress gives young women “*the zeal to strive to become better*”. This indicates that visibility itself plays an essential role in motivating emerging female professionals and fostering a belief that leadership positions are attainable.

However, improvement does not automatically equate to equality. All interviewees expressed that the highest decision making tiers, such as general managers, chief editors, and organizational heads, remain disproportionately occupied by men. The women who do achieve leadership roles tend to be concentrated in mid level editorial and production positions rather than at the apex of decision making power. Interviewee 1 noted that although women have gained ground in newsrooms and talk show leadership, “*the very top positions like general managers or chief editors are still dominated by men*”. This observation was shared by Interviewee 5 who highlighted the difficulty women face in “*making the leap to executive positions*”.

This theme therefore shows that representation has improved enough to challenge the long-standing belief that leadership in the media belongs exclusively to men, yet not enough to achieve genuine gender balance. The experiences of the interviewees point to a media environment that is in transition. Women’s leadership is more visible, their voices are more present, and their contributions are increasingly recognized. However, the structural and cultural forces that historically constrained women’s access to power still shape the upper levels of leadership.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Gendered Advancement Criteria and Performance Expectations

Across the interviews, a consistent theme emerged regarding the criteria used to assign leadership roles and how these criteria, although appearing neutral, often disadvantage women. The interviewees repeatedly explained that advancement is expected to be based on merit, capability, and professional conduct, yet the ways these standards are applied place additional burdens on women. In their accounts, women must demonstrate exceptional competence, emotional restraint, and resilience before they are considered for promotion,

while men are often granted authority more easily and with fewer doubts cast upon their readiness. Interviewee 1 described this dynamic clearly. She stated that her organization typically considers experience, work ethic, and the ability to perform under pressure. However, she was quick to point out that these criteria do not function the same way for men and women. She explained that *“women often have to prove themselves more before being trusted with major roles”*. She expanded this by describing an organizational culture in which a woman’s idea may be dismissed until a man restates it. In her words:

“Sometimes a woman simply says something and she is second guessed until a male colleague repeats the same idea. You need to stay confident and assertive to be taken seriously and over time when people see your consistency, they begin to respect the authority.”

This long account reveals how informal biases operate within supposedly neutral processes. Even when a woman demonstrates competence, her contributions may not be recognized until a male colleague validates them. The repeated need to demonstrate authority places women under greater pressure and reinforces unequal expectations. Interviewee 2 offered another perspective on advancement criteria. She initially mentioned that the organization considers intellectual strength, adaptability, and dynamism. However, she also acknowledged that perceptions attached to women’s advancement are often clouded by harmful stereotypes. She noted that many men assume women obtain leadership positions through inappropriate means. She explained:

“A lot of the times the challenge has to do with the male team players thinking that a woman got to the position either by sexual molestation or something. Most of the time people think that women use sexual exploitation ways to get to the positions we get to which I believe is not so.”

Her account demonstrates how damaging myths undermine women's credibility even before they enter leadership positions. These stereotypes mean women must work even harder to be viewed as legitimate leaders, which forms part of the unwritten criteria women have to meet to advance. Interviewee 3 also highlighted how criteria intended to measure merit can disadvantage women. She explained that leadership selection is based on experience, editorial judgement, and team management, yet these criteria tend to benefit individuals who have had uninterrupted career trajectories. She stated that:

“While these criteria are fair in theory, they often advantage women who have had to take career breaks or who have not been given high profile assignments early on.”

Her explanation points to a structural issue where women's professional pathways are more likely to be fragmented due to family responsibilities, and as a result women are judged against criteria, they have less opportunity to satisfy. She also added that leadership spaces are often shaped by male dominated networks in which women struggle to be seen as authoritative. Interviewee 4 provided a more personal and emotional perspective rooted in her experience. She stressed that leadership requires resilience and service, yet women are judged more harshly when they fail to meet very high expectations. She remarked that while leadership qualities matter, the interpretations of these qualities are gendered. She described how men tend to be evaluated through the lens of authority while women are scrutinized for their perceived emotional nature. Her account is demonstrated in the following long extract:

“A woman is perceived to be fragile. So, when you walk into that room most men will not look at the brain and what you bring to the table. They look at your high heels and your hair and they think that is all you have got. So sometimes women have to push extra to be realized and appreciated for what they bring to the table. And in the media space where there is a lot of communication and running around it becomes difficult. So, women have to do more before they are seen as capable.”

This statement illustrates the dual burden women face: they must not only demonstrate competence but also counter superficial judgments rooted in gender stereotypes. Interviewee 5 pointed towards another dimension of advancement criteria, highlighting the importance of visibility, sponsorship, and access to stretch assignments. She observed that women do not always receive opportunities that allow them to demonstrate leadership potential. She explained:

“Beyond qualifications we value initiative and crisis management and the ability to lead diverse teams. Unfortunately, women are not given the same visibility or stretch assignments that showcase these traits.”

She further described how internal promotion processes tend to favor individuals who are already well connected or visible in organizational networks. This structurally disadvantages women who may be equally or more capable but are less acknowledged within decision making spaces.

The interviewees also spoke about the different standards men and women are held to once they are in leadership. Interviewee 5 explained that there is a clear double standard in how assertiveness and strength are perceived. She stated that “*women are penalized for being assertive whereas men are praised for the same behavior*” and added that “*if you are too soft you are weak and if you are too firm you are aggressive*”. Her description captures the impossible balance women must maintain to be seen as acceptable leaders. Interviewee 3 supported this perspective with her own observation:

“Absolutely women are often held to higher standards expected to be nurturing but yet tough and any mistake is magnified. Men are allowed to be flawed but for us we are expected to be perfect.”

This long and reflective statement reveals how merit-based leadership criteria are shaped by gendered expectations that require women to excel in both traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine traits, creating a standard that is more demanding and more difficult to satisfy.

4.1.3 Theme 3: Cultural Norms and Gender Stereotypes Limiting Women's Leadership

The interviews reveal that deeply rooted cultural expectations and gender stereotypes remain powerful forces shaping women's participation in media leadership in Ghana. All five interviewees described how societal beliefs about women's roles, behaviors and identities continue to influence the way women are perceived, assessed, and treated in professional environments. These expectations not only constrain women's progression into leadership but also affect the way men respond to female authority within media organizations. Interviewee 1 stressed the strong influence of cultural perceptions in Ghana. She explained that despite increasing numbers of women in leadership, society still tends to view decision making as a masculine domain. She remarked that "*society tends to see women as caretakers rather than decision makers*" and added that women who assert themselves professionally are often judged more harshly. She elaborated on this by stating:

“When a woman becomes vocal or takes charge she is often labelled as aggressive or difficult. These stereotypes make it hard for some women to step forward or stay in leadership for long.”

Her narrative highlights a social environment that continues to punish female assertiveness and confidence, qualities that are typically celebrated in male leaders. These labels reinforce a culture where women are expected to be nurturing and accommodating rather than authoritative. Interviewee 2 also described how historical beliefs continue to shape leadership dynamics. She explained that women were traditionally viewed as domestic caregivers rather

than organizational leaders. She reflected on the cultural shift taking place and stated that “*in the olden days women were seen to be the home keepers and the baby making machines*”. She went further to explain how this perception limited women’s opportunities:

“If you allow a woman to get a position or aim high or get to that height in life it makes her proud. And so, a lot of people really did not want women to get to that height and that hindered the progress of women.”

Her detailed account demonstrates how cultural norms historically restricted women’s ambitions by framing leadership aspirations as inappropriate or undesirable for women. Although she acknowledged that change is happening, she indicated that remnants of these beliefs continue to influence workplace attitudes. Interviewee 3 provided a broader context by linking cultural norms with professional expectations. She explained that persistent assumptions about women’s ability to handle pressure and long working hours affects how they are viewed within the newsroom. She stated:

“Cultural norms in Ghana still expect women to prioritize domestic roles. This affects how female leaders are perceived. Some assume we cannot handle pressure or long hours and these assumptions limit opportunities and visibility.”

