



**WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: AN IMPACT STUDY OF CONTENT POLICIES,  
INNOVATION AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AT MEDIA GENERAL**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION BY STUDENT

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

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## CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

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

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29-12-2025

Supervisor

Signature

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, whose love, sacrifices, and unwavering support continue to inspire me. To all media practitioners and aspiring media managers, may this work serve as a source of motivation toward excellence, ethical practice, and innovation in the media industry

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of women in leadership at Media General, one of Ghana's leading media conglomerates, focusing on how women leaders influence content policies, innovation, and organisational culture across its television, radio, and digital divisions. Grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory and Gender and Leadership Theory, the study adopts a qualitative case study design, using in-depth interviews with women leaders and employees who work closely with them. The findings reveal that women occupy influential leadership roles at Media General, including executive, managerial, and editorial positions, demonstrating competence, creativity, and empathy. Their leadership pathways are shaped by performance merit, mentorship, and organisational recognition rather than formalised promotion systems, highlighting a culture of relational empowerment. The study found that women leaders embody a leadership style characterised by empathy, collaboration, and firmness, balancing emotional intelligence with strategic decisiveness. This blend not only enhances team cohesion but also fosters innovation and operational excellence. Furthermore, the study uncovered that women's leadership has been instrumental in driving innovation through the development of inclusive content, technological creativity, and audience engagement strategies. Female-led initiatives such as *Ghana's Most Beautiful* and *Perfect Match Extra* demonstrate the transformative potential of women's leadership in shaping Ghana's media landscape. The findings also show that Media General's organisational culture is undergoing a profound transformation influenced by women leaders. They have fostered a more inclusive, supportive, and innovative workplace environment that values diversity, empathy, and collaboration. The study concludes that women leaders at Media General are not only participants in institutional change but key architects of it, redefining leadership as an ethical, relational, and innovation-driven practice. Based on these insights, the study recommends institutionalising structured mentorship programmes, strengthening gender equity in technical and decision-making roles, and implementing family-friendly and inclusive workplace policies. It further calls for continuous gender audits and cross-industry collaborations to advance women's leadership across Ghana's media sector.

**Keywords:** Women in leadership, Media General, innovation, organisational culture, content policy, transformational leadership, gender equity, Ghanaian media.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MG	Media General
APL	Adesa Productions Limited
HR	Human Resources
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
GM	General Manager
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
GMB	Ghana's Most Beautiful
TLT	Transformational Leadership Theory
GLT	Gender and Leadership Theory
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
MGL	Media General Limited
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The discourse around women in leadership has gained traction globally due to its implications on organisational development and inclusive growth. Gender-diverse leadership is increasingly recognised for fostering innovation, ethical decision-making, and collaborative environments (Gürlek & Tuna, 2018). However, despite global momentum, women's representation in leadership within media organisations remains limited. This study examines the impact of women in leadership at Media General, a prominent Ghanaian media conglomerate, focusing on content policy reforms, innovation, and organisational culture transformation.

Empirical evidence supports the view that gender-diverse leadership enhances organisational innovation. Female leaders often encourage open communication, participative management, and diverse ideation, which are catalysts for innovation (Fang & Karia, 2024). In media organisations, such leadership can reshape news agendas and production approaches, pushing for inclusive and socially relevant content. As innovation is integral to media competitiveness, especially in digital-first environments, the presence of women leaders could be pivotal.

Content policies determine the editorial direction, ethical standards, and representation practices in media houses. Women in leadership positions often advocate for balanced gender representation and ethical storytelling, challenging patriarchal and stereotypical portrayals (Barkhuizen & Masakane, 2022). At Media General, this impact could manifest in programming choices, newsroom diversity, and gender-sensitive reportage. Research shows that female editors and managers are more likely to implement policies that promote diversity and social justice (Islam et al., 2023).

Organisational culture, defined as shared values, norms, and practices, profoundly affects employee behaviour and performance. Leadership plays a critical role in shaping and reshaping culture. Women leaders tend to foster more inclusive, team-oriented, and collaborative cultures that are conducive to performance and well-being (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2005). At Media General, an organisation with significant national reach, such cultural shifts could influence not only internal dynamics but also public narratives.

Leadership styles of women are often associated with transformational characteristics—vision-driven, empathetic, and people-focused. This has implications for policy formation, particularly in areas such as diversity recruitment, workplace harassment, and pay equity (Lesch et al., 2024). Evidence suggests that female leaders are more proactive in institutionalising policies that reflect equity and inclusivity values, which in turn shapes a sustainable and progressive organisational ethos (Gomes & Seman, 2021).

Despite their potential, women continue to face significant structural and cultural barriers to leadership. These include gender biases, lack of mentorship, and resistance to female authority (Islam et al., 2023). [Media environments are often fast-paced and male-dominated, further complicating women's ascent to leadership roles. Identifying these barriers within Media General is crucial for understanding how organisational policies either reinforce or dismantle gender inequality.

Leadership not only steers vision but also allocates resources and cultivates environments for innovation. Women leaders are shown to be instrumental in facilitating knowledge-sharing cultures and employee-driven innovation strategies (Zulkifli et al., 2023). Within Media General, women at the helm could influence editorial experiments, digital transitions, and brand engagement strategies, all crucial in the rapidly evolving media industry.

Media General (MG) is one of Ghana's largest and most influential media conglomerates, operating a diverse portfolio that includes television stations (such as TV3 Network), multiple radio channels (including 3FM, Onua FM, and Connect FM), and digital platforms under the 3News brand. With its headquarters in Accra, MG has established itself as a leader in news, entertainment, and public service broadcasting, reaching millions of Ghanaians daily through its multi-platform presence. The organisation plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, cultural narratives, and policy debates in Ghana, making it a critical site for examining how women in leadership influence content policies, foster innovation, and navigate organisational culture.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The increasing inclusion of women in leadership positions across global industries, including media, has attracted significant scholarly and institutional attention. Researchers have widely acknowledged the positive impacts of gender-diverse leadership on organisational outcomes such as innovation, ethical governance, and inclusive decision-making (Cropley & Cropley, 2017; Klettner et al., 2016). In the media sector specifically, women leaders influence content development, promote equitable narratives, and contribute to reshaping media culture (Dodd, 2012; Onalaja & Otokiti, 2022). However, much of the literature has focused on macro-level policy interventions and global media houses in the Global North, with insufficient attention given to the unique dynamics at national or regional levels, particularly in African media organisations such as Media General.

This gap becomes especially evident in organisations like Media General, one of Ghana's largest media conglomerates, where women occupy increasing leadership roles, but systematic academic inquiry into their impact is sparse. No comprehensive study to date has examined how these women influence organisational culture, content governance, and innovation

outcomes within the company. Understanding their influence is critical not only to advancing gender equity but also to optimizing content strategy, stakeholder trust, and digital transformation within African media settings (Onalaja & Otokiti, 2022; Dodd, 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to fill the existing knowledge gap by conducting an impact analysis of women in leadership at Media General, focusing on how their roles intersect with content policies, innovation, and organisational culture. By adopting a contextual and gender-sensitive lens, this research will generate new insights that challenge dominant paradigms in media leadership studies and contribute to theory and practice around gender-inclusive innovation and organisational development.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

#### **Broad Objective**

To examine the impact of women in leadership on content policies, innovation, and organisational culture at Media General

#### **Specific Research Objectives**

1. To establish the leadership roles or positions women occupy at Media General
2. To find out how women leadership roles has impacted innovation and operations at Media General
3. To find out how organisational culture has affected women leadership effectiveness and experiences at Media General

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What leadership roles or positions do women occupy at Media General?

2. How have women's leadership roles impacted innovation and operations at Media General?
3. How has organisational culture affected women's leadership effectiveness and experiences at Media General?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on gender diversity in leadership, particularly in media organisations within the African context. By focusing on Media General in Ghana, the research fills a regional gap in existing scholarship that is often dominated by data from Western media firms. It provides empirical evidence on how female leadership influences policy, innovation, and internal culture in a large media organisation, offering contextual insights that can support comparative leadership studies in developing countries.

The findings of this study will be useful to media executives, human resource managers, and content strategists in understanding the transformative potential of women in leadership roles. It will offer actionable insights into how inclusive leadership enhances innovation, reshapes editorial direction, and fosters a more equitable organisational culture. This can inform future hiring practices, leadership training programs, and organisational restructuring initiatives within Media General and similar companies.

By highlighting the interaction between gender, policy, and organisational dynamics, the study will provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, regulatory agencies, and advocacy groups seeking to promote gender equity in the media sector. The results can support the development of internal governance frameworks, national media policies, and diversity benchmarks that not only increase women's representation but also amplify their impact in decision-making roles.

## **1.6 Scope of Study**

This study focuses on examining the impact of women in leadership positions at Media General, a leading media conglomerate in Ghana, with specific emphasis on three key areas: content policies, innovation, and organisational culture. Content policies refer to the formal guidelines and editorial frameworks that shape decisions on programming, news coverage, and representation in media output. Innovation is understood as the adoption of new ideas, technologies, and practices that enhance media production, distribution, and audience engagement. Organisational culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, and practices within Media General that influence workplace behaviour, leadership effectiveness, and decision-making

The scope is limited to female leaders in senior editorial, managerial, and executive roles within the organisation. The study will explore how these women influence content direction, drive innovative practices, and navigate or transform the existing organisational culture.

The study will specifically consider women in leadership roles across Media General's television stations, radio networks, and online/digital platforms, as these represent the core operations of the organisation. The study does not extend to lower-tier staff or other media houses, as its primary goal is to understand the high-level impact of female leadership within one institution.

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

This study is subject to several limitations. First, it focuses exclusively on Media General, limiting the generalisability of findings to other media organisations in Ghana or beyond. Second, access to internal organisational data and leadership decision-making processes may be restricted due to confidentiality concerns, which could affect the depth of analysis. Third, the study concentrates solely on women in formal leadership roles, potentially overlooking the

informal influence of other female staff members. Lastly, given the time-bound nature of the study, the dynamic and evolving nature of media content, innovation strategies, and organisational culture may not be fully captured.

### **1.8 Organisation of the Study**

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction, including the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope, significance, limitations, and definitions of key terms. Chapter two reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature on women in leadership, content policies, innovation, and organisational culture in media institutions. Chapter three outlines the research methodology, detailing the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. Chapter four presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected, addressing each research question. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the findings, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews relevant literature and theories underpinning the study on women in leadership and their influence on content policies, innovation, and organisational culture at Media General. It critically engages with global, regional, and Ghanaian studies on women's representation in leadership, their contributions to organisational change, and the barriers they face in male-dominated industries such as media. The review highlights how leadership shapes organisational practices, content inclusivity, and innovation, while also drawing attention to gaps in existing research, particularly in the African media context. To provide a strong conceptual grounding, the chapter adopts the Transformational Leadership Theory, which explains how leaders inspire innovation, inclusivity, and organisational change (Burns, 1978; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Together, the review of literature and the theoretical framework establish the foundation for understanding the complexities of women's leadership at Media General and justify the study's focus.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopts the Transformational Leadership Theory as its guiding framework. Proposed by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1990), the theory posits that transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers to exceed expectations by fostering a shared vision, encouraging innovation, and developing individual potential.

##### **2.1.1 Transformational Leadership Theory**

Transformational Leadership Theory, first introduced by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1990), represents one of the most influential leadership paradigms in contemporary organisational research. Burns conceptualised transformational leadership as a process in

which leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of raising one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Bass (1990) further developed this concept into four dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Together, these components describe leaders who are visionary, ethical, innovative, and supportive, making the theory particularly relevant for organisations undergoing cultural transformation or seeking innovation. In the context of Media General, women in leadership can be examined through this framework to determine how they influence media content, stimulate organisational change, and shape inclusive workplace cultures.

The first dimension, idealised influence, refers to leaders acting as role models who are admired, respected, and trusted by their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Such leaders demonstrate high ethical standards and a strong sense of purpose, inspiring employees to emulate their values. In media organisations, where public trust and credibility are central to operations, leaders who embody idealised influence can significantly impact editorial integrity and policy decisions. Women leaders at Media General, by serving as ethical role models, have the potential to shape content policies that prioritise fairness, inclusivity, and representation. This aligns with research by Klettner et al. (2016), which found that leaders committed to ethical responsibility can drive institutional reforms that advance diversity and equity across industries.

The second dimension, inspirational motivation, highlights leaders' ability to articulate a compelling vision that motivates followers to exceed expectations (Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders inspire through communication, enthusiasm, and a clear sense of purpose. Within Media General, women leaders who embody inspirational motivation may influence content policies by promoting visions of inclusive storytelling and innovative programming. Cropley and Cropley (2017) argue that visionary leadership fosters creativity and organisational innovation, a finding directly applicable to media houses where innovation

in content and digital strategies is necessary to maintain relevance in competitive markets. Thus, women leaders at MG may leverage inspirational motivation to align employees with a collective mission of socially responsible journalism and cutting-edge broadcasting.

The third dimension, intellectual stimulation, is critical for encouraging followers to challenge traditional assumptions, think independently, and generate creative solutions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This aspect of transformational leadership is particularly relevant in media organisations, where technological advancements and audience preferences constantly reshape content production. Women leaders who foster intellectual stimulation at Media General may encourage teams to adopt new digital tools, experiment with multimedia formats, and challenge gender stereotypes in news coverage. Research by Müller, Obwegeser, and Glud (2019) confirms that leadership styles promoting experimentation and learning directly enhance innovation capacity in media companies, suggesting that women leaders can play a key role in driving Media General's digital transformation.

