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DEEPFAKES, PUBLIC TRUST, AND DIGITAL REPUTATION: UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC FIGURES AND CRISIS RESPONDERS IN GHANA.

BY

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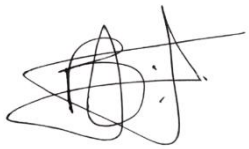
DECLARATIONS

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Belinda Kumah, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that, to the best of my knowledge, it has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for the award of any degree at any other institution. All sources of information including quotations and references contained in published works and data used in this work have been duly acknowledged. Therefore, I bear the responsibility for any shortcomings.



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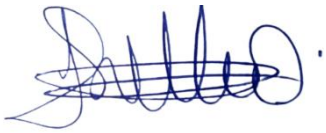
I, the undersigned supervisor, declare that I supervised the preparation and presentation of this work in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of Masters' theses as laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC).



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Dr Joshua Doe

(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

To my dear husband, Kelvin Offei Van-Addo, whose love, support, and steadfast belief in my dreams have been my anchor. Your encouragement has made this accomplishment possible. Your belief in me strengthened my resolve, even during the most demanding moments.

To Belvin Bediako Van-Addo, whose life is already a blessing. You are a source of profound inspiration. May this achievement one day remind you that perseverance opens doors and that pursuit of education is a path to limitless possibilities. As a family, we believe and sustain life-long learning. Welcome!

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ABSTRACT

Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) have transformed content production and communication processes globally, but they have also introduced new risks, particularly the rise of AI-generated misinformation and deepfakes targeting public figures. In Ghana, where digital media consumption continues to grow rapidly, the threat of manipulated audio, images, and videos poses significant challenges to public trust, brand credibility, and institutional communication. This study examined how AI-generated false content affects Ghanaian public figures and analyzed the strategies adopted by communication professionals to mitigate reputational damage.

Using a qualitative research design, the study engaged six participants: two public figures, a fact-checker, a digital forensics expert, and two communication/PR professionals. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that AI-generated misinformation in Ghana is expressed primarily through manipulated audio, deepfake images and videos, and altered media house creative cards. Although deepfake sophistication is still emerging, the speed and scale of online dissemination significantly magnify its effects.

The study found that misinformation severely undermines audience trust, erodes brand affinity, and imposes substantial psychological and professional strain on public figures. Communication teams experience increased operational pressure as they respond to crisis triggered by falsified content. Verification processes, such as frame-by-frame video analysis, metadata checks, reverse image searches, and QR-coded authenticity systems, play a crucial role in detecting false content. However, smaller media platforms struggle due to limited forensic capacity and digital literacy gaps.

Institutions rely on rapid corrective communication strategies, including official statements, evidence-based comparisons, and multi-platform responses. Despite these efforts,

misinformation often spreads faster than corrections, highlighting a persistent imbalance in the digital ecosystem. Participants also pointed out regulatory shortcomings, including weak enforcement of Ghana's AI and cybersecurity policies and inadequate penalties for perpetrators.

The study concludes that safeguarding public figures in the AI era requires a multi-dimensional approach: stronger detection infrastructure, improved public education, robust PR response protocols, and coordinated national policy efforts. Recommendations include establishing dedicated digital monitoring units, enhancing verification systems, accelerating enforcement of AI governance frameworks, and integrating AI misinformation modules into communication and PR training.

Overall, the study contributes to emerging scholarship on AI-driven misinformation in Africa and offers practical, policy, and academic pathways for addressing deepfakes within Ghana's media landscape.

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1.0 CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed the global media and communication landscape, redefining how information is created, shared, and consumed. Among the most influential developments of this technological revolution is the emergence of AI-generated content in texts, images, audio, and videos produced through machine learning algorithms (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020). From chatbots and automated journalism to deepfake videos and synthetic voiceovers, AI has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish authentic human expression from algorithmic fabrication (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). This transformation has generated both opportunities and challenges across industries, particularly in the field of Public Relations (PR) and brand communication (Theaker, 2022).