Her emphasis on visibility is significant because media leadership requires a high level of public and organizational presence. When cultural norms restrict women’s ability to be seen as reliable and resilient, these assumptions reinforce unequal leadership patterns. Interviewee 4 offered the most vivid and personal account of how stereotypes shape workplace interactions. She explained that when a woman enters a leadership role, her competence is rarely the first thing that male colleagues acknowledge. Instead, superficial and gendered judgments dominate initial impressions. She described this experience in a detailed way:

“A woman is perceived to be fragile. So, when you walk into that room most men will not look at the brain and what you bring to the table. They look at your high heels and your hair and they think that is all you have got.”

She added that this superficial judgement often forces women to overcompensate:

“Women have to push extra to be realized and appreciated for what they bring to the table. You try not to get the men to walk over you. If you do not have a balance you end up being a hawk instead of a mother hen.”

Her narrative suggests that cultural expectations pressure women to walk a tightrope between strength and gentleness, a balance that male leaders are not expected to maintain. She also revealed that men’s egos often clash with women’s authority, further complicating leadership interactions. Interviewee 5 described how cultural expectations related to family roles contribute to gendered double standards. She shared that commitment to work is interpreted differently depending on the gender of the leader. She gave a striking example:

“I have had colleagues suggest I was neglecting my family simply because I worked late. Men in the same role were praised for their dedication.”

Her account exposes a cultural double bind where women are criticized for professional dedication while men are praised for the same behavior. This reinforces the belief that women’s primary responsibility is domestic, even when they hold significant leadership roles.

Across all interviews, cultural norms were also described as influential in shaping team dynamics. Women who adopt assertive leadership styles are often viewed as too harsh or unfeminine while those who lead with empathy risk being seen as weak or unfit for authority.

Interviewee 4 explained this expectation explicitly and stated that leadership spaces subtly dictate that women should act as motherly figures, even in demanding environments.

A recurring idea across interviews is the tension between modern professional expectations and traditional cultural roles. Interviewee 2 highlighted the need for a collective shift in cultural attitudes if women are to fully participate in leadership. She explained that as society increasingly recognizes women's abilities, media institutions must also evolve. This evolution is gradual because cultural norms do not change at the same pace as workplace structures. Interviewee 3 extended this reflection by revealing that cultural attitudes are often internalized by both men and women. She noted that women may sometimes doubt their own capability because societal messages have taught them to prioritize domestic obligations over professional ambition.

The interview data show that cultural norms and gender stereotypes remain deeply significant in shaping women's leadership pathways. These norms influence how women are perceived, how they are judged and how they are expected to behave. They determine whether female authority is respected or resisted and influence whether women feel confident enough to pursue senior positions.

4.1.4 Theme 4: Work and Family Balance, Motherhood, and Domestic Responsibilities as Barriers to Leadership

Across all five interviews, the issue of work and family balance emerged as one of the most significant and persistent barriers faced by women in media leadership in Ghana. The interviewees repeatedly described how domestic responsibilities, pregnancy, childcare pressures and societal expectations about women's roles in the home directly influence women's capacity to pursue, accept or sustain leadership positions. This theme reveals the deep intersection between professional ambition and cultural norms surrounding womanhood in Ghana. Interviewee 1 highlighted this challenge early in her discussion. She explained that media work is extremely demanding and often involves irregular hours, late night

assignments, and unpredictable workloads. She noted that these pressures do not affect men and women equally because cultural norms assign domestic responsibilities primarily to women. She stated that women often struggle with “*balancing work with family responsibilities*” and emphasized that women are judged more harshly for managing both spheres. She explained:

“Media work can really be demanding especially when news breaks late at night or during weekends. Women who have families sometimes get judged unfairly for prioritizing personal life even though men in similar situations are rarely questioned.”

This long reflection underscores the unequal scrutiny applied to women who try to balance leadership responsibilities with family obligations. Men’s familial roles are not considered barriers to professional excellence, while women’s are seen as obstacles that can undermine their suitability for leadership. Interviewee 2 also described the pressures associated with family life, particularly how pregnancy and marriage can interrupt or restrict a woman’s career progression. She articulated this clearly when she said that “*family issues sometimes hinder the progress of the woman’s position*”. She then expanded on this by explaining that:

“When a woman gets pregnant or when a woman is married and the husband tries to bully her into becoming more of the home and all of that sometimes it hinders the progress or the upkeep of the woman’s position. Families need to understand that women have to also be given that position to focus on their leadership roles in the organization.”

Her account demonstrates how the expectations placed on women by their families and partners directly influence their professional opportunities. Men rarely encounter equivalent pressures that force them to choose between home and leadership. Interviewee 3 connected

this issue with broader cultural assumptions about women's capacity for demanding professional roles. She noted that some colleagues assume women cannot handle long hours or high-pressure tasks because they are expected to prioritize domestic obligations. She observed that *"some assume we cannot handle pressure or long hours. These assumptions limit opportunities and visibility."* Her statement reflects the cycle that keeps women from advancing: cultural beliefs lead to fewer opportunities, fewer opportunities reduce visibility, and reduced visibility makes women less likely to be selected for leadership roles.

Interviewee 4 provided the most vivid and emotionally layered account of how motherhood and work responsibilities clash. She described her own experience of having to navigate leadership duties while caring for a newborn child. Her example is detailed, personal, and deeply revealing of the barrier's women face. She explained:

"When you need to have babies your energy your strength and everything is not the same. So, it becomes a challenge. After you are done with your birthing you become a nursing mum. You do not really get the job done or you get it done but not as to how you would have naturally done it when you were just a single person."

She explained that she often had to bring her child to work because leaving her at home caused too much anxiety and affected her productivity. She recounted:

"I remember when I had my first child I had to go to work with my child. I always had her in the car seat by me because I did not want a situation where I had to do something and I had to be called home that my daughter was crying or she was not eating. So, she would be there with her babysitter whilst I worked. When I finished, we went home together."

Her account demonstrates the labour and emotional sacrifices women make to remain productive in leadership roles. Her narrative also indicates that workplace structures do not always accommodate the needs of women with young children, forcing women to create their

own coping mechanisms. Interviewee 4 highlighted another crucial problem: the lack of support systems for new mothers. She stressed that many women do not have the resources or flexibility she had. She explained:

“Imagine a woman who does not have the kind of support I had or who cannot take her child to the workplace like I could. It becomes challenging.”

This observation underscores how structural barriers disadvantage women based on their domestic circumstances, making leadership less accessible for those with limited support. Interviewee 5 expanded the discussion by addressing cultural expectations that frame women as primary caregivers and judge them more harshly for their career ambitions. She expressed frustration over how women who work long hours face negative moral judgment. She stated:

“I have had colleagues suggest I was neglecting my family simply because I worked late. Men in the same role were praised for their dedication.”

This example reveals a double standard that penalizes women for professional commitment and rewards men for the same behavior. Her account shows that while women strive to meet leadership expectations, they simultaneously face criticism for not meeting cultural expectations of motherhood and domestic responsibility.

This theme also draws attention to how domestic pressures shape women’s availability for leadership roles. Late night news coverage, crisis response and strategic editorial meetings often require extended working hours, yet women are frequently expected to return home early to fulfil domestic duties. These expectations reduce women’s visibility in leadership spaces and limit their participation in decision making processes. Another recurring idea is that many women internalize these cultural expectations, leading them to limit their own ambitions. Interviewee 2 mentioned that women sometimes second guess their ability to handle leadership roles because they anticipate disapproval or conflict at home.