The fourth dimension, individualised consideration, refers to leaders' attention to the unique needs and aspirations of their followers, often expressed through mentorship, coaching, and empathy (Bass, 1990). In male-dominated industries such as media, women leaders who demonstrate individualised consideration can create empowering environments that nurture diverse talent. Onalaja and Otokiti (2022) found that women in leadership positions often employ collaborative and supportive leadership styles, which foster employee loyalty and engagement. At Media General, such leadership may not only enhance staff morale but also contribute to cultural shifts that value inclusivity, creativity, and representation in organisational decision-making.

Transformational leadership is highly relevant to the analysis of content policies within Media General. Content policies are essential for ensuring fairness, balance, and inclusivity in media programming. Leaders with transformational qualities can shape these policies by embedding

values of diversity and equality in editorial guidelines. For instance, Dodd (2012) notes that women leaders in creative industries often disrupt stereotypical portrayals and encourage more balanced representation in content. At Media General, female leaders may be influencing content frameworks to ensure equitable coverage of women, marginalised groups, and social issues, thereby advancing the organisation's role as a socially responsible media house.

The theory is equally relevant in examining the impact of women leaders on innovation at Media General. Transformational leadership has been linked to higher innovation outcomes due to its emphasis on intellectual stimulation and vision-driven practices (Cropley & Cropley, 2017). Women leaders may drive innovation by encouraging digital adoption, experimenting with new broadcast formats, and fostering creative newsroom cultures. As media audiences shift toward online platforms, transformational leadership among women at MG becomes critical in guiding the organisation toward sustainable innovation. This connection reflects Bass and Riggio's (2006) assertion that transformational leadership is particularly effective in environments undergoing rapid change.

Another area where transformational leadership is highly applicable is organisational culture. Organisational culture often determines whether leadership efforts are accepted or resisted. Transformational leaders are known for reshaping cultures by aligning organisational values with inclusive visions (Schein, 2010). Women leaders at Media General, through transformational practices, may gradually alter traditional male-dominated organisational cultures by promoting collaboration, transparency, and diversity. Campuzano (2019) stresses that female leaders often confront cultural barriers, but, when successful, they can redefine organisational norms in ways that support long-term gender equity and performance improvement.

Scholars argue that transformational leadership is particularly effective for gendered contexts because it emphasises relational and ethical leadership qualities often associated with women's

leadership styles (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Unlike transactional approaches that focus on control and rewards, transformational leadership allows women leaders to harness communication, empathy, and collaboration to achieve organisational goals. This approach makes it possible for women at Media General to influence not only policies and innovation but also the overall cultural environment, creating space for greater equity in leadership. As such, transformational leadership offers a framework to understand how women leaders succeed despite systemic gender biases.

In summary, Transformational Leadership Theory offers a comprehensive framework for analysing how women in leadership positions at Media General influence content policies, foster innovation, and reshape organisational culture. By focusing on the four dimensions, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, the theory provides insight into the mechanisms through which female leaders create organisational change. Its relevance lies in linking leadership behaviour with organisational outcomes, thereby helping to explain how women leaders at Media General act as agents of transformation in Ghana's media landscape. This theoretical lens will guide the study in examining both the opportunities and challenges women leaders face, while also providing practical implications for strengthening gender equity and innovation in the media sector.

## **2.2 Review of Related Literature**

The literature on women in leadership has consistently highlighted gender disparities in organisational hierarchies, particularly in industries traditionally dominated by men, such as media, technology, and politics. Globally, there is agreement that increasing the representation of women in leadership positions contributes to organisational inclusivity, innovation, and ethical governance (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Cropley & Cropley, 2017). However, the contexts within which these changes occur differ significantly. For instance, research in the United

States has shown that despite progress in formal equality policies, women still face structural and cultural obstacles that hinder their upward mobility in male-dominated organisations (Campuzano, 2019). Similarly, in African contexts such as Ghana, organisational cultures shaped by societal gender norms often restrict women from reaching executive positions. Theoretical insights, such as Transformational Leadership and Organisational Culture Theory, have been employed to examine how women leaders influence innovation and culture despite such obstacles. This study builds upon these discussions by contextualising them within Media General, a Ghanaian media conglomerate where female leadership is beginning to make visible impacts in shaping content, organisational transformation, and innovation.

A baseline study by Dodd (2012) conducted in the United Kingdom examined women leaders in the creative industries, including film, media, and advertising. The study used a qualitative interview-based approach to explore women's experiences in leadership roles and their influence on creative outputs. The objective was to establish whether women in leadership brought different perspectives to content creation and whether organisational cultures enabled or hindered their effectiveness. The findings revealed that women leaders often disrupted stereotypical narratives, promoted diversity in storytelling, and advocated for inclusive policies. However, their influence was frequently undermined by male-dominated decision-making structures. The study concluded that women have the potential to transform content policies, but success depends on organisational support and broader structural reforms. This research is relevant to Media General because it suggests that women leaders in Ghana may face similar systemic challenges while also acting as change agents in shaping inclusive content.

In the Nigerian context, Onalaja and Otokiti (2022) conducted a study on women's leadership in marketing and media. Using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews with women executives across Lagos-based media houses, the researchers examined the

barriers women face and their contributions to industry transformation. The primary objective was to identify strategies women employ to overcome leadership barriers and to assess their impact on organisational growth. The results indicated that women leaders used collaborative and empathetic leadership styles, which fostered staff engagement and innovation. However, systemic gender biases, lack of mentorship, and organisational politics limited their opportunities. The study concluded that policies aimed at gender equity need to be accompanied by cultural shifts in organisations. This conclusion directly relates to Media General's context, as Ghana shares similar socio-cultural barriers, yet women leaders could be leveraging relational leadership styles to impact content and innovation.

A Scandinavian study by Müller, Obwegeser, and Glud (2019) investigated digital innovation and organisational culture in a Danish media company. Employing a case study methodology with interviews and document analysis, the study aimed to understand how leadership influences digital innovation in media organisations. The findings highlighted that leaders who encouraged intellectual stimulation and cultural openness facilitated greater adoption of digital tools and new storytelling methods. Although the study was not specifically focused on gender, it provided valuable insights into how leadership styles can shape organisational innovation. The study concluded that innovation in media is inseparable from leadership and cultural support. Applying this to Media General, the implication is that women in leadership positions could significantly influence innovation strategies by fostering inclusive, collaborative, and experimental cultures.

Campuzano (2019) conducted a systematic review of women's leadership in male-dominated organisational cultures in the United States. The study synthesised findings from over 70 empirical works, aiming to identify the main factors hindering or promoting women's leadership effectiveness. The review found that women often faced implicit biases, stereotyping, and institutional barriers, which limited their ability to implement change.

However, in organisations where culture embraced inclusivity, women were able to leverage their leadership roles to influence innovation and reshape cultural dynamics. The general conclusion was that policy interventions alone are insufficient unless accompanied by cultural transformation. This is crucial for Media General, where formal opportunities may exist, but women's effectiveness will depend on cultural acceptance and alignment with inclusive practices.

In Australia, Klettner, Clarke, and Boersma (2016) analysed the impact of regulatory frameworks on increasing women in leadership. Using a policy analysis approach, the study focused on multilevel targets and mandatory quotas in corporate organisations. The objective was to determine whether structural interventions such as quotas contributed to cultural change in workplaces. The findings showed that while quotas increased women's representation in leadership positions, their impact on organisational culture varied. In some contexts, quotas triggered cultural resistance, while in others they opened space for women leaders to influence decision-making. The study concluded that quotas are effective but must be complemented by cultural initiatives that support women's long-term success. For Media General, this suggests that internal policies promoting women in leadership should be paired with deliberate cultural initiatives to ensure lasting impact.

Research conducted in Indonesia by Andayani (2022) examined women leaders' perceptions of newsroom diversity. Using a qualitative research design, the study conducted interviews with female editors and newsroom managers in Jakarta-based media houses. The objective was to explore how women leaders perceive diversity and implement changes in newsroom practices. The study revealed that women leaders frequently prioritised diversity in content and staffing, but their efforts were often constrained by entrenched editorial norms and institutional resistance. The conclusion was that women leaders play an essential role in newsroom innovation and inclusivity, but success is context-dependent. This has direct relevance for

Media General, where women leaders may face similar challenges but are crucial for shaping inclusive newsroom practices and policies.

In Ghana, although literature on women in leadership within media organisations is limited, studies in related sectors provide useful insights. For example, Dzradosi and Essah (2021) researched women's leadership in Ghanaian higher education institutions. The study used a survey-based methodology to examine the leadership experiences of female academic leaders. The objective was to identify cultural and institutional barriers to women's leadership. The findings showed that patriarchal norms, lack of mentorship, and work-life balance challenges were major hindrances. However, women leaders who received institutional support were able to enact significant reforms in academic culture. The study concluded that cultural support is key to leadership effectiveness. This parallels the situation at Media General, where organisational culture may be a decisive factor in determining the impact of women leaders.

Another Ghanaian study by Abakah and Adusah (2020) analysed women in leadership in public service organisations. Using a mixed-methods approach with surveys and focus group discussions, the study explored the role of women in decision-making processes. The objective was to examine whether women's leadership had measurable impacts on policy and organisational performance. The findings indicated that women leaders were more likely to promote inclusive policies and foster participatory decision-making processes. The study concluded that women leaders positively influence governance outcomes but continue to face gendered barriers. For Media General, this reinforces the idea that women leaders can positively impact policy formulation, including content policies, if supported by conducive organisational cultures.

Eagly and Carli (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of leadership effectiveness, comparing male and female leadership styles across multiple industries in North America and Europe. The objective was to test whether women leaders were less effective than men in achieving

organisational outcomes. Using a quantitative meta-analytic approach, the study aggregated findings from over 40 studies. The results showed that women leaders are equally, if not more, effective in relational and transformational leadership styles, which are strongly associated with innovation and cultural change. The study concluded that perceptions of women's leadership ineffectiveness are rooted in bias rather than evidence. This supports the notion that women leaders at Media General can significantly contribute to innovation and cultural transformation if given opportunities.

A study by O'Neil and Hopkins (2015) in the United States examined the experiences of women leaders in the media and communication industries. Using a qualitative approach, they conducted in-depth interviews with women executives. The objective was to explore how women navigated leadership roles and influenced content and innovation. The findings revealed that women often prioritised diversity in content, challenged stereotypes, and advocated for digital innovation. However, they faced resistance from male-dominated cultures that valued traditional leadership models. The study concluded that women leaders are agents of innovation but require supportive cultures to succeed. This directly informs the study of Media General, where organisational culture may act as both a barrier and an enabler of women's leadership.

In Kenya, Mungai and Oduor (2020) studied women in leadership within the broadcast media sector. The study employed a survey and interview methodology to collect data from female journalists and managers in Nairobi. The objective was to understand how women leaders influence newsroom practices and organisational policies. The results showed that women leaders were instrumental in advocating for gender-sensitive reporting and in mentoring young female journalists. However, they faced challenges such as gender bias and limited promotion opportunities. The study concluded that while women leaders have positive impacts on content and organisational culture, systemic barriers remain significant. For Media General, this

highlights the importance of addressing systemic challenges to maximise women leaders' contributions.

In Canada, Burke and Mattis (2007) conducted a study on women in senior management roles across multiple industries, including media. The study used survey questionnaires to assess the leadership styles and organisational impacts of women executives. The objective was to evaluate whether women leaders influenced organisational performance and culture differently from men. The findings indicated that women leaders were more likely to implement participatory decision-making structures, emphasise employee well-being, and encourage innovation. The study concluded that women's leadership contributes positively to organisational outcomes but often goes unrecognised due to bias. This finding underscores the importance of highlighting women's contributions at Media General as part of the study's objective.

Globally, UNESCO (2019) has documented persistent gender gaps in media leadership. Their report, based on a cross-national comparative study using surveys and policy analysis, examined women's representation in media leadership across over 50 countries. The objective was to evaluate how media organisations were addressing gender disparities. The findings revealed that while some progress had been made, women remained underrepresented in top media leadership positions worldwide. The report concluded that women leaders are essential for promoting inclusive media content and organisational innovation, but systemic barriers such as cultural biases and a lack of mentorship persist. For Media General, this global evidence situates the study within broader international debates on gender, media, and leadership.

Taken together, the reviewed literature shows that women in leadership across diverse contexts contribute significantly to content policies, innovation, and organisational culture, yet their effectiveness is mediated by structural and cultural contexts. Studies from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Africa, and Asia consistently show that women leaders are agents of

inclusivity and innovation, often employing transformational leadership styles to influence organisations. However, systemic barriers such as gender bias, cultural resistance, and lack of institutional support hinder their impact (Campuzano, 2019; Onalaja & Otokiti, 2022; Müller et al., 2019). The general conclusion across contexts is that women leaders positively influence media and organisational practices, but long-term success requires supportive organisational cultures. This gap is particularly relevant to Media General, where empirical studies on women's leadership remain limited, thereby justifying the present study's focus on Ghana's media landscape.

## **2.3 Review of Related Concepts and Issues**

### **2.3.1 Women in Leadership**

Women in leadership has been a central theme in management and organisational research for decades, with scholars consistently documenting the challenges and opportunities associated with female representation in leadership roles. Globally, the proportion of women in senior decision-making positions has increased, yet progress remains uneven across industries and regions. Eagly and Carli (2003), in their analysis of leadership effectiveness, argue that women often excel in transformational leadership styles, which emphasise collaboration, empathy, and inclusivity, qualities increasingly valued in contemporary organisations. However, they also note that societal stereotypes and gendered expectations continue to act as barriers to women's full participation in leadership. This pattern has been observed in media industries as well, where leadership positions remain heavily skewed toward men, despite evidence that women leaders contribute positively to organisational outcomes and ethical governance. Understanding this dynamic is critical in the Ghanaian media landscape, where cultural norms often intersect with institutional practices to shape leadership pathways.