In recent years, AI-generated contents have begun to influence how audiences perceive public figures, especially brand ambassadors. Brand ambassadors, individuals whose personal image and credibility are leveraged to represent and promote a brand, play a vital role in shaping consumer attitudes and organizational reputation (Keller, 2013; Khatri, 2021). However, the proliferation of AI-generated false content has introduced a new layer of vulnerability to their professional and personal brands. Misinformation, manipulated media, and fabricated statements generated through AI tools can easily tarnish reputations, distort brand narratives, and erode public trust (Hancock et al., 2021).

Globally, the impact of such technologies has already been observed in several high-profile incidents where synthetic media has been used to impersonate celebrities, politicians, and corporate leaders. Deepfake videos, in particular, have been weaponized to create false impressions of individuals engaging in controversial acts or making inflammatory statements

(West, 2019; Paris & Donovan, 2019). While some of these occurrences have been swiftly debunked, the initial reputational damage and public confusion often linger, creating long-term image challenges for affected individuals and their affiliated brands (Gorwa, Binns, & Katzenbach, 2020).

In Ghana, the issue is emerging with growing concern. As the digital ecosystem expands and social media becomes central to brand communication, the potential for AI-generated misinformation to harm public figures is becoming more pronounced (Ofori, 2023). Ghanaian brand ambassadors, many of whom operate within the spheres of entertainment, politics, and journalism, are particularly susceptible to false narratives that can spread rapidly across digital platforms (Adu-Gyamfi & Nyarko, 2022). The consequences of such falsehoods extend beyond personal embarrassment; they can lead to diminished brand partnerships, loss of audience trust, and a decline in public credibility (Nyarko, 2021).

This study therefore focuses on the broader cohort of Ghanaian brand ambassadors and related communication stakeholders, examining how AI-generated content affects their reputations and the strategies practitioners use to mitigate harm. Drawing on interviews with public personalities, PR professionals, fact-checkers and cybersecurity personnel, the research seeks to understand the implications of synthetic content for reputation management, media ethics and digital literacy in Ghana (Diakopoulos, 2019; Lacy & Rosenstiel, 2021).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) in content creation has ushered in a new era of communication where digital material can be generated, altered, and distributed with minimal human intervention. While AI tools such as ChatGPT, image-generation and deepfake software have revolutionized creativity and marketing, they have also created new ethical and reputational risks (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). A growing concern is the misuse of these technologies to produce fabricated or misleading content, often indistinguishable from authentic materials. This phenomenon, referred to as information disorder, threatens public trust in digital communication and has serious implications for individuals and institutions whose credibility depends on authenticity.

In Ghana, where the influence of social media on public opinion continues to expand, the rapid spread of AI-generated misinformation has begun to affect public figures, including brand ambassadors. These individuals play crucial roles in shaping consumer perceptions and representing brands' values. However, recent incidents suggest that AI-generated or manipulated content can distort public narratives about them, leading to reputational harm and public confusion (Ofori & Asare, 2022). For instance, Honourable Sam George and Bernard Avle have both faced digital controversies in which online misinformation or manipulated imagery circulated widely, underscoring the growing vulnerability of public figures to AI-driven distortions.

Despite increasing awareness of the issue, there is limited empirical research in Ghana exploring how AI-generated content specifically impacts brand ambassadors and their professional credibility. Much of the existing literature focuses on AI in marketing efficiency or general misinformation but fails to address the nuanced intersection between artificial content creation and personal branding within the Ghanaian context (Afolayan & Boateng, 2023). Moreover, discussions at the Africa Digital Festival (2025) highlighted that while the

continent embraces digital transformation, few protective measures or communication frameworks have been developed to safeguard individuals against synthetic digital manipulation.

This gap in knowledge leaves both practitioners and policymakers without clear strategies to respond to the ethical and reputational challenges presented by AI-generated content. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how AI-generated content affects brand ambassadors in Ghana and explore the adaptive strategies they can employ to safeguard their credibility and maintain public trust in an increasingly AI-mediated communication environment.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Artificial Intelligence continues to redefine the boundaries of communication, image management, and digital identity. In Ghana, where the social media sphere has become a major platform for brand communication and influencer engagement, AI-generated content introduces both opportunities and risks. The present study is therefore guided by the overarching aim of examining how AI-generated content affects Ghanaian brand ambassadors, specifically exploring the experiences, perceptions, and responses. The study also aims to contribute to a broader understanding of digital authenticity and reputation management strategies in an era where fabricated content can easily circulate through social networks and online media.