4.1.5 Theme 5: Structural and Institutional Barriers Including Bias, Resistance, and Male Dominance

All five interviewees described an environment where structural barriers, institutional biases and patterns of male dominance continue to shape women's ability to progress and function effectively in media leadership roles. These barriers take both overt and subtle forms, ranging from explicit resistance and questioning of women's authority to deeply ingrained assumptions about competence and legitimacy. Collectively, the interviews reveal a systemic challenge in which women must constantly negotiate institutional cultures that privilege masculinity and uphold unequal power dynamics. Interviewee 1 articulated one of the clearest examples of subtle institutional resistance, explaining how women's ideas are often dismissed until repeated by male colleagues. She stated that:

“Sometimes a woman simply says something and she is second-guessed until a male colleague repeats the same idea. You need to stay confident and assertive to be taken seriously.”

Her account shows how gendered communication dynamics reinforce male authority even in collaborative spaces. The requirement for women to be consistently assertive to gain respect illustrates a structural environment where male voices carry more weight and female competence is questioned by default. Interviewee 1 also described how resistance manifests socially when women are promoted into leadership. She explained that:

“When a woman is promoted people might quietly question whether she truly earned it or got it through favoritism. I usually handle that by focusing on performance. Once you deliver results those doubts fade away.”

This example captures a common pattern across the interviews: women are frequently assumed to be beneficiaries of bias rather than competence, whereas men are assumed to have earned their positions legitimately. Such perceptions form part of a structural narrative that undermines women's authority and forces them to engage in continuous performance-based justification.

Interviewee 2 described a more overt form of institutional resistance. She explained that male colleagues often believe that women achieve leadership positions through inappropriate means. She stated:

“A lot of the times the challenge has to do with the male team players thinking that a woman got to the position either by sexual molestation or something. Most of the time people think that women use sexual exploitation ways to get to the positions we get to which I believe is not so.”

This statement demonstrates how deeply rooted patriarchal stereotypes directly affect women's professional credibility. Such beliefs create a hostile environment for women who are forced to defend their professional integrity even before their leadership abilities are assessed. Interviewee 2 further explained that some men resist female authority because they do not want to be directed by women. She explained that:

“Some feel that they do not want women to be authoritative over them. They feel they are the men so they like to challenge women in such positions because they feel they are not to be tossed around by women.”

Her statement shows how gendered power expectations shape organizational culture by normalizing male resistance to female authority. This pattern reinforces unequal hierarchies regardless of formal leadership structures.

Interviewee 3 described similar frustrations, noting that women's contributions are often overlooked unless they hold formal authority. She explained that:

“In meetings dominated by men our voices can be sidelined unless we hold formal authority. Sometimes it takes confidence and persistence to be heard.”

This example highlights institutional gatekeeping and shows how women must continually assert themselves to ensure their contributions are recognized. Such dynamics reflect systems where authority is automatically associated with masculinity. Interviewee 3 also described the existence of a “boys club” culture that influences promotions and recognition. While she phrased it subtly, her reflection aligns with Interviewee 5’s much more direct account. Interviewee 5 recalled:

“I had to confront the boys club mentality when I was first promoted. Some male colleagues questioned whether I was tough enough. I proved them wrong by delivering results and building a high performing team.”

Her experience demonstrates how male dominated networks reinforce institutional barriers to women’s entry into leadership spaces. Instead of being welcomed or judged on merit, she was required to prove herself against gendered assumptions about capability and toughness. Interviewee 4 provided a profound and emotionally rich perspective on the subtle and explicit ways men resist female authority. She explained that some men express resistance not through direct confrontation but through body language, dismissal, or ego driven behaviors. Her long and striking reflection illustrates this:

“Mostly when you are on TV, people think you are just on TV. They do not know your academic background. They do not know what you have gone through to be fair. When I was mentioned as Executive Director they just felt that is another celebrity. In my first month they tried to be relevant and say something even if they did not need to. I did less talking and observed. By the third month they were eating back their words.”

This narrative highlights institutional prejudice rooted in both gender and public persona. The assumption that a woman lacks intellectual substance simply because she is a media

personality reflects deep structural bias. Interviewee 4 further explained that the male ego plays a critical role in institutional resistance. She stated:

“Men have ego because they believe they are the alphas. So imagine someone who at home has the wife at their feet doing everything and they come to work and now they have to control someone who might be younger than their wives.”

This detailed account demonstrates how private gender hierarchies spill into professional spaces, creating cultures where male employees resist female leadership by default.

Interviewee 5 also highlighted systemic bias in promotion processes. She explained that while qualifications matter, visibility and sponsorship are equally important yet unequally distributed. She shared:

“Women are not given the same visibility or stretch assignments that showcase leadership traits. Sponsorship is something men receive informally but women often do not.”

This shows how structural systems of advancement silently favor men through network-based sponsorship and preferential exposure. Across all interviews, there is a strong consensus that while organizations often describe themselves as equal opportunity workplaces, informal norms, hidden assumptions, and gendered expectations create unequal experiences for women.

4.1.6 Theme 6: Importance of Mentorship, Sponsorship, and Role Models in Supporting Women’s Leadership Progression

Across the five interviews, mentorship and sponsorship emerged as vital mechanisms for enabling women’s growth into leadership roles within the Ghanaian media sector. While all interviewees acknowledged their importance, several noted that structured systems of mentorship are either weak or nonexistent in their organizations, leaving women to rely on informal support, personal initiative and the inspiration of visible female role models. The

interviews also show that although mentorship is essential, sponsorship often carries even greater weight because it involves active advocacy and opens doors to opportunities that women are frequently denied.

Interviewee 1 emphasized the value of mentorship by describing her personal efforts to support younger women in her organization. She explained that although a formal mentorship system does not yet exist, she tries to guide emerging female professionals because of her own experiences in leadership. She stated that “*mentorship and professional development are very important*” and expanded on the current situation within her organization by explaining:

“We do not have a formal mentorship structure yet but there is an informal culture of supporting one another. I mentor a few younger female journalists because I know how tough it can be to find guidance. Structured programs would make a big difference.”

Her account reveals a common theme across interviews which is mentorship, and exists largely through individual goodwill rather than institutional design. This limits its reach and effectiveness because it depends on the availability and commitment of senior women rather than being embedded within organizational culture. Interviewee 2 also acknowledged the absence of formal mentorship in her organization. She described mentorship as something they hope to develop in the future but explained that currently it is limited to basic on the job learning for interns. She explained:

“No there are no specific programs at the moment. We give opportunities to people who want to learn on the job and the interns get that chance but we do not have a particular mentorship program or anything of that sort at the moment.”

Her reflection demonstrates how the lack of structured mentorship limits women’s exposure to leadership building experiences and reduces the level of targeted support required for career

progression. While Interviewee 2 was optimistic about future improvements, she implicitly acknowledged that without intentional mentorship systems, women will continue to rely on fragmented support that may not address the unique challenges they face. Interviewee 3 provided a contrasting account by describing a more proactive institutional effort. She explained that her organization has established a women focused initiative designed to build leadership capacity and confidence among female staff. In her words:

“Mentorship has been crucial in my journey. We have launched a Women in Media initiative that pairs junior staff with senior editors and offers workshops on leadership negotiation and editorial ethics. It is helping build confidence and skills.”

This detailed description reveals the potential impact of structured programs. By creating organized pathways for learning and growth, the organization not only supports individual women but also contributes to cultural change by normalizing the presence of female leaders in decision making spaces. Interviewee 3 also highlighted the role of mentorship in helping women navigate gender bias and institutional barriers. She explained that she uses her own leadership position to advocate inclusive hiring and challenge biased narratives, noting that:

“Sometimes you have to let your work speak louder than the biases. Mentorship has played a huge part in helping us support each other and push against the resistance.”