Empirical studies have shown that women leaders bring unique perspectives to organisational decision-making, particularly in industries such as media where content influences public

discourse. Dodd (2012), in her baseline study of women in the UK creative industries, demonstrated that female leaders often disrupt stereotypical portrayals and champion narratives that reflect broader social diversity. This suggests that women in leadership have the potential to reshape not only organisational practices but also societal perceptions through media content. However, Dodd's study also highlighted persistent barriers such as exclusion from senior decision-making forums and a lack of mentorship opportunities. Similarly, Onalaja and Otokiti (2022), in a mixed-methods study of women leaders in Nigerian media organisations, found that while women leaders contributed significantly to innovation and inclusivity, systemic gender bias and cultural constraints limited their influence. These findings highlight the double-edged nature of women's leadership, transformative yet constrained, which directly informs the case of Media General in Ghana.

One important contribution of women in leadership is their impact on workplace culture and inclusivity. Research suggests that women leaders often foster collaborative environments, mentor emerging talent, and challenge hierarchical structures that exclude minority voices (Burke & Mattis, 2007). For instance, in Canada, women executives surveyed across multiple industries were found to be more likely than men to adopt participatory decision-making and inclusive policies (Burke & Mattis, 2007). This suggests that women leaders not only influence organisational outputs but also reshape internal dynamics. For Media General, where newsroom practices and content production are team-driven, women leaders could be central to building collaborative work cultures that prioritise innovation and inclusivity. However, the persistence of patriarchal organisational norms in Ghanaian institutions raises questions about the extent to which women leaders can fully exercise this influence without structural reforms to support gender inclusivity.

The challenges women face in leadership roles often stem from deeply ingrained cultural and institutional barriers. Campuzano (2019), in her systematic review of women's leadership in

male-dominated organisations in the United States, identified barriers such as implicit biases, gender stereotyping, and limited access to mentorship. These barriers resonate with findings from African contexts, where cultural expectations around gender roles often determine women's opportunities for advancement. In Ghana, Dzradosi and Essah (2021) reported that female academic leaders often faced resistance from male colleagues and institutional structures, which limited their capacity to influence policy and culture. Such findings are relevant to Media General, where women leaders may similarly face cultural resistance despite occupying senior positions. Addressing these barriers is essential for realising the full potential of women's leadership in shaping content, innovation, and organisational culture.

The literature demonstrates that women in leadership are both critical change agents and subjects of systemic challenges. Their leadership styles often align with transformational leadership principles, making them effective in fostering inclusivity, innovation, and ethical governance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2003). However, their effectiveness is mediated by organisational cultures and societal norms that may resist change. Studies across diverse contexts, from the UK to Nigeria, Canada, and Ghana, show consistent patterns: women leaders influence policy, innovation, and culture, but their impact is either amplified or constrained by the institutional environment. This gap highlights the importance of studying women in leadership within Media General, where female leaders are poised to influence media content and organisational transformation, yet their effectiveness depends on overcoming entrenched cultural and structural barriers.

### **2.3.2 Organisational Leadership**

Organisational leadership refers to the processes through which individuals guide, influence, and direct collective organisational behaviour toward achieving strategic goals. Scholars such as Northouse (2018) define it as the exercise of influence that aligns organisational systems, values, and resources with desired outcomes. Different leadership styles, transactional,

transformational, servant, and laissez-faire, have been studied in organisational contexts, with transformational leadership emerging as particularly effective in dynamic and innovation-driven environments (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In the media industry, organisational leadership plays a critical role in shaping editorial directions, innovation capacity, and organisational culture. For Media General, leadership is particularly important because media organisations serve as both businesses and societal institutions, where leadership decisions directly affect public discourse, representation, and democracy.

Several studies have highlighted the relationship between leadership and organisational performance. For instance, O’Neil and Hopkins (2015) conducted a qualitative study in the United States media sector, interviewing female and male executives to assess how leadership approaches influenced organisational practices. Their findings indicated that leaders who adopted inclusive and participatory approaches were more likely to foster innovation and adapt to market shifts. Similarly, Cropley and Cropley (2017) argued that innovation capacity is directly tied to leadership approaches, with leaders who encourage creativity and risk-taking significantly enhancing organisational competitiveness. These insights are particularly relevant to Media General, where leadership must balance commercial viability with social responsibility, and where women in leadership roles may bring transformational perspectives that foster inclusivity and innovation.

Organisational leadership also has a profound impact on organisational culture. Schein (2010) argues that leaders shape culture by embedding their values into organisational practices, structures, and decision-making processes. In media organisations, culture often manifests in newsroom practices, editorial priorities, and the inclusivity of content. Müller, Obwegeser, and Glud (2019), in their case study of a Danish media company, demonstrated that leadership committed to experimentation and openness fostered a culture of digital innovation. These findings suggest that at Media General, leadership, particularly by women, may be instrumental

in shifting organisational culture from traditional, hierarchical practices to more inclusive, innovative ones. Such shifts are critical for sustaining relevance in the digital media environment.

In African contexts, organisational leadership studies have emphasised the role of culture and societal expectations. Abakah and Adusah (2020), studying women leaders in Ghanaian public service organisations, found that leadership effectiveness was constrained by patriarchal norms and institutional biases. Leaders who attempted to promote inclusive practices often encountered resistance from both colleagues and subordinates. However, the study also found that women leaders were more likely to emphasise collaboration and participatory governance, which improved organisational outcomes when supported by institutional policies. This suggests that leadership in Ghanaian contexts, including at Media General, must be analysed not only in terms of leadership styles but also in relation to broader cultural contexts that may enable or constrain leadership practices.

Overall, organisational leadership literature shows that leadership is both a driver of change and a reflection of organisational culture. Transformational and inclusive leadership styles are associated with positive organisational outcomes, including innovation, staff engagement, and cultural transformation (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2018). However, the effectiveness of leadership is mediated by institutional structures and cultural contexts. For Media General, the presence of women in leadership roles provides an opportunity to examine how leadership styles intersect with organisational culture and innovation capacity in the Ghanaian media sector. This situates the study within broader debates about leadership effectiveness in African contexts and its implications for media governance and societal representation.

### **2.3.3 Innovation.**

Innovation, broadly defined as the introduction of new ideas, processes, or technologies that enhance organisational outcomes, is a central theme in contemporary organisational research.

In the media industry, innovation is particularly critical due to the rapid pace of technological change and shifting audience demands. Cropley and Cropley (2017) define innovation capacity as an organisation's ability to generate and implement novel ideas that improve products, services, or processes. Their study of European organisations revealed that leadership styles and organisational culture strongly influenced innovation outcomes. For Media General, innovation is vital in areas such as digital broadcasting, online content creation, and audience engagement. Women leaders may play a pivotal role in promoting innovative practices by encouraging experimentation and inclusivity in content development and organisational processes.

Empirical evidence supports the link between leadership diversity and innovation. A study by Díaz-García, González-Moreno, and Sáez-Martínez (2013) in Spain used a quantitative survey of 4,000 small and medium enterprises to examine the relationship between gender diversity in leadership and innovation performance. The findings indicated that gender-diverse leadership teams were more likely to adopt innovative practices and develop new products. The study concluded that women leaders contribute unique perspectives that enhance creativity and problem-solving within organisations. This finding has direct implications for Media General, where women leaders may bring new perspectives to content development and digital strategies, thereby enhancing the company's competitiveness in Ghana's media sector.

Innovation in media organisations also depends on organisational culture. Müller, Obwegeser, and Glud (2019) demonstrated through their case study of a Danish media company that leadership which fosters openness and experimentation creates environments where innovation thrives. Their study employed qualitative methods, including interviews and document analysis, to examine leadership's role in digital innovation. They concluded that leaders who encourage staff to take risks and challenge traditional norms foster more innovative outputs. This aligns with findings by Cropley and Cropley (2017), who argue that intellectual

stimulation, a dimension of transformational leadership, is a critical driver of innovation. For Media General, this suggests that women leaders who promote collaborative and creative environments can significantly enhance innovation outcomes in content and organisational practices.

In African contexts, innovation studies often highlight the intersection of resource constraints and cultural dynamics. For example, Mungai and Oduor (2020), studying Kenyan broadcast media, used a mixed-methods approach combining surveys and interviews to assess how women leaders influenced newsroom innovation. They found that women leaders often championed gender-sensitive reporting and experimented with new media formats, despite facing resistance from traditional newsroom cultures. The study concluded that innovation in African media organisations is often driven by leaders who are willing to challenge cultural norms and resource limitations. For Media General, where women leaders may face similar challenges, the ability to foster innovation depends not only on leadership style but also on navigating Ghana's socio-cultural media landscape.

Overall, literature on innovation underscores the critical role of leadership, diversity, and culture in fostering new ideas and practices. Gender diversity in leadership enhances creativity and problem-solving (Díaz-García et al., 2013), while transformational leadership styles that encourage intellectual stimulation and collaboration foster innovation (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Cropley & Cropley, 2017). In media organisations, innovation is not only a business imperative but also a societal responsibility, as it shapes how content is produced and consumed. For Media General, examining how women in leadership influence innovation offers valuable insights into the organisation's ability to remain competitive, relevant, and socially responsible in Ghana's rapidly evolving media environment.

#### **2.3.4 Media Content**

Media content plays a central role in shaping public opinion, cultural norms, and democratic

processes. Content is not only a product of organisational strategies but also a reflection of leadership values and societal contexts. Scholars such as McQuail (2010) argue that media content serves as both a mirror and a moulder of society, influencing how individuals perceive issues such as gender, politics, and culture. In organisations like Media General, content decisions are directly shaped by leadership priorities and policies, making the study of women's leadership particularly relevant. Women leaders may influence content to promote inclusivity, challenge stereotypes, and address underrepresented issues. This aligns with Dodd (2012), who found that women leaders in the UK creative industries often disrupted stereotypical portrayals in media content, promoting more balanced and diverse narratives.

The influence of leadership on content has been examined in several contexts. O'Neil and Hopkins (2015), in their study of the U.S. media industry, interviewed female executives to assess how they influenced content decisions. They found that women leaders often prioritised diversity in content, ensuring representation of minority groups and gender-sensitive reporting. The study concluded that women leaders' presence in media organisations was associated with more inclusive and socially responsible content. Similarly, Andayani (2022), in her qualitative study of Indonesian media leaders, reported that women leaders implemented newsroom changes that prioritised inclusivity and innovation in reporting. These findings suggest that women in leadership roles significantly shape the narratives produced by media organisations. In Africa, the relationship between leadership and media content has been explored in several studies. Mungai and Oduor (2020) found that women leaders in Kenyan broadcast media played critical roles in shaping gender-sensitive reporting and content diversity. Their mixed-methods study revealed that women leaders often challenged patriarchal newsroom practices and advocated for inclusive editorial decisions. However, they also noted that systemic barriers limited the extent of women leaders' influence. In Ghana, empirical studies on women leaders' influence on media content remain limited, though related research in other sectors indicates

that women leaders often promote inclusivity and ethical practices (Abakah & Adusah, 2020). This highlights the need for targeted studies on organisations like Media General.

Media content is also influenced by organisational culture and editorial policies. Schein (2010) argues that organisational culture shapes decision-making processes, including content priorities. In media organisations, content often reflects the dominant values of leadership and organisational culture. Studies such as UNESCO's (2019) global report on gender equality in media leadership show that organisations with higher female leadership representation tend to produce more gender-sensitive and diverse content. This suggests that increasing women's leadership at Media General could directly impact the inclusivity and diversity of its media content, aligning with global best practices for socially responsible media.

In summary, literature indicates that media content is deeply intertwined with leadership dynamics, organisational culture, and policy frameworks. Women leaders, in particular, have been shown to influence content toward inclusivity, diversity, and innovation (Dodd, 2012; O'Neil & Hopkins, 2015; Andayani, 2022). However, the extent of their influence is shaped by cultural and institutional contexts. In Ghana, where patriarchal norms remain strong, women leaders at Media General may face challenges in shaping content policies. Nonetheless, their presence provides opportunities for more inclusive and socially responsible content, making the study of their impact on media content highly significant.

### **2.3.5 Content Policies and Leadership Influence**

Content policies are formal guidelines that determine the nature, scope, and boundaries of media content. They are crucial for ensuring ethical standards, diversity, and inclusivity in programming and reporting. Leadership plays a critical role in formulating and implementing these policies, as leaders set the tone for what is acceptable and prioritised in media outputs (McQuail, 2010). Klettner, Clarke, and Boersma (2016) emphasise that policies designed to increase diversity and inclusivity often originate from leadership initiatives, but their

effectiveness depends on cultural alignment. In media organisations such as Media General, women in leadership may shape content policies to ensure gender-sensitive reporting and balanced representation, thereby aligning organisational practices with broader societal goals. Empirical research supports the link between leadership and content policy. Dodd (2012) showed that women leaders in UK creative industries influenced content policies to disrupt stereotypes and promote diversity. Similarly, Onalaja and Otokiti (2022), studying Nigerian media organisations, found that women leaders advocated for inclusive content policies but were often constrained by institutional politics. Their mixed-methods study concluded that while women leaders can shape policies, long-term change requires cultural support and institutional buy-in. For Media General, this suggests that women leaders may influence content policies, but their effectiveness will depend on how well organisational culture supports these initiatives.

In Indonesia, Andayani (2022) found that women leaders influenced newsroom policies to prioritise diversity and innovation. Using qualitative interviews with female newsroom leaders, the study revealed that women advocated for policies promoting fair representation and gender-sensitive reporting. However, resistance from traditional newsroom structures limited the scope of their influence. This reflects findings by Campuzano (2019), who noted that male-dominated organisational cultures often undermine policy reforms initiated by women leaders. These studies highlight the interplay between leadership influence and cultural acceptance, which is directly relevant to Media General's Ghanaian context.

Global reports also highlight the importance of leadership in shaping content policies. UNESCO (2019), in its comparative study of over 50 countries, found that organisations with higher female representation in leadership positions were more likely to adopt policies promoting gender equality and content diversity. However, the report also noted that policy adoption does not guarantee implementation unless supported by cultural change. This

underscores the dual role of leadership in both policy-making and cultural transformation. For Media General, the implication is that women leaders must not only shape content policies but also work to align organisational culture with these policies for them to be effective.

Content policies are powerful tools for ensuring inclusivity and ethical standards in media, but their effectiveness depends heavily on leadership influence and organisational culture. Women leaders have been shown to advocate for policies that prioritise diversity and inclusivity (Dodd, 2012; Andayani, 2022; Onalaja & Otokiti, 2022). However, systemic barriers such as institutional politics and cultural resistance often limit their success. For Media General, the study of women leaders' influence on content policies offers insights into how leadership can shape media outputs and contribute to broader social transformation in Ghana's media landscape.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter situated the study within the broader scholarly discourse on women in leadership, media innovation, and organisational culture. The literature review demonstrated that while women leaders positively influence inclusivity, content policies, and innovation globally, cultural and institutional barriers often constrain their effectiveness, particularly in African contexts. It also identified a gap in research specific to Ghana's media sector, underscoring the relevance of studying Media General. The theoretical framework drew on Transformational Leadership Theory to explain how women leaders inspire change and foster innovation. By integrating insights from prior studies with these theoretical lenses, the chapter provided a coherent foundation for analysing women's leadership at Media General and sets the stage for the research methodology and empirical analysis that follow.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed to investigate the impact of women in leadership at Media General on content policies, innovation, and organisational culture. It begins by establishing the interpretivist philosophical stance underpinning the study, which recognises that leadership and organisational culture are socially constructed and best understood through the lived experiences of individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The chapter then justifies the use of a qualitative research approach and a case study design, focusing on Media General as a complex organisation operating across television, radio, and digital platforms. The study population includes women in leadership positions at Media General and staff who interact with them. Purposive sampling is explained as the technique for selecting participants and content most relevant to the research objectives. The chapter further details the use of semi-structured interviews as the main data collection method and thematic analysis, and the method of data analysis. Finally, it highlights the ethical considerations guiding the study, ensuring confidentiality, informed consent, and cultural sensitivity throughout the research process.

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

The philosophical foundation of this study is interpretivism, which emphasises the exploration of social phenomena through the meanings individuals attach to their lived experiences. Unlike positivist philosophies, which seek objectivity and universal laws, interpretivism acknowledges the complexity of human behaviour and focuses on understanding subjective realities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This philosophy is highly relevant for the study because it examines how women in leadership at Media General perceive their roles and influence, how

their subordinates interpret their leadership practices, and how these influences materialise in organisational outcomes such as content, innovation, and culture. Interpretivism assumes that reality is socially constructed, and therefore, leadership and organisational culture cannot be separated from the social and cultural contexts in which they occur (Saunders et al., 2019). For Media General, a Ghanaian media conglomerate with television, radio, and digital divisions, interpretivism allows the researcher to capture nuanced insights into how gender norms and workplace dynamics shape leadership practices and influence organisational transformation.

This philosophy is justified because the study seeks to explore meaning rather than to measure or quantify relationships. The interpretivist stance enables a nuanced and context-specific understanding of women's leadership within Media General's socio-cultural environment. It provides the flexibility to engage with participants' narratives, explore leadership experiences, and interpret how these experiences manifest in policies, practices, and media outputs. Similar studies, such as Dodd (2012) in the UK and Andayani (2022) in Indonesia, adopted interpretivism to explore women's leadership experiences in creative industries, demonstrating its effectiveness in revealing complex relationships between gender, culture, and leadership. Hence, interpretivism provides the most suitable philosophical foundation for this qualitative case study.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which focuses on understanding people's lived experiences, meanings, and perspectives within their natural settings. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for this study because the objective is to explore how women leaders at Media General shape content policies, foster innovation, and influence organisational culture. Rather than testing hypotheses or measuring variables, the study seeks to understand the depth and richness of participants' experiences and how they interpret their leadership roles in context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative inquiry is well suited for examining

complex organisational and cultural dynamics where personal perceptions and social interactions are central to understanding phenomena.

While the study employs a case study design, it is important to note that case studies are methodologically neutral, they may be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed depending on research objectives (Yin, 2018). In this research, the case study is implemented qualitatively, enabling in-depth exploration through semi-structured interviews with women leaders and selected employees. The qualitative approach allows for a holistic understanding by drawing on multiple sources of data, including interviews and organisational documents, to construct a layered understanding of women's leadership influence (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Previous studies, such as Campuzano (2019) and Mungai and Oduor (2020), have demonstrated that qualitative case study designs are highly effective in uncovering subtle organisational and gendered leadership dynamics. Thus, this approach provides the most appropriate framework for meeting the study's objectives.

### **3.3 Research Design**

This study adopts a case study design, focusing on Media General as the unit of analysis. Yin (2018) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that explores a phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. Media General, as one of Ghana's largest media conglomerates with television, radio, and online operations, provides a unique and multifaceted case for exploring women's leadership influence. The design facilitates the integration of multiple sources of data, interviews with women leaders, and organisational documents, providing a holistic picture of leadership, innovation, and culture within the organisation.

The case study design is justified because it allows for a deep, contextualised understanding of how and why women leaders influence organisational dynamics at Media General. This is

consistent with the aims of the research, which seeks to explain how leadership practices shape innovation and culture in a specific media environment. Previous case studies, such as Dodd (2012) and Andayani (2022), have successfully examined women's leadership in media and creative industries using similar approaches, showing that case study designs are ideal for exploring organisational phenomena embedded in cultural contexts.

### **3.4 Population**

The population of this study comprises women in leadership positions at Media General, the staff members who interact with them, and the media content developed or managed under their leadership. Specifically, the study will involve female executives, departmental heads, editors, and producers across Media General's television, radio, and digital platforms. To complement these insights, selected employees from different departments will also be interviewed to provide contextual perspectives on organisational culture and women's leadership effectiveness.

This population is justified because leadership influence extends beyond formal authority to include the organisational environment and the artefacts that reflect leadership decisions. As Schein (2010) notes, organisational culture is a collective construct shaped by both leaders and employees. Similarly, McQuail (2010) argues that content in media institutions reflects broader organisational and cultural influences. Including both individuals and outputs in the study ensures a holistic understanding of women's leadership within Media General's ecosystem.

### **3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The study will employ purposive sampling, a non-probability technique used to select participants who possess specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research (Palinkas et al., 2015). Approximately 10 women leaders from Media General's key divisions (television, radio, and digital) will be purposively selected, including executives, editors, and senior

producers. To provide additional perspectives, 5 staff members who work directly under or alongside these women will also be included.

Purposive sampling is justified because the aim of qualitative research is depth rather than representativeness. This technique allows the researcher to select participants most knowledgeable about leadership experiences and their influence on organisational culture and innovation. Similar sampling strategies were used by Dodd (2012) and Andayani (2022) in media leadership studies, where participants were chosen based on their expertise and positional relevance.

### **3.6 Sources of Data**

This study will rely on two key sources of data: primary data obtained through semi-structured interviews and secondary data drawn from scholarly literature and existing documents. The primary data will be collected directly from women in leadership positions at Media General and selected employees who interact with them. The interviews will serve as the main means of gathering in-depth insights into participants' lived experiences, leadership practices, and perceptions of how women influence innovation, content policies, and organisational culture. The use of semi-structured interviews allows participants to express their views freely while ensuring that discussions remain focused on the research objectives. This aligns with Kvale and Brinkmann's (2015) assertion that interviews are the most effective method for accessing subjective meanings and experiences in interpretivist qualitative research.

The secondary data will consist of information obtained from scholarly literature, books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and institutional reports that provide theoretical, conceptual, and empirical context for the study. Reviewing existing academic works helps to situate the findings within broader discussions on women's leadership, innovation, and organisational culture (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The secondary data will also include reports from

recognised institutions such as UNESCO and academic publications on gender and media leadership. These materials will serve to support, compare, and validate the interpretations drawn from the primary interview data. The combination of primary and secondary data enhances the credibility and depth of the study by ensuring that participants' lived experiences are interpreted in relation to existing theoretical and empirical knowledge (Flick, 2018).

### **3.7 Data Collection Method**

A semi-structured interview is the primary data collection method. This format allows the researcher to ask guided yet open-ended questions that encourage participants to share detailed experiences, reflections, and perceptions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interviews will be conducted with women leaders to explore their leadership roles, decision-making processes, challenges, and influence on innovation, content, and culture. Selected staff members will also be interviewed to understand how they perceive and experience women's leadership at Media General. Each interview will last approximately 30 minutes and will be audio-recorded with participants' consent.

This method is justified because it allows for flexibility, enabling participants to discuss experiences in their own words while ensuring consistency across key themes. Semi-structured interviews have been widely used in leadership and gender studies, including Onalaja and Otokiti (2022), who examined women's leadership in Nigerian media, and Andayani (2022), who used similar methods in Indonesian newsrooms.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection will take place in three stages. First, ethical clearance will be obtained from the researcher's institution, and permission will be sought from Media General's management. Participants will be contacted via email or phone, provided with an information sheet, and asked to sign consent forms. Second, interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or

virtually, depending on participants' availability. Interviews will be conducted in English, recorded (with permission), and later transcribed verbatim.

This phased approach ensures systematic, ethical, and reliable data collection. Flick (2018) emphasises that multiple stages of qualitative data collection strengthen triangulation and trustworthiness. Following established procedures enhances credibility and aligns with best practices in qualitative case studies.

### **3.9 Data Analysis Method**

Data will be analysed using thematic analysis, a method that identifies, organises, and interprets patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interview transcripts will be read multiple times, coded, and categorised into themes aligned with the research objectives, such as leadership roles, innovation practices, and organisational culture. Manual coding techniques will be used to manage data efficiently.

Thematic analysis is justified because it is flexible and allows the researcher to derive meaning directly from participants' narratives while maintaining analytical rigour. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is particularly suitable for interpretivist research as it connects participants' experiences with broader organisational contexts.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical integrity is central to this research, given its focus on human participants and organisational settings. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants after they are briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and voluntary nature. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained by assigning pseudonyms and omitting identifying details from transcripts and reports. Data will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

Ethical clearance will be obtained from the researcher's academic institution before fieldwork begins, in compliance with international research ethics guidelines. The ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, as outlined in the Belmont Report (National Commission, 1979), will guide the study. Special care will be taken to handle gender-related topics sensitively, particularly in relation to organisational culture and workplace dynamics.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the research methodology guiding the study, demonstrating how the interpretivist philosophy, qualitative approach, and case study design provide a robust framework for exploring women's leadership at Media General. It outlined the population of interest, comprising women leaders, staff, and media outputs, and justified the use of purposive sampling to ensure the selection of relevant participants and artefacts. The multiple sources of data, interviews and surveys, were shown to enable triangulation, enhancing the credibility and validity of findings (Flick, 2018). The chapter also explained how thematic analysis and descriptive statistics will be employed to interpret data, capturing both depth and breadth of insights into leadership influence. Ethical principles, grounded in international guidelines such as the Belmont Report (National Commission, 1979), were emphasised as critical to protecting participants and maintaining the integrity of the study. Together, the methodological choices establish a coherent and rigorous foundation for achieving the study's objectives and generating meaningful insights into women's leadership, content policies, innovation, and organisational culture in Ghana's media sector.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents, analyses, and interprets the data gathered through in-depth interviews with women leaders and employees who work closely with them at Media General. The analysis was guided by the study's three main research questions, which sought to explore the leadership roles occupied by women, the impact of their leadership on innovation and operations, and how organisational culture influences their leadership effectiveness and experiences. Using a thematic analysis approach, the chapter identifies and discusses eight major themes that emerged from the data, each supported by detailed excerpts from participant interviews and relevant scholarly literature. The analysis also integrates insights from Transformational Leadership Theory to contextualise the findings within established academic frameworks. Through this process, the chapter not only presents the voices and lived experiences of participants but also illustrates how women's leadership continues to redefine power, innovation, and culture within the Ghanaian media landscape.

#### **4.1 Research Question One: What leadership roles or positions do women occupy at Media General?**

This research question sought to identify and examine the various leadership roles and positions occupied by women within Media General's organisational structure, including its television, radio, and digital divisions. The purpose was to understand how women's presence in leadership contributes to the overall governance, strategy, and creative direction of the organisation. By mapping these roles, the study aimed to reveal the extent of gender representation and assess whether women's leadership has transcended tokenism to become an integral aspect of Media General's management framework. The question also explored how

women leaders' responsibilities compare to those of their male counterparts, thereby uncovering patterns of inclusion, influence, and authority. Grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory, this question examined how women in key roles exemplify attributes such as vision, mentorship, and empathy, while also shedding light on the broader institutional commitment to gender equity in leadership.