Her account confirms that mentorship not only provides skill development but also emotional support and professional visibility in environments that often question female authority. Interviewee 4 expressed a more complicated relationship with mentorship. While she acknowledged that people frequently approach her for mentorship, she suggested that not all of them genuinely seek professional guidance. She recounted several experiences where young women appeared more interested in proximity to her status rather than learning. Her deeply personal reflection illustrates this challenge:

“There are times people have come to me saying they want me to mentor them but you sit with them and have conversations and you realize they are not looking for mentorship. They are looking for followership. They want people to know they know you. They hang with you taking pictures and posting and they are calling you mummy but you realize they are not learning anything”.

She further described an incident in which a young woman she attempted to mentor became involved in a personal relationship with a client she had introduced her to. She explained:

“Sometimes you are mentoring people and helping them but they have their own intentions. It makes mentorship very difficult because you never know the reason they are there. Some people just want to use you as a springboard.”

Her narrative sheds light on the emotional labour placed on senior women who attempt to mentor younger women in environments where trust may be difficult to establish. It also reveals a gendered expectation that women in leadership must perform nurturing roles that extend beyond professional guidance.

Despite these challenges, Interviewee 4 still emphasized the value of mentorship when genuine. Her reflections show that mentorship is an important but complex relational process that requires commitment and sincerity from both sides. Interviewee 5 brought attention to another dimension often overlooked in discussions of career development: sponsorship. She stressed that while mentorship is helpful, sponsorship is transformative because it involves active advocacy by someone with power. She explained:

“One overlooked challenge is the lack of sponsorship. Mentorship is helpful but sponsorship moves careers forward faster. Women rarely get someone in power actively advocating their promotion.”

This distinction between mentorship and sponsorship is significant. Sponsorship provides women with access to high level opportunities, leadership visibility, and influential

endorsements that they may not receive through mentorship alone. Interviewee 5's organization attempts to address this gap through leadership lunches that bring women together across departments. She explained:

“I personally run a quarterly leadership lunch where women can share challenges and learn from each other. It is informal but it has sparked some powerful connections and collaborations.”

Her approach demonstrates how intentional gatherings can foster community, knowledge exchange, and informal sponsorship networks. Another strategy mentioned by Interviewee 5 is the visibility of female role models. She suggested that internal targets for gender balance and public celebration of women's achievements help dismantle stereotypes and inspire younger women. She explained that such visibility encourages others to “*aim higher and challenge stereotypes*” and contributes to a culture where female leadership is normal rather than exceptional.

4.1.7 Theme 7: Positive Editorial and Organizational Impact of Women's Leadership

Across all five interviews, the participants indicate the significant positive impact that women in leadership bring to editorial direction, organizational culture and the overall quality of media output. Their reflections reveal that women's leadership contributes not only to the diversity of content but also to more balanced decision making, ethical sensitivity, emotional intelligence and inclusivity in newsroom practices. This theme demonstrates that women's presence at the decision-making table is not just an issue of representation but a catalyst for improved content, healthier organizational environments and broader societal relevance. Interviewee 1 offered a clear explanation of how women influence editorial tone and story selection. She emphasized that women leaders expand the thematic range of newsroom content by prioritizing issues that are often neglected in male dominated environments. She explained that:

“Having women in leadership position changes the tone and direction of content. Women tend to push for more inclusive stories. Issues like health education and human rights get better attention. It gives a balance in how we tell stories and the kinds of conversations we prioritize on air.”

This long reflection demonstrates how women’s leadership shifts editorial focus towards socially relevant and community centered issues, promoting diversity in content and ensuring that media narratives reflect broader societal concerns. Interviewee 2 supported this view by describing women’s emotional sensitivity and adaptability as key strengths that shape editorial decisions. She highlighted that women leaders naturally adopt a tone that is sensitive to context and audience needs. She explained:

“Because women are emotionally psychologically and physically calm and soft when a woman attaches emotions to the job whereby there is supposed to be a soft tone the woman can adapt and adjust. When there is supposed to be a pathetic tone she is able to adjust. This makes it easier for women to set the tone right when it comes to taking decisions or being leaders.”

Her description reflects a belief that women’s instinctive empathy and emotional intelligence enrich the editorial process and facilitate more nuanced storytelling. Interviewee 3 reinforced these ideas by linking women’s leadership to increased inclusivity and ethical sensitivity in editorial decisions. She noted that women leaders introduce critical perspectives that broaden organizational priorities. She stated:

“Women leaders tend to broaden editorial focus. We are more likely to cover gender-based violence education and health from a community perspective. This makes our content more inclusive and relevant to diverse audiences.”

This statement shows how women shape editorial values by bringing new insights and advocating vulnerable groups whose stories are often marginalized. Interviewee 3 also mentioned that women introduce collaborative leadership styles that reshape newsroom culture. She explained that women's presence in editorial discussions reduces posturing and competitive behavior and promotes collaboration rooted in fairness and shared purpose. Interviewee 4 offered a deeply reflective and emotionally rich understanding of how women influence organizational culture. She explained that women use intuition, empathy, and holistic thinking when making decisions. Her insight is captured in the following lengthy passage:

“Women are very intuitive. We feel. Before a woman puts something out she looks at it holistically. She would want to go okay if we put it this way is it going to sound biased. Is it going to make somebody feel uncomfortable. Why do we not do it this way. Women make sure that in as much as they are getting the job done, they are not being offensive. They are being polite and decorous. Men are looking for that story but a woman will do that story and still ensure things are done differently.”

This statement shows how women's leadership style is grounded in reflection, ethical sensitivity and concern for interpersonal harm. Interviewee 4's perspective positions women as mediators who balance journalistic rigour with social responsibility. Interviewee 5 also described how women's presence in editorial spaces improves content quality by challenging stereotypes and expanding narrative diversity. She stated that:

“Women leaders often push for more nuanced storytelling. We are more likely to question stereotypes in reporting and ensure that marginalized voices are included in coverage.”

Her reflection links women's leadership directly to more responsible journalism and demonstrates how women act as gatekeepers who challenge reductive or harmful narratives.

Across interviews, the participants also noted that women introduce cultural and structural shifts in the newsroom that affect morale, teamwork, and inclusivity. Interviewee 5 explained that when women chair editorial meetings, the tone changes significantly. She noted:

“When women are in charge of editorial meetings their tone shifts. There is more openness to collaborative ideas and less posturing. It creates a healthier newsroom culture.”

This demonstrates that women contribute to organizational climates that encourage participation and reduce hierarchical intimidation, thereby improving overall team cohesion.

Furthermore, several interviewees noted that women in leadership act as role models who inspire younger women within the institution. Interviewee 1 explained that seeing women in leadership “*inspires younger journalists to aim higher*”, while Interviewee 2 stated that women leaders “*give the young ones the zeal to strive to become better*”. These short quotes demonstrate the symbolic power women bring by simply occupying leadership spaces. Interviewee 5 echoed this sentiment by describing how celebrating women's achievements publicly contributes to cultural transformation saying that “*we celebrate women's achievements and this inspires others to aim higher and challenge stereotypes.*”

This indicates that women leaders function not only as decision makers but also as inspirational figures who actively reshape the aspirations of younger staff. The interview data reveal that women's leadership profoundly enriches the editorial and organizational environment.

4.2 Discussion of Qualitative Findings

The findings show that women's representation in leadership roles within Ghana's media has improved over the years, yet remains uneven and disproportionately low at the topmost levels. This aligns strongly with literature which emphasized that women globally remain underrepresented in media leadership despite forming a substantial share of the media workforce (Robertson, Selva and Nielsen, 2021). This finding supports Gadzekpo and Tettey's (2020) argument that while women participate actively in media professions, their ascent into leadership remains slow. It also corroborates Yeboah-Banin et al.'s (2020) conclusion that women in Ghanaian media are still confined largely to the lower ranks of newsroom structures. Similarly, Interviewee 5's observation that women constitute "*just under a third*" of leadership roles mirrors global statistics where only 22 percent of top editors are women despite women comprising over 40 percent of journalists (Robertson, Selva and Nielsen, 2021).