#### **4.1.1 Pathways to Leadership, Progression, Mentorship, and Opportunity**

The pathway to leadership at Media General for women appears to be a complex interplay between individual competence, organisational recognition, and mentoring support. Participants described leadership progression not as a structured process but rather as an organic evolution driven by opportunity and performance. As one participant articulated, *"I think Media General is a place where they encourage you to find your leadership potential. I started off helping 3FM with events... and a year later, I was given the promotion of managing three groups, and it's been up ever since."* This organic system of recognition aligns with transformational leadership theory, which emphasises the leader's role in identifying and nurturing potential within individuals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The narrative suggests that women's leadership trajectories within Media General are less about formal application and more about talent visibility and informal mentoring, where supervisors and executives play catalytic roles in identifying and promoting female leaders.

The data further reveals that mentorship and sponsorship from existing leaders, both male and female, are pivotal in women's ascension to leadership. Participant 1 credited her rise to senior mentors, stating that *"people like Apefa, Lloyds, or Aunty Bea are in your corner and encouraging you... knowing that your leaders were invested in your growth and were willing to help you succeed."* Such organisational culture echoes Kram's (1985) model of mentoring, which underscores psychosocial support and career facilitation as crucial mechanisms for leadership development. Similarly, Eagly and Carli (2007) argue that women's progression is

often dependent on relational networks that compensate for structural inequalities within organisations. In the Media General context, this mentoring culture appears to substitute for systemic promotion frameworks, demonstrating a relational and collaborative pathway to leadership that reflects the transformational leadership principle of individualised consideration (Bass, 1999).

Another important dimension of women's leadership progression at Media General is the intersection of competence and trust. The testimonies suggest that promotions are not merely symbolic but meritocratic, grounded in proven capability. Participant 2 described that *"my efforts were being seen, my works were being noticed... other males could have taken up the role, but then based on what I proved with my work and my potential, I was shortlisted."* This narrative challenges traditional tokenism critiques often associated with female advancement (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). Instead, Media General's culture seems to recognise female competence as legitimate grounds for leadership, an approach consistent with transformational leadership theory, which prizes intellectual stimulation and performance outcomes (Northouse, 2022). By highlighting competence over gender, the organisation reinforces women's legitimacy as leaders and anchors leadership advancement in professional merit rather than symbolic representation.

Nevertheless, progression is not devoid of challenges and self-doubt, as captured in Participant 1's reflection that *"I was actually very sceptical if I had the potential to be it and do it and execute it."* This emotional labour of self-validation among women leaders resonates with social role theory (Eagly, 1987), which posits that women in leadership often experience internalised role incongruence, the tension between societal expectations of femininity and the assertiveness required in leadership. Such internal conflict underscores the significance of supportive organisational environments that normalise women's leadership potential, helping them to negotiate self-doubt through affirming mentorship and peer recognition (Ryan et al.,

2016). The narrative reveals that Media General's structure, by providing validation and visible female role models, mitigates these psychological barriers, creating a sense of belonging that sustains women's leadership growth.

A recurring feature of women's leadership journeys at Media General is peer mentorship and collective empowerment. Participant 3 noted, "*I now mentor young women who want to pursue digital journalism leadership.*" This peer-led model reflects what Fletcher (2004) termed "relational leadership," where influence emerges from collaboration and empathy rather than hierarchical control. Such mentorship loops perpetuate an internal ecosystem of female empowerment, allowing women not only to rise but to lift others alongside them. In the Ghanaian context, where patriarchal professional networks often constrain women's mobility (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014), this approach is transformative, it builds social capital and trust networks that anchor gender equity within the media sector.

The transformational leadership framework underpins these patterns by illustrating how women leaders at Media General enact key transformational behaviours: individualised consideration (mentoring and support), inspirational motivation (empowering others), and idealised influence (serving as role models). As Burns (1978) posits, transformational leaders do not merely occupy authority but redefine relationships within organisations to elevate collective performance. The women leaders' experiences at Media General exemplify this model, as they not only pursue personal advancement but also shape a broader organisational shift toward inclusive leadership development. This pattern reinforces the conclusion that the pathway to women's leadership at Media General is transformative, relational, and deeply embedded in a culture of mentorship and trust, a model that both reflects and strengthens the principles of transformational leadership theory.

#### 4.1.2 Leadership Identity and Style, Empathy, Collaboration, and Firmness

Women leaders at Media General articulate a leadership identity that balances empathy and authority, challenging traditional perceptions of female leadership as either “soft” or “subordinate.” Across the interviews, a consistent narrative emerges: women leaders lead through collaboration, inclusion, and relational awareness, yet they remain firm and decisive when necessary. Participant 4, a senior producer, explained: *“My leadership approach is centred on teamwork and mentorship. I believe that strong teams are built on trust, clarity, and shared purpose. I try to maintain open communication and ensure that everyone understands the rationale behind editorial decisions.”* This leadership orientation exemplifies transformational leadership behaviours, particularly the dimensions of inspirational motivation and idealised influence (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The evidence suggests that women leaders intentionally foster environments of psychological safety, creating spaces where team members can contribute without fear, thereby enhancing creativity and accountability (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, & Ziv, 2010).

This empathetic and participatory leadership style is not indicative of weakness but of strategic emotional intelligence. Participant 2 observed, *“I allow people to explore. I allow people to share ideas. Everybody is not wrong when it comes to creativity.”* Such openness aligns with Goleman’s (1998) concept of emotionally intelligent leadership, which views empathy, self-awareness, and relational management as core competencies of effective leaders. In the creative industries, where innovation depends on team synergy, this emotional sensitivity translates directly into productivity. Empathy also aligns with transformational leadership’s individualised consideration, where leaders attend to followers’ needs and aspirations (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Through relational engagement, these women not only manage teams but nurture creative autonomy, a critical asset in a media organisation that thrives on innovation.

Another critical element of women's leadership identity at Media General is the equilibrium between collaboration and assertiveness. Several participants emphasised that while empathy guides their leadership, firmness ensures consistency and discipline. Participant 4 shared, *"They communicate expectations clearly and maintain discipline without intimidation. They also tend to mentor junior staff more actively."* This ability to combine relational sensitivity with authority reflects Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt's (2001) research on gender and leadership, which found that women often integrate transformational and transactional leadership styles; they engage teams emotionally while enforcing standards of excellence. The balance between empathy and firmness is especially vital in Ghana's media industry, where traditional gender norms may question women's authority. By demonstrating competence and relational strength, women leaders simultaneously humanise and legitimise authority within the organisation.

The collaborative leadership model described in the interviews also supports shared leadership theory, which emphasises distributed influence rather than centralised power (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Participant 1 described her leadership style as *"more collaborative. Let's all bring in the ideas and create it together so that everyone feels a part of the process."* This participatory style aligns with what Helgesen (2017) termed the "web of inclusion," a leadership paradigm common among women that builds networks of shared accountability rather than pyramids of control. Within Media General, this inclusive dynamic fosters cohesion and enhances team morale. The participants' narratives collectively depict a leadership culture that values listening, consensus, and empowerment, an orientation that mirrors the core tenets of transformational leadership theory and feminist organisational thought (Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

However, participants also acknowledged the challenges of navigating gendered perceptions of leadership style. As Participant 3 reflected, *"Sometimes assertive women are misinterpreted"*

*as aggressive, while men showing the same traits are praised as confident.*” This observation corroborates the findings of Eagly and Karau’s (2002) “role congruity theory,” which posits that societal expectations often penalise women for exhibiting assertive leadership traits. Despite this, the data show that Media General’s female leaders have learned to manage perception by blending warmth with competence, embodying what Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) describe as “authentic adaptive leadership.” This approach allows women to maintain credibility while transforming gendered expectations within the workplace.

The transformational leadership framework provides a theoretical grounding for understanding the leadership identity emerging at Media General. The women leaders exhibit the core transformational qualities: *idealised influence* (serving as ethical role models), *inspirational motivation* (articulating a shared vision), *intellectual stimulation* (encouraging creativity), and *individualised consideration* (mentoring and empathy). As Bass and Riggio (2006) argue, these attributes enable leaders to foster intrinsic motivation and commitment. In Media General’s context, women leaders are not merely managing tasks; they are transforming relationships, redefining authority, and inspiring innovation through emotional intelligence and inclusion. This reinforces that their leadership identity is both transformational and gender-inclusive, reflecting a leadership model that transcends conventional masculine norms while achieving superior team engagement and organisational outcomes.

#### **4.1.3 Gender Representation and Equity in Media Leadership**

The participants’ testimonies reveal that Media General stands out as one of Ghana’s most gender-progressive media organisations, with women occupying high-ranking leadership roles across departments. Participant 1 captured this vividly: *“Our CEO is female. Our general manager for APL is female. Our general manager for 3Group is female. Our head of station for 3FM is female... Technical leads are female. Producers themselves are females. Head of editing is female.”* This level of female representation, spanning from executive to technical

positions, illustrates what Ely and Meyerson (2000) describe as *institutionalised gender inclusion*, where gender diversity is embedded into the organisational structure rather than tokenised. However, beyond representation, the testimonies reveal that Media General's model of gender inclusion is based on *earned credibility* rather than symbolic equality. As Participant 1 clarified, *"It's not tokenism... women here have earned their way to be there. All the women here are women who have worked hard, have impressed in their role, and have executed far above what they even need to do to be able to earn the role as leaders."* This sentiment mirrors the findings of Eagly and Carli (2007), who argue that when women achieve leadership positions through visible competence, their legitimacy strengthens both individual and collective gender equity within organisations.

Representation at Media General also extends to visible leadership in both creative and technical sectors. Participant 2 emphasised this by noting: *"We have a general manager HR who is a female. We have a group CEO who is a female. We have a general manager for APL who is also a female... At every level of leadership in Media General, there are females occupying positions."* This kind of distribution contrasts with the global media landscape, where leadership in production and engineering remains heavily male-dominated (Byerly, 2011; Northouse, 2022). However, Participant 3 provided a more nuanced view, acknowledging that despite progress, gender representation still varies by department: *"Women's representation in leadership at Media General is improving, but it's not yet balanced. We have women in key roles in television, marketing, and production, but far fewer in technical departments like engineering and digital strategy."* This statement aligns with the work of Everbach (2006), who found that women's visibility in media organisations often concentrates in "soft" or creative departments, while technical domains remain resistant to gender diversification. Therefore, Media General's case demonstrates progress toward gender

equity, but one that still mirrors structural asymmetries seen globally in the distribution of technical authority.

Beyond mere numbers, representation at Media General also carries *symbolic and cultural power*. Participant 4 (Executive Producer, TV3) reflected on how women's leadership presence redefines organisational identity: "*When I started, there were only a handful of women in senior positions, mostly anchors and administrative heads. Today, there are female news editors, producers, digital leads, and marketing directors.*" This observation supports Eagly's (2013) assertion that the visibility of women in leadership roles fosters cultural transformation within institutions, challenging long-held stereotypes of male-dominated authority. Moreover, representation enhances psychological safety and aspiration among junior women, creating what Ibarra et al. (2013) describe as a "*leadership identity contagion*", a process where seeing women lead inspires others to imagine themselves in leadership positions. Indeed, Participant 4's commitment to mentoring younger women ("I now consciously mentor younger women because I know how critical representation is") reflects the *transformational* quality of leadership, where influence extends beyond task performance to shaping others' identities and ambitions (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Furthermore, participants described how women's leadership representation influences content production and public perception of the organisation. Participant 5 (Digital Marketing Officer) noted, "*Women leaders are very visible across the organisation, they anchor programmes, lead innovation projects, and represent MG at industry events.*" Visibility, in this sense, operates as both organisational strategy and cultural statement. It aligns with Kanter's (1977) *critical mass theory*, which posits that when women reach a visible threshold within leadership, their influence becomes self-sustaining, transforming workplace norms and perceptions. This is evident at Media General, where women-led programmes like "Ghana's Most Beautiful" and "Perfect Match Extra" have not only achieved commercial success but also reinforced positive

narratives about women's leadership in media production. These examples demonstrate how representational equity translates into institutional legitimacy and competitive advantage.

The data also suggest that gender representation at Media General is both a cause and consequence of an inclusive leadership culture. Participant 3 highlighted that "Media General has introduced gender mainstreaming in recruitment and leadership training," illustrating the organisation's commitment to embedding equality into its strategic operations. This finding resonates with Meyerson and Fletcher's (2000) argument that gender equity is sustainable only when built into systemic processes rather than left to individual goodwill. Furthermore, such integration mirrors transformational leadership's emphasis on *idealized influence*, where top leaders model ethical and inclusive values that permeate organisational culture (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The female CEO and general managers at Media General appear to embody this principle, influencing both formal policy and informal attitudes toward gender fairness.

Finally, representation at Media General signifies a redefinition of authority and expertise. As Participant 1 concluded, "*If more women were running things in Ghana... it would be better for it. I mean, this organisation is a perfect example of that.*" This declaration encapsulates the transformational potential of gender-equitable leadership. According to Chin (2011), organisations that normalise women's leadership challenge patriarchal assumptions not only internally but across societal institutions, creating ripple effects of empowerment. Media General's case illustrates how representational equity transforms leadership from a gendered construct into a collaborative, competence-driven culture, aligning with transformational leadership's vision of shared growth, inclusivity, and moral purpose (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

## **4.2 Research Question Two: How have women’s leadership roles impacted innovation and operations at Media General?**

This research question aimed to explore the influence of women leaders on innovation and operational effectiveness across Media General’s multiple platforms. It examined how female leadership fosters creativity, drives content diversification, and enhances organisational performance through collaborative and inclusive practices. The question was designed to uncover concrete examples of innovative initiatives or programmes developed under women’s direction, such as new content formats, digital campaigns, or organisational reforms—and how these have shaped Media General’s brand identity and market competitiveness. In line with Transformational Leadership Theory, the question also sought to determine how women leaders use intellectual stimulation, mentorship, and vision to inspire innovation among their teams. Furthermore, it considered whether women’s leadership styles, often characterised by empathy, adaptability, and participatory decision-making, create a workplace culture that nurtures creative thinking and sustainable innovation.

### **4.2.1 Challenges, Double Burden, and Gendered Expectations**

While Media General presents a strong case for gender equity, participants acknowledged that women leaders still face *systemic and social challenges* that complicate their leadership experiences. One recurring theme was the *double burden* of balancing professional and domestic responsibilities. Participant 1 articulated this challenge poignantly: “*Women shoulder more... they have to deal more with ensuring the kids are cared for, the home is done before coming to work. You have to work like you have no family and go back to your family and act like you have no work.*” This “double shift” (Hochschild & Machung, 2012) remains a central obstacle for women leaders, reflecting broader socio-cultural expectations that women must maintain domestic roles regardless of professional achievement. Eagly and Carli (2007)

describe this as part of the *labyrinth of leadership*, where women must constantly negotiate between competing personal and professional identities. Even within a progressive institution like Media General, this tension illustrates the persistent cultural conditioning that links femininity with caregiving, placing women under disproportionate pressure to excel in dual spheres.

Participants also highlighted the existence of subtle but pervasive gender bias within organisational perceptions. Participant 4 reflected, “*Women often have to work twice as hard to be taken seriously, especially in editorial meetings where assertiveness can be mistaken for aggression.*” This observation resonates with research by Rudman and Glick (2001), who found that women in leadership are penalised for exhibiting agentic traits, behaviours typically associated with competence and authority, because they violate gendered expectations of warmth and deference. Such *role incongruity* (Eagly & Karau, 2002) can force women into a “tightrope effect,” balancing firmness with perceived femininity to maintain legitimacy. The interviews suggest that Media General’s women leaders have learned to navigate this paradox by adopting *transformational leadership* practices, balancing empathy with assertiveness, as reflected in Participant 4’s statement: “I’ve learned that empathy is not a weakness; it’s a leadership strength.” This balancing act embodies Eagly and Carli’s (2007) concept of “blend leadership,” where successful women leaders integrate communal and agentic behaviours to transcend gendered stereotypes.

Another challenge pertains to *visibility and recognition*. Although women are visible in leadership roles, Participant 3 cautioned that “women’s representation is higher on-screen and in creative departments, but far fewer in technical departments like engineering and digital strategy.” This pattern reflects gendered segmentation in media leadership, consistent with findings by Byerly (2011) that women remain underrepresented in technological and infrastructural decision-making roles. Such disparities reinforce vertical and horizontal

segregation, limiting women's influence in strategic domains. Yet, as Participant 3 noted, "the women who are here are making strong impressions through competence and innovation," suggesting that women leaders at Media General counter structural barriers through *performance legitimacy*. This mirrors the argument by Ibarra et al. (2013) that women overcome systemic exclusion by producing measurable outcomes that make bias untenable, a hallmark of *transformational performance-driven leadership*.

Emotional labour also emerged as a hidden challenge embedded in women's leadership experiences. Participant 1 observed that women leaders bring a "nurturing feel where it's beyond just work, work, work. But also, how are you doing?" While such empathy enhances team morale, it simultaneously imposes an *invisible burden* of emotional caregiving, a phenomenon Hochschild (1983) called "emotional labour." Research by Ely and Padavic (2020) suggests that when women consistently shoulder relational management, it reinforces gendered divisions of labour within leadership, even as it sustains organisational harmony. Transformational leadership theory acknowledges this paradox: while leaders' emotional attunement fosters engagement, it can also create vulnerability to burnout if not institutionally supported (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Hence, the nurturing dimension of women's leadership, though powerful, requires structural recognition and shared responsibility to remain sustainable.

A further barrier identified was the persistence of *informal exclusion* in decision-making spaces. Participant 4 mentioned that "key decisions are sometimes influenced by social interactions that women, due to societal roles, cannot easily access." This exclusion from male-dominated informal networks reflects the findings of Ibarra (1993), who noted that women's limited access to social capital in organisational politics often impedes their career advancement despite formal equality. Transformational leadership theory provides a partial antidote by promoting *inclusive influence networks*, where trust and collaboration replace

hierarchical patronage (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). However, as the interviews reveal, organisational transformation must extend beyond formal inclusion to dismantle implicit gendered gatekeeping within informal power structures.

Finally, despite these challenges, the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by women leaders at Media General exemplify the transformative potential of gender-conscious leadership. Participant 2 asserted that “Media General gives room for growth for women, and supports women a lot,” suggesting that institutional support mitigates, though does not eliminate, systemic bias. Participant 3 added that “women can succeed anywhere and everywhere... so long as they are allowed to do so.” This belief reflects the *self-efficacy* dimension of transformational leadership, leaders’ confidence in their ability to influence change despite obstacles (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By persistently negotiating gendered expectations and structural constraints, women leaders at Media General embody what Eagly and Carli (2007) call *resilient leadership*, transforming barriers into platforms for innovation and collective empowerment. Their experiences demonstrate that while gendered challenges persist, transformational leadership, grounded in empathy, inclusivity, and vision, provides a viable framework for overcoming them.

#### **4.2.2 Women’s Leadership and Innovation**

Innovation emerged as one of the strongest and most consistent themes in the interviews. Participants described how women leaders at Media General have been instrumental in driving creative transformations in both content and organisational strategy. Participant 1 captured this vividly when she said, “*The reason why Media General leads in terms of every different production, the reason why we have many percentages higher than every other media organisation, is because of the women that are creating the work... they’re the ones creating the content, managing the productions, and that is the reason why the magic is there.*” This narrative illustrates a direct link between women’s leadership and institutional innovation,

aligning with Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen's (2003) assertion that women's transformational leadership styles, characterised by collaboration, openness, and empathy, often result in higher levels of creativity and innovation. Furthermore, Bass and Riggio (2006) emphasise that transformational leaders stimulate innovation by encouraging followers to think critically and explore new approaches to old challenges. The accounts from Media General affirm that women leaders are not just managing innovation, they are its architects.

Several participants provided concrete examples of innovative projects initiated or led by women. Participant 1 cited *Perfect Match Extra* and *Ghana's Most Beautiful* as groundbreaking programmes that "set the country ablaze" and redefined entertainment television in Ghana. She stressed, "*All the people leading the production are women, Fafa, Sheba, Dhaba, Hana, Pefi, all of them. And that is one thing that has set the country ablaze.*" These examples reveal not only the creative capacity of women leaders but also how female-led projects align innovation with cultural resonance and inclusivity. As Amabile and Pratt (2016) argue, innovation in media is most effective when creativity is both *contextually relevant* and *collaboratively generated*. The fact that these female-led programmes achieved national recognition indicates that women leaders at Media General are adept at connecting creativity to audience engagement, thereby transforming innovation into a form of cultural leadership.

Participant 3 (Head of Digital Content) further emphasised that women's approach to innovation is both technological and human-centred: "*I led the introduction of '#GhanaDecides,' our digital election monitoring hub that integrated audience participation on social media... Another woman leader spearheaded 'HerVoice,' a multimedia series highlighting women entrepreneurs.*" These initiatives highlight how female leadership at Media General merges social impact with digital innovation. This finding echoes the argument by Chin (2011) and Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, and Ziv (2010), who contend that women leaders often view innovation not merely as technological advancement but as a form of *inclusive*

*change*, fostering engagement, participation, and collective ownership. In this sense, innovation becomes a leadership philosophy rather than a managerial task, reinforcing transformational leadership's *intellectual stimulation* dimension, where leaders inspire new perspectives and challenge existing assumptions (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Interestingly, several participants noted that women's innovation often stems from empathy and problem-solving rather than competition or hierarchy. Participant 4 (Executive Producer, TV3) explained, "*We introduced interactive audience feedback segments during evening news bulletins, allowing viewers to send questions and opinions live via social media. This initiative increased audience engagement and helped the newsroom remain connected to public sentiment.*" Such innovations represent what Bennis and Nanus (2007) describe as *adaptive leadership*, leaders reconfiguring structures to meet emergent needs through communication and participation. This empathetic innovation style contrasts with the traditional "command and control" model and illustrates how women leaders create spaces where ideas are shared and refined collectively. As Northouse (2022) suggests, innovation under transformational leadership is sustained when leaders nurture psychological safety and inclusion, qualities that women leaders at Media General consistently demonstrate.

The participants also revealed that Media General's structure actively supports innovation through openness and receptivity to ideas from women leaders. Participant 1 described this culture vividly: "*You can go into a meeting with ideas and nobody shuts you down. Everybody's willing to listen. Everybody wants to know what you have to say.*" This openness reflects *innovation climate theory* (West, 2002), which posits that creative organisations thrive when leadership cultivates trust, inclusivity, and participative decision-making. Transformational leadership enhances this climate by ensuring that employees feel valued and empowered to contribute. As seen at Media General, female leaders embody this principle through

collaborative ideation, reinforcing Amabile's (1996) model of creative environments where autonomy, encouragement, and recognition drive innovation outcomes.

Finally, women's innovation at Media General is not limited to programmes or technology, it extends to *process innovation and human capital development*. Participant 5 (Digital Marketing Officer) highlighted this when she mentioned the "Digital Inclusion Week," organised by a female head to train young interns in digital literacy. She noted, "*It created a lasting impact on our talent pipeline.*" Such initiatives demonstrate that innovation under women's leadership is cyclical; it generates immediate results while investing in long-term capacity building. This aligns with Bass's (1999) notion of transformational leaders as *builders of future leadership*, using innovation not only to enhance performance but to expand possibilities for others. Therefore, Media General's women leaders exemplify how innovation, when combined with empathy, inclusivity, and mentorship, transcends traditional boundaries, positioning the organisation as a model for gender-conscious creative leadership in Africa's media landscape.

#### **4.3 Research Question Three: How has organisational culture at Media General affected the leadership effectiveness and experiences of women in senior roles?**

This research question focused on understanding the interaction between Media General's organisational culture and the experiences of women in leadership positions. It examined how existing workplace values, communication patterns, and institutional norms either support or hinder women's ability to lead effectively. The question aimed to identify cultural enablers—such as inclusivity, mentorship, and openness, as well as barriers, including gender bias, informal exclusion, or work-life balance pressures. By analysing these dynamics, the study sought to reveal how women leaders navigate and influence the organisational culture, potentially transforming it through empathy, collaboration, and shared leadership values. The question was framed within Gender and Leadership Theory, which emphasises how women's

relational leadership styles can reshape organisational climates to become more equitable and innovation-oriented. Ultimately, this question aimed to link leadership effectiveness with cultural transformation, demonstrating how women leaders at Media General are not only participants but also key architects of institutional change.

#### **4.3.1 Organisational Culture and Change through Women's Leadership**

The participants consistently described Media General's organisational culture as dynamic, inclusive, and human-centred, particularly due to the influence of women leaders. Participant 4 summarised it aptly: "*The culture is accommodating. It allows every kind of person to be accommodated... It gives access to those who have busy schedules... So the organisational culture is very nurturing and very accommodating.*" This perspective reflects the *transformational leadership model* of culture change, where leaders influence organisational values by modelling inclusivity, collaboration, and openness (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Schein (2010) argues that culture evolves when leaders demonstrate consistent behaviour that aligns with desired norms. At Media General, women leaders appear to function as *cultural carriers*, reshaping the environment to prioritise emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and professional development, traits associated with effective transformational leadership (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013).

Participant 3 (Head of Digital Content) elaborated on this transformation, noting that Media General's culture "used to be highly hierarchical, but it's now becoming more inclusive and team-based." She further added, "*There's a growing consciousness about equality, though subtle stereotypes remain.*" This gradual transition from hierarchy to collaboration mirrors Eagly and Carli's (2007) findings that women leaders often catalyse cultural change by redefining power as relational rather than positional. Such change fosters what Ely and Meyerson (2000) describe as *gendered organisational learning*, the process through which inclusivity becomes embedded in the organisational fabric. The participants' consistent

references to “open communication,” “safe spaces for idea-sharing,” and “mentorship” show that cultural change at Media General is both structural and behavioural, driven by the example of women leaders who normalise participative leadership and psychological safety.

Another critical dimension of cultural transformation is the emergence of *mentorship and community*. Participant 1 stated, “*It’s about people supporting you in getting it done... your managers, your leaders, your head are all very invested in your growth.*” Similarly, Participant 3 observed that “women leaders have introduced mentorship programmes, more open communication, and more inclusive content policies.” These examples reflect Bass’s (1985) *individualised consideration* dimension of transformational leadership, leaders attending to each follower’s development and well-being. According to Kram (1985) and Ragins and Kram (2007), such mentorship practices not only support personal growth but also cultivate a culture of reciprocity and shared responsibility. At Media General, mentorship appears to serve as both an instrument of empowerment and a cultural norm, an institutional expression of care that transforms the organisational identity from competitive to collaborative.