Furthermore, according to Byerly (2021), women's representation in leadership worldwide remains constrained by institutional traditions that privilege masculinity. The findings reinforce this, as several interviewees indicated that senior editorial and executive roles continue to be dominated by men. This pattern reflects the symbolic annihilation of women in decision making spaces, a concept highlighted by Tuchman (1978) and revisited in the Feminist Media Theory. Thus, the findings show strong agreement with existing literature and reinforce the theoretical assertion that gendered power relations shape media leadership structures (Steiner, 2014).

The findings revealed that criteria for leadership advancement, although framed as neutral, frequently advantage men and place additional burdens on women. This provides vivid evidence of the glass ceiling phenomenon described by Byerly (2021) and Amponsah and Owusu (2022), where women face invisible barriers that hinder upward mobility. This pattern strongly aligns with the Glass Ceiling Theory presented and further supports the argument by

Haruna and Essel (2021) that institutional expectations often ignore gendered life patterns. The perception that women attain positions through inappropriate means, reflects persistent gender stereotypes identified in empirical studies such as Dhiman (2023). These stereotypes reinforce organizational cultures that question women's legitimacy and thus contribute to maintaining the glass ceiling. Moreover, the idea that women must balance assertiveness without being labelled aggressive is consistent with existing literature that states women leaders are evaluated through more restrictive behavioral standards than their male counterparts (North, 2020). This confirms the assertion of Robertson et al. (2021) that women in media leadership are held to higher standards.

The findings reveal that cultural expectations and gendered stereotypes remain powerful influences on women's leadership opportunities. Interviewee 1 noted that women who express authority are labelled "*aggressive or difficult*", while Interviewee 2 highlighted that women were historically seen as "*home keepers and baby making machines*". These perceptions reflect the feminist media argument that media organizations are embedded within patriarchal cultures that reproduce gender inequality (Van Zoonen, 1994). This theme strongly aligns with the arguments presented in Chapter Two that cultural norms in Ghana frame women's roles primarily in domestic terms, limiting their professional advancement (Morrison and Amoah, 2022). The evidence also supports the empirical observation by Malik (2025) that women in Ghanaian media encounter gender stereotyping and exclusion from key decision-making process

Work-life conflict emerged as a significant challenge for women in leadership. Interviewee 4 provided powerful testimony about caring for a newborn while leading a major media organization. Her account illustrates the gendered nature of caregiving roles, consistent with literature indicating that family responsibilities disproportionately affect women's career trajectories (Gadzekpo, 2009). The findings strongly reinforce the observations by Nyarko (2022) and Boateng (2023) that women in Ghanaian media must navigate complex

intersections of motherhood, social expectations, and organizational pressures. Interviewee 5's experience of being accused of neglecting her family for working late further illustrates the double standard identified by Dhiman (2023), where women are criticized for ambition while men are praised for dedication. Furthermore, the Glass Ceiling Theory suggests that motherhood penalties and assumptions about female domesticity contribute to institutional barriers (Loden, 1978). This was vividly supported by Interviewee 2 who stated that "*when a woman gets pregnant... it hinders the progress of the woman's position*". The findings therefore strongly support existing literature, with no significant contradictions.

The findings revealed pervasive structural biases that manifest through resistance to female authority, gendered questioning of competence and the presence of male dominated networks. Interviewee 5 described confronting "*the boys club mentality*", while Interviewee 4 explained that men often judge women based on appearance rather than competence. These findings agree closely with the study by Bastow and Henry (2024) which argues that media organizations continue to uphold structural barriers that disadvantage women. The subtle undermining described by Interviewee 1 aligns with Byerly's (2021) observation that gendered power relations within media institutions operate through informal rather than overt mechanisms. The Feminist Media Theory also posits that institutional practices often appear neutral but are embedded within patriarchal systems that limit women's agency (Steiner, 2014). The findings therefore reinforce both theoretical frameworks, offering no major disagreements with existing literature.

The importance of mentorship and sponsorship strongly emerged in the findings. Interviewee 3 highlighted institutional mentorship programmes that provide leadership training and confidence building, while Interviewee 5 stressed that "*sponsorship moves careers forward faster*". These findings align with Kim and White (2021), who emphasized that mentorship programmes and leadership development are essential for enhancing women's leadership capacity. The absence of structured mentorship in most organizations echoes the concerns

raised by Malik (2025), who noted limited implementation of gender sensitive policies in Ghanaian media institutions. The evidence therefore supports existing literature and suggests that structural investment in mentorship is necessary to close leadership gaps.

These findings strongly support feminist media arguments that women's presence in leadership challenges patriarchal narratives and encourage more diverse representation in media content (Van Zoonen, 1994; Gallagher, 2020). They also align with empirical studies showing that women's leadership improves content sensitivity and diversity (Anang, 2023). There is also agreement with Malik (2025) who found that women in Ghanaian media influence programming in ways that promote gender equity. No contradictions emerged between the findings and the literature.

4.3 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative section presents descriptive statistical results derived from the survey administered to media managers, editors, producers and individuals involved in role assignment. This section offers a broader view of the representation of women in leadership, the barriers they encounter, the availability of organizational support and perceptions of gender equity within the media industry. The survey findings complement the qualitative data by quantifying key trends and highlighting the prevalence of specific challenges and opportunities.

4.3.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 8: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Questionnaire Item	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
What is your gender?	Female	5	100
What is your current role in the media organization?	Editor	3	60
	Manager	1	20
	Producer/Editor	1	20
Which media platform do you currently work with?	Radio	3	60
	Television	2	40
How many years have you worked in media management or editorial leadership?	3–5 years	2	40
	6–10 years	1	20
	More than 10 years	2	40

The demographic data show that all five respondents were female, indicating that the survey captured views directly from women working within Ghana’s media landscape. The respondents occupied roles such as editors, managers and producer-editors, demonstrating a range of leadership and supervisory functions within their organizations. Most respondents worked in radio, while the rest worked in television. Their years of experience were fairly distributed across early, mid, and senior levels with some having more than ten years of experience. This distribution suggests that the participants had sufficient professional

exposure to comment meaningfully on the state of women’s leadership in Ghanaian media institutions.

4.3.2 Representation of Women in Media Leadership

Table 9: Representation of Women in Media Leadership

Questionnaire Item	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
How many women currently hold leadership or editorial decision-making roles in your organization?	1–3 women	3	60
	4–6 women	2	40
In your view, how adequately are women represented in media leadership within your organization?	High	1	20
	Moderate	2	40
	Low	2	40
Do you think the Ghanaian media industry as a whole is making progress in promoting women into leadership roles?	Significant progress	2	40
	Some progress	2	40
	Little progress	1	20
How frequently are women consulted in key editorial or programming decisions in your organization?	Always	2	40
	Often	2	40
	Sometimes	1	20

The findings reveal that although women are present in leadership roles within media organizations, their representation remains limited. Most respondents indicated that only a small number of women occupy leadership or editorial decision-making roles in their organizations. Representation levels were described as moderate or low by a majority of the respondents. Despite this, there was an acknowledgment that the industry is making some or significant progress in promoting women into leadership. Women were also reported to be consulted “always” or “often” in editorial decisions, suggesting increasing visibility and involvement even though representation at higher executive levels remains insufficient.