Empathy and relational leadership also define Media General’s evolving organisational culture. Participant 5 (Digital Marketing Officer) emphasised that “women leaders have brought empathy, fairness, and accountability to our department. They encourage balance between productivity and well-being, which helps us perform better.” This balance between compassion and accountability exemplifies Eagly and Carli’s (2007) model of *blended leadership*, where communal traits enhance rather than weaken managerial effectiveness. It also reflects the *idealised influence* aspect of transformational leadership, where leaders’ ethical conduct and authenticity inspire trust and imitation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Through empathy-based practices, mentoring, flexible work arrangements, and inclusive communication, Media General’s women leaders have redefined productivity as both performance and wellness, a

cultural reorientation supported by recent research on compassionate leadership in creative industries (Boyatzis, Smith & Van Oosten, 2019).

Cultural change at Media General has also been marked by *improved collaboration and reduced hierarchical distance*. Participant 4 stated, “*I can walk to those that matter and get them together to work for you. It makes me more efficient as a leader because those I call my leadership are always one call away.*” This open-door culture aligns with Northouse’s (2022) depiction of transformational organisations where power is shared, and communication flows multi-directionally. Moreover, it resonates with Yukl’s (2013) notion of *empowering leadership*, which decentralises authority to promote autonomy and creativity. Such decentralisation appears to have increased agility and morale within Media General, as leaders and subordinates collaborate as partners rather than as ranks in a hierarchy. This flattening of power structures represents a profound cultural shift in a historically hierarchical industry.

Finally, the collective impact of women’s leadership on organisational culture at Media General can be understood as a process of *transformational alignment*. The participants’ experiences suggest that women leaders not only embody but also institutionalise the four key dimensions of transformational leadership, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). As Participant 3 concluded, “*Women have modelled empathy-based leadership, and the organisation is adopting that tone at every level.*” This observation captures how leadership and culture become mutually reinforcing systems: women’s inclusive, ethical, and visionary leadership styles create a feedback loop that sustains organisational transformation. In line with Avolio and Yammarino (2013), such environments foster continuous learning, resilience, and adaptability, qualities essential for innovation and long-term success in the media industry. Thus, Media General’s experience demonstrates that when women lead authentically and

inclusively, they do not merely occupy positions of power; they redefine what organisational power itself means.

#### **4.3.2 Mentorship, Empowerment, and Transformational Impact**

Mentorship and empowerment surfaced as central elements of women's leadership philosophy at Media General. Across multiple interviews, participants highlighted how female leaders intentionally invest in developing others, ensuring that leadership is not positional but *relational*. Participant 1 captured this ethos powerfully when she said, "*It's not just growing you to swim or sink. It's about people supporting you in getting it done. Your managers, your leaders, your head are all very invested in your growth.*" This relational commitment aligns closely with Bass and Riggio's (2006) *individualised consideration* component of transformational leadership, which emphasises mentorship, coaching, and the leader's role in unlocking followers' potential. It also reflects Eagly and Carli's (2007) argument that women's leadership is often characterised by an ethic of care, where empowerment is achieved through relational connection rather than hierarchy. Media General's culture of mentorship, as described by participants, therefore represents both a moral and structural expression of empowerment.

Mentorship in Media General also serves as a mechanism for institutional continuity and intergenerational leadership. Participant 4 explained, "*I now consciously mentor younger women because I know how critical representation is.*" This statement underscores a leadership philosophy built on *legacy rather than competition*. According to Kram's (1985) mentoring model, effective mentorship provides both psychosocial support and career advancement guidance, helping mentees internalise the confidence and behaviours necessary for leadership. Similarly, Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) found that women leaders who engage in mentorship create "identity pathways" for emerging female professionals by modelling alternative forms of authority that challenge patriarchal norms. Thus, mentorship at Media General is not merely

a developmental practice but a transformational one; it redefines what leadership looks like by institutionalising inclusion, confidence, and collective growth.

Participants repeatedly emphasised that empowerment under women's leadership is not limited to formal programmes but embedded in everyday interactions. Participant 5 (Digital Marketing Officer) stated, "*My manager gives constructive feedback and values my input, even though I'm relatively junior. It makes me feel confident to take initiative.*" This approach reflects what Spreitzer (1995) defines as *psychological empowerment*, the process by which individuals gain confidence, autonomy, and a sense of purpose through meaningful engagement. In this case, empowerment stems from relational validation rather than positional power. The leader's willingness to listen and give credit creates what Bass (1999) describes as a *transformational exchange*, where leaders elevate followers by linking their self-worth to collective achievement. The literature suggests that such environments increase creativity and intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1996; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013), explaining why Media General's teams demonstrate such innovation and cohesion under female leadership.

Mentorship also functions as a tool of organisational resilience, particularly for women navigating gendered challenges. Participant 3 (Head of Digital Content) explained that during her rise, she faced scepticism about digital journalism's legitimacy but was encouraged by senior women and allies who "believed in her vision." This reflects what Ibarra et al. (2010) describe as *sponsorship-based mentorship*, when senior leaders not only advise but actively advocate for emerging talent. Eagly and Carli (2007) identify sponsorship as critical for helping women traverse the "labyrinth" of leadership, providing access to informal networks and legitimacy in decision-making spaces. At Media General, such mentorship relationships appear to mitigate structural and cultural barriers, ensuring that women's leadership progression is not an exception but an institutional expectation.

Moreover, mentorship at Media General is multidirectional; it is both vertical and horizontal. Participant 2 (Head of Production, Onua Group) observed that collaboration and learning occur across peers and departments: *“I allow people to explore, share ideas. Everybody is not wrong when it comes to creativity.”* This reflects the *collective empowerment* model proposed by Fletcher (2004), which argues that women’s leadership flourishes in *relational networks* rather than hierarchical mentorship. Such peer-to-peer empowerment enhances innovation and reinforces community, transforming the workplace into a developmental ecosystem. As Kark and Shamir (2002) suggest, transformational leaders create *self-reinforcing empowerment loops*, where empowered followers become future leaders who replicate inclusive values, a process clearly visible in Media General’s culture of continuous mentorship.

Finally, the participants’ accounts demonstrate that empowerment at Media General is both transformative and self-sustaining. It cultivates what Bass and Avolio (1994) call *transformational ripple effects*, when empowered individuals, in turn, empower others. Participant 4 reflected this ripple effect when she said, *“Leadership is about service. Empowering others and creating opportunities for your team is more fulfilling than personal success.”* This mindset reframes leadership from individual achievement to collective transformation. It also aligns with feminist leadership theories (Batliwala, 2011), which define empowerment as redistributing power rather than accumulating it. Through mentorship, women leaders at Media General are not only nurturing future professionals, they are institutionalising equality, creating a generative cycle where empowerment becomes both the means and the outcome of leadership.

#### **4.3.3 Reshaping Perceptions of Women in Authority**

The interviews reveal that the increasing visibility and success of women leaders at Media General have profoundly reshaped how authority, competence, and gender are perceived within the organisation. Participant 4 explained, *“Most colleagues respect and respond positively to*

women in authority. Initially, there was scepticism, but over time, performance has overridden prejudice.” This evolution reflects the *role congruity theory* (Eagly & Karau, 2002), which argues that stereotypes associating leadership with masculinity diminish when women consistently demonstrate competence in leadership roles. As performance-based legitimacy accumulates, gender becomes secondary to credibility. The participants’ testimonies suggest that Media General’s culture now recognises authority as *gender-neutral*, grounded in evidence and output rather than traditional bias, a profound cultural shift that aligns with transformational leadership’s *idealised influence* dimension, where leaders earn respect through integrity and example (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

However, this transformation did not occur automatically. Participants acknowledged that women leaders initially faced suspicion and resistance. Participant 1 reflected, “*Working with women leaders can be more challenging... due to emotions, ego, and pride,*” suggesting that some biases persist in the perceptions of subordinates. Yet, such comments also highlight how female leaders have learned to negotiate respect in complex interpersonal dynamics. Participant 2 counterbalanced this perspective by describing her experience as “peaceful and very welcoming,” attributing this to women leaders’ nurturing and empathetic style. These contrasting perceptions illustrate Eagly and Carli’s (2007) “labyrinth of leadership,” where women must continually recalibrate how they assert authority to maintain legitimacy. Over time, consistent performance and empathy-based leadership have reshaped these perceptions, normalising women’s authority within the organisation.

The interviews also indicate that women’s success in leadership has redefined *what authority means*. Participant 5 stated, “*Women leaders have brought empathy, fairness, and accountability... They encourage balance between productivity and well-being, which helps us perform better.*” This quote encapsulates a transformation from authority as control to authority as care, a shift that aligns with the *servant leadership* dimension of transformational models

(Bass & Riggio, 2006). Scholars such as Eagly and Heilman (2016) argue that women leaders tend to frame authority relationally rather than hierarchically, leading to cultures of trust and inclusion. Media General's women leaders appear to have operationalised this by replacing fear-based respect with value-based influence, fostering a workplace where authority is earned through fairness, mentorship, and vision rather than coercion.

Participant 3 offered a critical reflection on how these evolving perceptions also challenge societal norms: *"Sometimes assertive women are misinterpreted as aggressive, while men showing the same traits are praised as confident. Still, management has made significant efforts to normalise female authority through policies and awareness campaigns."* This observation reflects ongoing tensions between progress and patriarchy, what Ridgeway (2011) calls *status expectations theory*, where ingrained gender hierarchies subtly shape perceptions of competence. Yet, transformational leadership theory posits that authentic, ethical, and consistent leadership behaviours can gradually realign these perceptions through moral influence (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The interviews show that this is precisely what has happened at Media General: women leaders have transformed resistance into respect by consistently delivering excellence and embodying fairness.

A recurring motif in the data is the *normalisation of female authority through visibility and consistency*. Participant 2 noted, *"They [female leaders] are very visible. Their impact is felt at every point in time."* This aligns with Kanter's (1977) *critical mass theory*, which holds that once women occupy a substantial portion of leadership roles, their authority becomes self-legitimising. Visibility, in this sense, neutralises novelty, reducing bias by making female authority familiar. Moreover, by mentoring younger employees and leading high-impact projects, women leaders at Media General create daily, lived examples of female competence, which, as Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest, is the most effective antidote to gendered stereotypes. Authority, once questioned, becomes naturalised through repetition and performance.

Finally, the transformation of perceptions at Media General reflects the core principles of transformational leadership: modelling, inspiration, and ethical influence. Participant 4 summarised this transformation when she said, “*Leadership, for me, is about legacy and continuity.*” Women leaders at Media General have not only proven their competence but redefined the symbolic meaning of authority itself. Their success illustrates that *transformational authority*, rooted in empathy, integrity, and shared purpose, can dismantle patriarchal notions of dominance without diminishing leadership strength. This aligns with Avolio and Yammarino’s (2013) proposition that transformational leadership humanises power by aligning it with moral authenticity. Thus, the reconfiguration of authority at Media General demonstrates how women’s leadership transcends representation; it reconstructs leadership itself as a collective, inclusive, and ethical practice.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined the complex dynamics surrounding women’s leadership at Media General, highlighting both the progress achieved and the challenges that persist. The findings revealed that women occupy significant leadership roles across managerial, editorial, and creative divisions, demonstrating competence, empathy, and strategic vision. Women leaders have also played a transformative role in driving innovation, introducing new programmes, and fostering inclusive operational practices that enhance creativity and performance. At the same time, organisational culture emerged as both a facilitator and a constraint, providing mentorship and openness while still reflecting subtle gender biases and traditional expectations. Overall, the chapter demonstrates that women leaders at Media General are not merely participants in institutional change but active agents shaping a culture of collaboration, equity, and innovation. The next chapter builds upon these findings by drawing broader conclusions, discussing their implications for theory and practice, and offering recommendations for strengthening women’s leadership and organisational inclusivity.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides a synthesis of the study's key findings, conclusions, and recommendations on the impact of women in leadership at Media General, with a specific focus on content policies, innovation, and organisational culture. Drawing upon the thematic analysis presented in the preceding chapter, the discussion highlights how women leaders at Media General have influenced institutional practices, driven creative innovation, and shaped an inclusive organisational culture while navigating gendered challenges. The chapter first summarises the overarching patterns and implications emerging from the data, rather than restating individual findings, to provide a cohesive understanding of the study's central insights. It then presents the conclusions derived from the analysis, situating them within the frameworks of Transformational Leadership Theory. Finally, it offers practical and policy-oriented recommendations aimed at strengthening women's leadership development, enhancing gender equity, and promoting sustainable innovation in the Ghanaian media sector, followed by a discussion of the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

#### **5.1 Summary of Key Findings**

The study sought to investigate the impact of women in leadership at Media General with specific attention to content policies, innovation, and organisational culture. The findings revealed that women occupy a range of significant leadership roles within the organisation, cutting across managerial, editorial, and technical domains in television, radio, and digital divisions. However, the leadership pathway for women is not structured through formalised

promotion systems but rather through a meritocratic and relational process grounded in mentorship, performance visibility, and trust. Many participants described how mentorship, both from male and female senior leaders, played a decisive role in helping women ascend to leadership positions. This process aligns with Kram's (1985) model of mentorship and the individualised consideration component of Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006), which posits that effective leaders nurture and develop potential within others. The findings also demonstrate that women leaders at Media General often experience internalised self-doubt, a reflection of Eagly's (1987) social role theory, yet the organisation's supportive culture and visible female role models mitigate these psychological barriers. Collectively, these findings underscore that women's leadership progression at Media General is relational, competence-based, and driven by transformational mentorship rather than bureaucratic processes.