4.3.3 Challenges and Barriers Faced by Women

Table 10: Challenges and Barriers Faced by Women

Questionnaire Item	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
What are the most common challenges women face in attaining leadership roles in your organization? (Select all that apply)	(each challenge mentioned once)	1 each	20 per item
Examples:	Gender bias	1	20
	Family responsibilities	1	20
	Work–life balance	1	20
	Lack of recognition	1	20
	Stereotyping	1	20

What barriers do you think prevent women from applying for leadership roles in media?	Cultural expectations	2	40
	Lack of mentorship	1	20
	Fear of discrimination	1	20
	Domestic responsibilities	1	20
To what extent do you believe unconscious bias affects the promotion of women into leadership roles in your organization?	To a small extent	3	60
	Moderate extent	1	20
	Not at all	1	20
Have you observed any instances of gender-based discrimination in leadership decisions?	Yes	2	40
	No	3	60
Do you believe there is a 'glass ceiling' for women in your media organization?	Yes	3	60
	No	2	40

The respondents identified several challenges that commonly hinder women from fully attaining leadership roles. These included gender bias, stereotypes, work-life balance pressures, domestic responsibilities, and limited recognition of women's competencies. Barriers preventing women from applying for leadership roles included cultural expectations, lack of mentorship, and concerns about discrimination. Most respondents believed

unconscious bias influences promotion decisions to some extent and a majority also affirmed the existence of a glass ceiling. These findings indicate that women face a combination of structural, cultural, and institutional barriers that restrict their leadership progression.

4.3.4 Opportunities and Leadership Development

Table 11: Opportunities and Leadership Development

Questionnaire Item	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
How often are women given high-visibility assignments or editorial authority in your newsroom or programming team?	Always	3	60
	Often	2	40
How accessible are leadership training or capacity-building programs to women in your organization?	Very accessible	2	40
	Accessible	2	40
	Not accessible	1	20
Are there mentorship or leadership development programs specifically for women in your organization?	Yes	1	20
	No	4	80
How would you rate the organizational support for women aspiring to leadership roles?	Strong support	2	40

	Moderate support	2	40
	Weak support	1	20

The data show that women receive a fair number of high-visibility assignments with most respondents selecting “always” or “often”. Leadership training and capacity-building programs were rated as accessible by most respondents, although one indicated they were not accessible. However, mentorship programs specifically designed for women were largely absent with 4 out of 5 respondents stating that no such programs exist in their organizations. Organizational support for women aspiring to leadership was reported as moderate or strong, suggesting that while support structures exist, they are not yet sufficiently formalized or comprehensive.

4.3.5 Organizational Policies and Support Structures

Table 12: Organizational Policies and Support Structures

Questionnaire Item	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Does your organization have formal policies promoting gender equity in leadership?	Yes	2	40
	No	2	40
	Not sure	1	20
If yes, how effective are these policies in practice?	Very effective	1	20

	Moderately effective	1	20
	Not effective	1	20
	Not applicable	2	40
How often are gender equity issues discussed at management or editorial board meetings?	Regularly	1	20
	Occasionally	3	60
	Rarely	1	20
What strategies has your organization implemented to support women's career advancement?	Training & capacity-building	2	40
	Gender-balanced recruitment	1	20
	Flexible arrangements	1	20
	None	1	20

The findings show inconsistencies in the presence and effectiveness of gender equity policies. Some organizations have formal gender equity policies but others do not and one respondent was unsure. Even where policies exist, their effectiveness varies, with only a minority considering them very effective. Discussions about gender equity issues take place occasionally in most organizations but are not yet integrated as regular agenda items. The strategies implemented to support women varied including capacity-building initiatives and gender-balanced recruitment but a portion of respondents indicated that no clear strategies

were in place. This demonstrates that policy frameworks remain fragmented and inconsistently applied.

4.3.6 Impact of Women’s Leadership

Table 13: Impact of Women’s Leadership

Questionnaire Item	Response Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Do you believe that increasing women’s leadership in media improves content diversity and organizational culture?	Yes	5	100
	No	0	0
In your experience, how do male and female leaders differ in leadership styles within your organization?	Women more collaborative	3	60
	Women more empathetic	1	20
	No difference	1	20
Do you believe women in leadership are held to higher performance standards than their male counterparts?	Yes	4	80
	No	1	20

All respondents agreed that increasing the number of women in leadership positively influences content diversity and organizational culture. Respondents highlighted that women bring collaborative and empathetic leadership styles to the newsroom, contributing to more

inclusive and ethical decision making. A majority also believed that women in leadership roles are held to higher performance standards than men, suggesting a continued culture of unequal expectations. These findings reinforce the argument that women’s leadership enriches editorial practices but systemic bias continues to shape their experiences.

4.3.7 Recommendations for Improving Gender Equity

Table 14: Recommendations for Improving Gender Equity

Questionnaire Item	Themes Identified from Responses	Frequency (n)
In your opinion, what can be done to improve women’s representation in media leadership in Ghana?	Mentorship and sponsorship	3
	Gender equity policies	2
	Visibility and promotions	2
	Support for mothers	1
	Training and development	2
What policy recommendations would you make to improve gender equity in media leadership in Ghana?	Gender audits	1
	Stronger policies	2
	Leadership development	2

	Accountability mechanisms	1
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4.4 Discussion of Quantitative Findings

The data indicate that women hold leadership roles within the organizations surveyed, yet their numbers remain limited. Most respondents reported between one and six women in leadership positions and rated overall representation as moderate or low. This finding strongly aligns with the literature reviewed which indicates global and Ghanaian patterns of women being concentrated in lower levels of media work while top editorial and executive roles remain male dominated (Robertson, Selva and Nielsen, 2021). The evidence supports the argument by Gadzekpo and Tettey (2020) that although women participate actively in media work in Ghana, their rise to higher leadership levels remains restricted. The perception among respondents that the industry is making “some” or “significant” progress reflects gradual change but also highlights the slow pace of transformation. This is consistent with the literature earlier reviewed where researchers such as Byerly (2021) argue that gender parity in media leadership has remained elusive despite decades of advocacy. The quantitative data therefore show agreement with existing literature that women’s leadership in media is improving but still constrained by entrenched institutional cultures.

The responses also show that women continue to face multiple barriers including gender bias, heavy domestic responsibilities, lack of recognition, and stereotyping. These barriers mirror those documented in Chapter Two, where scholars described persistent cultural expectations and gendered labour divisions that undermine women’s career advancement (Morrison and Amoah, 2022; Nyarko, 2022). The findings also support Dhiman’s (2023) argument that deeply embedded gender stereotypes continue to shape perceptions of women in professional settings. A significant proportion of respondents believed a glass ceiling exists within their organizations, demonstrating strong agreement with the Glass Ceiling Theory. According to the theory, invisible yet powerful organizational norms limit women's access to top leadership

positions even when formal policies appear gender neutral. The perception of a glass ceiling in the quantitative results confirms the claim by Haruna and Essel (2021) that women's leadership is impeded by subtle forms of exclusion and by promotion practices that indirectly favor men.

The quantitative results further indicate that family responsibilities and work-life balance pressures are major barriers for women. This aligns with the findings of Boateng (2023) and Gadzekpo (2009) who noted that women in Ghanaian media often struggle to combine leadership responsibilities with domestic expectations. These expectations reinforce the Feminist Media Theory position that women's absence from top leadership positions is not merely organizational but also socially constructed through cultural beliefs about gender roles (Van Zoonen, 1994). The quantitative data therefore confirm strong agreement with the theoretical argument that gendered expectations continue to shape women's leadership opportunities.

A notable finding is that while leadership training programs are generally accessible, mentorship programs specifically designed for women are largely absent. Four out of five respondents reported no formal mentorship systems in their organizations. This finding echoes available literature where scholars such as Kim and White (2021) emphasized the importance of mentorship and sponsorship in promoting women's leadership growth. The absence of such programs supports Malik's (2025) argument that Ghanaian media institutions often lack gender-responsive structures that sustain long-term leadership development for women. The fact that respondents rated organizational support as moderate or strong suggests that although goodwill exists, structured systems are still underdeveloped.

Across respondents, there was inconsistency regarding whether gender equity policies exist in their organizations. Even where policies were present, respondents differed on their perceived effectiveness. This supports the argument that policy frameworks in Ghana's media industry remain fragmented and inconsistently enforced (Gadzekpo and Tettey, 2020). The

findings also agree with Malik (2025) who noted that policies alone do not change gender dynamics unless accompanied by institutional commitment and resource allocation. The irregularity of gender equity discussions at management levels further reinforces the gap between policy and practice. This aligns closely with the Feminist Media Theory argument that formal inclusion does not automatically translate into substantive equality (Byerly and Ross, 2006). Organizational structures may appear progressive while still reproducing patriarchal norms in everyday operations.

One of the strongest findings was the agreement that increasing women's leadership improves content diversity and organizational culture. Every respondent affirmed this position. This confirms arguments made in Chapter 2 that women leaders bring more inclusive perspectives to newsroom decision-making, often promoting human-centered storytelling, fairness, and diversity (Gallagher, 2020; Anang, 2023). Respondents also reported that women are more held to higher performance standards than men, a finding strongly consistent with both the theoretical frameworks and the literature. According to Robertson, Selva and Nielsen (2021), women in leadership are frequently evaluated more harshly and must prove their competence repeatedly. This also aligns with the Glass Ceiling Theory's position that women face stricter scrutiny and must work harder for recognition (Loden, 1978).

4.5 Synthesis of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

The synthesis of findings from both the qualitative and quantitative strands shows a high level of convergence regarding the representation and experiences of women in leadership roles within Ghana's media industry. Both sets of data reveal that although women are present in leadership and are increasingly visible in editorial and managerial spaces, their overall representation remains limited. Respondents across both datasets described leadership structures as still predominantly male dominated with most organizations having only a small number of women in key decision-making roles and representation frequently rated as moderate or low. These patterns reflect arguments where scholars such as Robertson, Selva

and Nielsen (2021) and Gadzekpo and Tettey (2020) emphasized that progress in women's media leadership remains incremental. The findings align strongly with Feminist Media Theory, which argues that patriarchal structures continue to shape media institutions by restricting women's access to authority and influence. Both datasets further reveal that women's leadership contributes positively to editorial diversity and ethical storytelling, a point that resonates with the works of Gallagher (2020) and Anang (2023).

In both the qualitative interviews and quantitative responses, cultural norms and gendered expectations emerged as some of the most significant barriers to women's leadership. Women described expectations that they prioritize domestic responsibilities, behave in socially approved ways and avoid authoritative behavior that may be interpreted negatively. Respondents also identified gender bias, stereotyping, heavy domestic responsibilities, and work-life balance constraints as major barriers preventing women from attaining leadership roles. These findings mirror the empirical evidence reviewed where Morrison and Amoah (2022), Nyarko (2022) and Dhiman (2023) found that gendered cultural attitudes remain deeply embedded in Ghanaian society and continue to shape professional perceptions. The existence of a glass ceiling was acknowledged in both datasets, confirming the assumptions of the Glass Ceiling Theory that invisible organizational barriers limit women's upward mobility even when formal structures appear neutral. The quantitative finding that women are held to higher performance standards also reinforces the qualitative accounts of women having to repeatedly prove themselves in order to gain recognition and legitimacy.

Across both forms of data, a lack of structured mentorship and inconsistent organizational policies further restricted women's leadership advancement. While respondents noted that opportunities such as high-visibility assignments and involvement in editorial decision making have improved, both datasets revealed that mentorship programmes are largely absent and gender equity policies are inconsistently implemented and, in some cases, ineffective. These findings reinforce scholarly arguments that institutional change within Ghanaian media

tends to be policy-driven in principle but slow in practical application (Malik, 2025; Gadzekpo and Tettey, 2020). Despite these challenges, both datasets strongly agreed that increasing women in leadership improves organizational culture and content diversity. The convergence of evidence across methods reaffirms that while progress is taking place, structural and cultural barriers rooted in gendered expectations and institutional norms continue to shape the leadership trajectories of women in Ghana's radio and television institutions. The integration of findings therefore supports the applicability of both the Feminist Media Theory and the Glass Ceiling Theory as useful explanations for understanding women's experiences in the media leadership landscape.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the analysis of the data gathered from the interviews and the survey conducted for the study. The chapter was categorized into two main sections, consisting of the qualitative analysis and the quantitative analysis. The qualitative section explored the major themes that emerged from the interview data, highlighting the lived experiences, challenges and contributions of women in media leadership. The quantitative section complemented these findings by presenting descriptive statistics from the survey which provided broader insights into patterns of representation, organizational practices and perceived barriers. In sum, these two sections offered a comprehensive understanding of the problem under study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study titled: **“Women in media leadership in Ghana: challenges and representation among radio and television managers and editors.”**

The summary focuses on key insights derived from the mixed-methods approach (quantitative + qualitative), followed by conclusions and recommendations for:

- Media organizations
- Policy institutions
- Women in media leadership
- Future researchers

5.2 Summary of Findings

The aim of the research was to examine the representation and challenges of women in media leadership in Ghana’s radio and television industry, specifically focusing on women **who assign roles** managers and editors.

This study was guided by four objectives:

1. To evaluate the current level of women’s representation in managerial and editorial roles within Ghana’s radio and television industry.
2. To identify the particular challenges women, encounter in achieving and excelling in leadership roles in radio and television.
3. To analyse how cultural, institutional, and organizational factors influence women’s leadership experiences in the media.

4. To recommend strategies and interventions for improving women's representation and participation in managerial and editorial leadership in radio and television.

Data were gathered from survey and interviews. Analysis followed descriptive statistics and selective coding (open → axial → selective coding).

5.2.1 Key Findings

Objective 1: To evaluate the current level of women representation in managerial and editorial roles within Ghana's radio and television industry.

- The findings show that women's representation in leadership roles within Ghana's media has improved over the years, yet remains uneven and disproportionately low at the topmost levels. This aligns strongly with a study by (Robertson, Selva and Nielsen, 2021), which emphasised that women globally remain underrepresented in media leadership despite forming a substantial share of the media workforce.
- The findings also revealed that, criteria for leadership advancement, although framed as neutral, frequently advantage men and place additional burdens on women. This provides vivid evidence of the glass ceiling phenomenon described by Byerly (2021) and Amponsah and Owusu (2022), where women face invisible barriers that hinder upward mobility.

Objective 2: To identify the particular challenges women, encounter in achieving and excelling in leadership roles in radio and television.

- Family responsibilities and work-life conflict emerged as a significant challenge for women in leadership. The findings strongly reinforce the observations by Nyarko (2022) and Boateng (2023) that women in Ghanaian media must navigate complex intersections of motherhood, social expectations, and organizational pressures.

- The findings, also revealed pervasive structural biases that manifest through resistance to female authority, gendered questioning of competence and the presence of male dominated networks. These findings agree closely with the study by Bastow and Henry (2024) which argues that media organizations continue to uphold structural barriers that disadvantage women.

Objective 3: To analyse how cultural, institutional, and organizational factors influence women’s leadership experiences in the media.

- The findings show that, women continue to face multiple barriers which influence their leadership experience in the media including gender bias, heavy domestic responsibilities, lack of recognition, and stereotyping. The findings, support Dhiman’s (2023) argument that deeply embedded gender stereotypes continue to shape perceptions of women in professional settings.

Objective 4: To recommend strategies and interventions for improving women’s representation and participation in managerial and editorial leadership in radio and television.

- The importance of mentorship and sponsorship strongly emerged in the findings as a strategy improving women’s representation and participation in managerial and editorial leadership in radio and television. These findings align with Kim and White (2021), who emphasized that mentorship programs and leadership development are essential for enhancing women’s leadership capacity.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that:

1. Women's representation in leadership roles within Ghana's media has improved over the years, yet remains uneven and disproportionately low at the topmost levels, particularly in radio and television decision-making roles.
2. The underrepresentation is not due to lack of competence, but to structural constraints such as gender bias, newsroom politics, and societal expectations.
3. Leadership selection in some media houses is influenced by gendered perceptions, informal networks, and "boys club systems."
4. For women to advance into leadership, media houses must actively reshape organizational cultures to embrace gender equity.