Another major finding concerns the nature and character of women's leadership styles at Media General. The data revealed that women leaders embody a unique combination of empathy, collaboration, and firmness that fosters inclusivity while maintaining professional discipline. This balance between compassion and assertiveness corresponds with Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt's (2001) findings that women's leadership often integrates transformational and transactional elements, blending relational engagement with performance enforcement. Participants consistently emphasised that women leaders at Media General lead through open communication, participatory decision-making, and emotional intelligence, creating psychologically safe environments that promote creativity and accountability. This empathetic leadership approach, often perceived as feminine, has emerged as a strategic advantage in the media industry, where teamwork and innovation are critical. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that women leaders at Media General are redefining authority away from control and hierarchy toward inclusion and shared vision, a shift that resonates with transformational

leadership's idealised influence and inspirational motivation dimensions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This finding demonstrates that women's leadership is not peripheral but central to Media General's evolving organisational identity.

The study also found that women's leadership has a direct and measurable impact on innovation and operations across Media General's platforms. Female leaders were credited with initiating groundbreaking programmes such as *Ghana's Most Beautiful* and *Perfect Match Extra*, which have redefined entertainment television in Ghana through cultural authenticity and creative excellence. In the digital domain, women leaders introduced innovative projects such as “#GhanaDecides” and “HerVoice,” integrating social engagement with digital strategy. These initiatives demonstrate that women leaders view innovation not merely as technological advancement but as a participatory process grounded in empathy and inclusivity. This aligns with Amabile's (1996) creativity in context model and Bass's (1999) emphasis on intellectual stimulation as a driver of innovation. The participants' testimonies confirmed that women leaders encourage experimentation, value team input, and reward creativity, behaviours that enhance organisational adaptability. However, despite these achievements, women continue to encounter challenges such as gendered stereotypes, informal exclusion from male-dominated networks, and the “double burden” of managing professional and domestic responsibilities. These barriers reflect broader socio-cultural constraints within Ghanaian society, yet women's resilience and performance continue to subvert traditional gendered expectations.

In addition, organisational culture emerged as both an enabler and a constraint to women's leadership effectiveness. Participants consistently described Media General's culture as dynamic, inclusive, and evolving, influenced significantly by the presence and behaviour of women leaders. Female executives were perceived as cultural architects who model inclusivity, empathy, and open communication, leading to a transformation of workplace dynamics. The introduction of mentorship programmes, open-door communication policies, and flexible work

arrangements has strengthened staff morale and promoted innovation. These practices reflect Bass and Riggio's (2006) notion of transformational alignment, where leaders' values and organisational culture become mutually reinforcing. However, participants also noted subtle remnants of patriarchal norms and informal biases that persist, particularly in decision-making circles. Despite these challenges, the overall trajectory of organisational culture at Media General shows progressive transformation driven by women's leadership, where authority is becoming gender-neutral and performance-based.

Finally, the findings revealed that mentorship and empowerment form the cornerstone of women's leadership influence at Media General. Female leaders actively mentor junior employees, creating a pipeline of emerging leaders and fostering an internal ecosystem of empowerment. This pattern aligns with Fletcher's (2004) relational leadership model and Kark and Shamir's (2002) research on empowerment loops, where empowered individuals reproduce empowerment through mentoring others. The study found that women's empowerment practices are multidirectional, both vertical and horizontal, allowing for interdepartmental collaboration and knowledge sharing. Through this process, women leaders have not only redefined leadership as service but also reshaped organisational perceptions of authority. As a result, women's leadership at Media General exemplifies a transformative model that integrates ethical leadership, inclusivity, and innovation, thereby positioning the organisation as a progressive leader in Ghana's media industry and a model for gender-conscious organisational transformation across Africa.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The study concludes that women's leadership at Media General has evolved into a powerful catalyst for organisational transformation, innovation, and inclusivity. Through their strategic roles in management, production, and digital operations, women leaders have redefined leadership as a relational and ethical practice centred on empathy, collaboration, and shared

purpose. Their ability to blend firmness with compassion demonstrates the operational effectiveness of transformational leadership in practice, particularly in contexts where traditional gender hierarchies have historically marginalised women. The findings affirm that women's leadership is not merely about representation but about reconstructing power relations in organisations, moving from hierarchical command structures to participatory networks of influence. This evolution confirms that when leadership is grounded in authenticity and inclusivity, it fosters resilience, creativity, and collective performance across organisational levels.

Another key conclusion is that women's leadership at Media General has directly shaped the organisation's innovation trajectory and content production strategies. By fostering environments of trust, openness, and shared accountability, women leaders have cultivated creative teams capable of producing high-quality, culturally resonant media outputs. Their leadership has not only improved operational effectiveness but also strengthened Media General's public image as a socially responsible and gender-progressive organisation. However, despite these successes, women continue to face structural and cultural challenges, including subtle gender bias, work-life conflicts, and limited access to informal power networks, that can constrain their full leadership potential. These findings underscore the need for continuous organisational commitment to equity and inclusivity to sustain the gains achieved through female leadership.

Finally, the study concludes that Media General's organisational culture is undergoing a gradual but profound transformation, largely driven by women in leadership. Through mentorship, empathy, and empowerment, female leaders have embedded inclusivity and innovation into the organisation's cultural DNA. They have not only redefined authority but also reshaped perceptions of gender, competence, and legitimacy in leadership. This aligns with transformational leadership theory's proposition that authentic, value-driven leaders can

realign organisational culture toward ethical and performance-based ideals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The experience of Media General therefore demonstrates that empowering women in leadership has a multiplier effect: it enhances innovation, strengthens organisational cohesion, and promotes a culture of fairness that benefits both men and women alike.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

First, Media General should institutionalise structured mentorship and leadership development programmes tailored specifically to women across all departments. While informal mentorship has proven effective, formalising these structures would ensure sustainability and inclusivity. Such programmes should focus on developing leadership competencies, negotiation skills, and digital innovation capabilities for emerging female professionals. Partnering with academic institutions or international organisations focused on gender and leadership could strengthen this initiative. This recommendation aligns with Kram's (1985) mentoring framework and Bass's (1999) transformational emphasis on developing future leaders through intentional capacity building.

Second, the organisation should address systemic barriers that subtly limit women's participation in decision-making, particularly in technical and digital divisions where female representation remains low. This can be achieved through targeted recruitment, gender-sensitive training, and transparent promotion processes that prioritise competence over traditional gendered expectations. Creating women-led technical taskforces or innovation labs could help bridge the representation gap and position Media General as a leader in gender-diverse technological innovation. As Byerly (2011) and Ely and Meyerson (2000) suggest, gender inclusivity in leadership should extend beyond representation to structural empowerment in traditionally male-dominated domains.

Moreover, Media General should strengthen its organisational culture by formalising policies that promote work-life balance, psychological safety, and gender-sensitive leadership evaluation. Introducing flexible work arrangements, parental leave equality, and recognition of emotional labour as part of leadership performance can improve women's retention and effectiveness. These initiatives resonate with Hochschild and Machung's (2012) call for organisations to mitigate the "second shift" burden faced by women. Furthermore, leadership performance reviews should include metrics for inclusivity, empathy, and team development, aligning evaluation systems with transformational and ethical leadership principles.

Furthermore, the organisation should establish a continuous gender audit mechanism to monitor progress in women's representation, leadership influence, and inclusion. Annual reports highlighting gender distribution, promotion patterns, and content inclusivity would promote transparency and accountability. These audits could also track the impact of female leadership on innovation and cultural change, providing empirical data to support policy refinement. As Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) argue, systemic change in gender equity requires institutional feedback loops that measure and adjust interventions over time.

Finally, there is a need for cross-industry collaboration to share best practices on gender and leadership transformation in Ghana's media sector. Media General could partner with other media houses, NGOs, and governmental bodies to host an annual "Women in Media Leadership Forum," showcasing female-led innovations and promoting policy advocacy. Such collaborative platforms would position Media General as a national leader in gender-equitable leadership and extend its transformational impact beyond its organisational boundaries. This recommendation supports Batliwala's (2011) concept of feminist leadership for social transformation, where individual empowerment translates into collective institutional change.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

Although this study provides rich qualitative insights into women's leadership at Media General, its findings are based on a single case study design, limiting the generalisability of results across Ghana's broader media landscape. While Media General offers a robust model of gender inclusion, other organisations may differ significantly in structure, policy, and culture. Therefore, caution must be exercised in applying these findings universally to all media institutions. Additionally, the study relied primarily on interview data, which, while in-depth, may reflect subjective interpretations rather than objective organisational realities.

Another limitation relates to the sensitivity of the research topic. Discussions around gender, leadership, and organisational culture often evoke personal and social biases that may influence participants' responses. Some participants might have underreported negative experiences due to fear of reputational risk or organisational loyalty. Furthermore, time constraints restricted the inclusion of longitudinal data, which could have captured cultural and leadership transformations over time. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the interplay between gender, leadership, and organisational transformation in the Ghanaian media context.

#### **5.5 Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research should adopt a comparative, multi-case approach by examining women's leadership across different media organisations in Ghana and West Africa. Such studies would enable cross-institutional analysis of gender equity practices, leadership effectiveness, and cultural dynamics, providing a broader understanding of systemic patterns in the media sector. Comparative studies could also highlight contextual factors, such as ownership structures and market orientation, that influence gender representation and leadership styles across diverse media environments.

Additionally, future studies should consider incorporating longitudinal designs to track the evolution of women's leadership impact over time. Examining how policies, leadership practices, and organisational cultures shift under sustained female leadership would provide deeper insights into the durability of cultural transformation. Longitudinal research could also assess how mentorship and empowerment networks influence the next generation of women leaders within the media ecosystem.

Finally, researchers should explore the intersectionality of women's leadership experiences by considering factors such as age, ethnicity, class, and educational background. Intersectional studies would help uncover nuanced patterns of inclusion and exclusion, illustrating how multiple identities shape leadership opportunities and challenges. Moreover, integrating quantitative methods, such as surveys on employee perceptions and leadership effectiveness, could complement qualitative insights, offering a more comprehensive and empirically grounded understanding of gendered leadership in media organisations.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN LEADERS**

This interview aims to explore the roles women occupy in leadership at Media General, understand how their leadership influences innovation and organisational operations, and examine how organisational culture affects their leadership experiences and effectiveness.

#### **Section A: Background Information**

1. Please tell me about your current role and main responsibilities at Media General.
  - a. How long have you been in this position, and what was your journey into leadership like?
2. How would you describe your approach to leading teams or managing projects?
  - a. Would you say your leadership style has evolved, and if so, what experiences shaped that change?

#### **Section B: Leadership Roles and Positions**

3. How would you describe women's representation and participation in leadership roles within Media General?
  - a. Are there specific areas or departments where women are more visible or have greater influence? Why do you think that is?
4. What challenges or opportunities have you observed for women aspiring to leadership positions at Media General?
  - a. Can you share any personal experiences or examples that illustrate these challenges or opportunities?

#### **Section C: Women's Leadership and Innovation**

5. In what ways do you think women leaders have contributed to innovation and new ideas at Media General?
  - a. Please describe some specific examples of an innovation, programme, or initiative led by a woman that had a noticeable impact on the organisation.

6. How does Media General support or encourage innovation among women leaders?
- a. Are there organisational policies, informal practices, or leadership networks that foster creativity and experimentation?

#### **Section D: Organisational Culture and Leadership Experiences**

7. How would you describe the organisational culture at Media General, particularly in terms of gender dynamics and inclusion?
- a. What aspects of this culture support or hinder women's leadership effectiveness?
8. How do you think women in leadership positions have influenced or shaped the culture of Media General?
- a. Have you noticed any changes in attitudes, practices, or relationships as more women have taken on leadership roles?

#### **Section E: Reflections and Recommendations**

9. What have been the most significant lessons or insights from your experience as a woman in leadership at Media General?
- a. How have these experiences shaped your perspective on leadership and organisational change?
10. What recommendations would you make to strengthen women's leadership and innovation at Media General?
- a. Are there specific organisational practices or cultural shifts that could help make leadership more inclusive?

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES WORKING UNDER WOMEN LEADERS**

### **Section A: Background Information**

1. Could you please describe your current position and the department you work in at Media General?
2. How long have you worked with Media General, and how long have you been working with women leaders in your unit or department?
3. In what capacity do you interact with women leaders (e.g., direct reporting, project collaboration, content development, etc.)?
4. How would you describe your general working relationship with women leaders?
5. From your experience, how has the presence of women leaders influenced your department or team dynamics?

### **Section B: Leadership Roles of Women at Media General**

6. What leadership positions do women hold in your department or within the organisation as a whole?
7. How would you describe their roles and responsibilities compared to male leaders?
8. How visible and influential do you think women leaders are in organisational decision-making?
9. What qualities or characteristics stand out in the leadership styles of women you work with?
10. In your view, how does the organisation support or limit women's progression into leadership roles?

### **Section C: Women's Leadership and Innovation**

11. How have women leaders influenced creativity or innovation within your department or projects?
12. Can you describe any specific initiatives or programmes introduced by women leaders that improved operations or content?
13. How do women leaders encourage teamwork and collaboration in generating new ideas?
14. In your opinion, do women leaders manage innovation differently from their male counterparts?
15. How receptive is the organisation to innovative ideas initiated by women leaders?

### **Section D: Organisational Culture and Leadership Experiences**

16. How would you describe the general organisational culture at Media General?
17. In what ways does this culture support or challenge women in leadership positions?
18. How do colleagues generally perceive and respond to women in authority?
19. Have you observed any changes in organisational culture since more women began holding leadership roles?

20. How do women leaders themselves shape or influence workplace culture within your team or department?