In short:

Women are qualified, capable, and available, but are constrained by systemic barriers.

5.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes meaningfully to academia, policy, and media practice in several ways:

Academic Significance

- Provides updated empirical evidence (2020–2025) on gender representation in Ghana's broadcasting sector.
- Fills a research gap by focusing specifically on women who assign roles (managers and editors), an area often ignored in existing literature.
- Adds to African-centered feminist media scholarship.

Policy Significance

- Offers actionable insights for the National Media Commission and other regulatory bodies to promote gender equality.
- Supports development of gender-sensitive leadership frameworks.

Practical/Industry Significance

- Helps media organizations understand barriers limiting female leadership.
- Highlights the need for institutional reforms, mentorship, and inclusive practices.
- Provides guidance for HR managers to develop equitable hiring and promotion policies.

Social Significance

- Encourages public discourse on gender inequality in media.
- Promotes women's empowerment and participation in decision-making processes in Ghana.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

While the study provides valuable insights, certain limitations exist:

1. Sample Limitation:
 - The study focused on selected radio and television stations in specific regions, which may limit generalizability to the entire country.
2. Limited Access to Senior Leaders:
 - Some high-ranking managers, especially male executives, were unwilling to participate, limiting the diversity of perspectives.

3. Self-Reporting Bias:

- Responses from female participants may reflect personal experiences or perceptions, which can introduce bias.

4. Time Constraints:

- The mixed-method design required extensive interviews and coding; limited time may have reduced the number of possible participants.

5. Lack of Longitudinal Data:

- The study did not track leadership progression over time. A longitudinal approach might reveal trends more clearly.

These limitations do not invalidate the findings but suggest areas for future improvement.

5.6 Recommendations

5.6.1 To Media Organizations

- Establish transparent career progression frameworks.
- Introduce gender-sensitive HR policies (e.g., maternity flexibility, equal opportunity promotion).
- Create in-house women leadership mentorship programs.

5.6.2 To Policy Institutions

- The National Media Commission and Ministry of Information should:
 - Encourage annual gender audits in media houses.

- Introduce leadership gender quota guidelines (e.g., at least 40% women in leadership teams).

5.6.3 To Women in Media

- Build strong support networks (professional associations like Ghana Women in Media).
- Pursue leadership development programs and short courses.
- Document achievements and actively negotiate promotions.

5.6.4 To Academic and Future Researchers

- Conduct large-scale studies across all 16 regions of Ghana.
- Explore representation in digital media leadership (YouTube, podcasting, online journalism).

5.7 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies may examine:

- The influence of social media entrepreneurship on women's new leadership pathways in broadcasting.
- Comparative assessment of private vs. state-owned media on gender inclusion.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide

1. Can you describe the current gender composition of your leadership and editorial team?
How has this changed over the years?
2. What criteria do you typically use when assigning leadership roles or editorial responsibilities, and how do these criteria affect women's chances of advancement?
3. Have you observed any patterns or trends in how women are represented in leadership roles within your organization or the broader Ghanaian media landscape?
4. What are the most significant challenges women face when pursuing leadership positions in your media organization?
5. Can you share any personal experiences or observations of how gender dynamics influence decision-making in editorial or managerial roles?
6. How do societal expectations or cultural norms in Ghana impact women's participation and visibility in media leadership?
7. Are there any formal policies or informal practices in your organization that support or hinder women's advancement into leadership roles?
8. How do you ensure fairness and equity when assigning roles or promoting staff, especially in contexts where gender bias may be present?
9. What role do mentorship and professional development play in preparing women for leadership in your organization? Are there specific programs in place?
10. Have you encountered resistance either subtle or overt from colleagues or stakeholders when promoting women into leadership roles? If so, how was it addressed?

11. In your view, how does having women in leadership positions influence the content, tone, or editorial direction of your media platform?

12. What strategies have been most effective in increasing women's representation in leadership roles within your organization or industry?

13. Do you believe women in media leadership are held to different standards than their male counterparts? If so, how does this manifest?

14. How do you personally advocate for gender equity in your role as a manager or editor, and what challenges have you faced in doing so?

15. What recommendations would you offer to media organizations, policymakers, or academic institutions seeking to improve gender representation in media leadership across Ghana?

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Women in Media Leadership in Ghana; Challenges and Representation.

A study on Media Managers, Editors, and individuals that assign roles.

* Indicates required question

1. Email *

Untitled section

2. What is your gender? *

Mark only one oval.

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

3. What is your current role in the media organization? *

Mark only one oval.

Editor

- News Director
- Program Manager
- Other (please specify)

4. **How many years have you worked in media management or editorial leadership?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 5 years
- 5–10 years
- 11–15 years
- More than 15 years

5. **Which media platform do you currently work with?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Radio
- Television
- Graphic Communications Group Limited
- Other (please specify)

6. **How many women currently hold leadership or editorial decision-making roles in your organization?** *

Mark only one oval.

- None
- 1–2
- 3–5
- More than 5

7. **In your view, how adequately are women represented in media leadership within your organization?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Very adequately
- Adequately
- Inadequately
- Very inadequately

8. **What factors influence the appointment of women into leadership roles in your organization?** * *(Please Select all that apply)*

Tick all that apply.

- Merit and qualifications
- Gender equity policies
- Personal networks
- Organizational culture
- Other (please specify)

9. **What are the most common challenges women face in attaining leadership roles in your organization?** *

(Please Select all that apply)

Tick all that apply.

- Gender bias/stereotypes
- Lack of mentorship
- Work-life balance
- Limited promotion opportunities

Resistance from colleagues

Other (please specify)

10. **Have you observed any instances of gender-based discrimination in leadership decisions?** *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

11. **How would you rate the organizational support for women aspiring to leadership roles?** *

Mark only one oval.

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

12. **Does your organization have formal policies promoting gender equity in leadership?** *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Not sure

13. **If yes, how effective are these policies in practice?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Very effective
- Moderately effective
- Not effective
- No policies exist

14. **Are there mentorship or leadership development programs specifically for women in your organization?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

15. **In your opinion, what can be done to improve women's representation in media leadership in Ghana?** *

16. Do you believe that increasing* women's leadership in media will positively impact content diversity and organizational culture? Why or why not?

17. **To what extent do you believe *
unconscious bias affects the promotion of
women into
leadership roles in your organization?**

Mark only one oval.

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a large extent

18. **How often are women given high- *
visibility assignments or editorial authority
in your newsroom or programming team?**

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

19. **In your experience, how do male and female leaders differ in their leadership styles within your organization?** *

20. **Do you believe women in leadership are held to higher performance standards than their male counterparts.** *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

21. **How frequently are women consulted in key editorial or programming decisions in your organization?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

22. **What barriers do you think prevent *
women from applying for leadership
roles in media?**

23. **How accessible are leadership *
training or capacity-building programs to
women in your organization?**

Mark only one oval.

- Very accessible
- Somewhat accessible
- Not accessible
- Not available
- Other (please specify)

24. **Do you believe there is a 'glass *
ceiling' for women in your media
organization?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

25. **What strategies has your organization implemented to support women's career advancement?** *

26. **How does societal perception of gender roles influence leadership appointments in media?** *

27. **Do you think the Ghanaian media industry as a whole is making progress in promoting women into leadership roles?** *

Mark only one oval.

Significant progress

Some progress

Little progress

No progress

28. **How often are gender equity issues discussed at management or editorial board meetings?** *

Mark only one oval.

- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

29. **What policy recommendations would you make to improve gender equity in media leadership in Ghana?** *