1.3.1 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the types and prevalence of AI-generated content within Ghana's digital communication landscape.

2. Investigate how AI-generated content influences the personal and professional image of brand ambassadors in Ghana.
3. Explore the lived experiences of notable Ghanaian public figures with AI-generated or manipulated content and how it has affected their reputational standing.
4. Identify the strategies and coping mechanisms adopted to counter or mitigate the negative impact of AI-generated content.

1.3.2 Research Questions

In alignment with the above objectives, the study seeks to answer the following key research questions:

1. What types of AI-generated content are most prevalent in Ghana's digital communication landscape?
2. In what ways does AI-generated content affect the reputation and credibility of Ghanaian brand ambassadors?
3. What are the personal and professional experiences of Ghanaian brand ambassadors and related stakeholders with AI-generated misinformation or digital manipulation?
4. How can brand ambassadors, PR practitioners, media organizations and regulators respond to or manage the effects of AI-generated false content?
5. What practical and strategic approaches can be developed to protect and sustain the reputational integrity of brand ambassadors in Ghana?

1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is defined by its focus on the intersection between Artificial Intelligence, digital media communication, and brand ambassadorship within the Ghanaian context. The study investigates how AI-generated content affects the reputation and professional credibility of Ghanaian brand ambassadors and examines the perspectives of related stakeholders (PR professionals, fact-checkers, and cybersecurity personnel).

Geographically, the study is limited to Ghana, a country whose expanding digital ecosystem reflects both the promise and the perils of the AI era. The research will primarily draw data from Accra and other major urban centers where brand communication, influencer marketing, and media engagement are most active. This geographical limitation ensures a contextually grounded analysis that reflects Ghana's unique sociocultural and technological realities.

Conceptually, the study is confined to AI-generated content, including but not limited to deep-fake videos, synthetic audio, algorithmically produced images, and text-based misinformation. It does not examine other forms of traditional or human-created disinformation except where they intersect with AI-mediated manipulation. By focusing on AI-generated content, the study aims to deepen understanding of how automated digital technologies influence public perception, trust, and reputation management among brand ambassadors.

Temporally, the research covers developments from 2020 to 2025, a period characterized by the rapid diffusion of AI technologies in communication and marketing across Ghana and the wider African region. This timeframe captures the emergence of AI-generated content as a significant social and reputational issue, coinciding with the rise of digital influences, the proliferation of social media platforms, and the increasing accessibility of AI-driven media tools.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative research design, allowing for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and coping strategies. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and digital content analysis of relevant online materials relating to the selected cases. The use of qualitative methods ensures a nuanced understanding of how brand ambassadors interpret and respond to AI-generated content within their specific socio-cultural and professional contexts.

However, the study will not attempt to measure the quantitative frequency or volume of AI-generated content circulating in Ghana, as that would require large-scale computational analysis beyond its scope. Instead, it will focus on interpretive depth, exploring meaning, implication, and strategy rather than numerical patterns.

By delimiting the research to the Ghanaian context and to specific cases of prominent public figures, this study aims to generate insights that are both locally relevant and potentially applicable across the African digital communication landscape. The findings are expected to contribute to policy discussions, ethical guidelines, and professional practices that can strengthen trust, transparency, and accountability in brand communication amid the challenges posed by artificial intelligence.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the complex relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital communication, and brand reputation within the Ghanaian context. As AI-generated content increasingly infiltrates media spaces, its implications for credibility, authenticity, and public trust cannot be overlooked especially for brand ambassadors whose professional value is built on image, influence, and integrity.

From an academic perspective, this research extends the body of knowledge in communication studies, public relations, and media ethics by focusing on a relatively underexplored area in Africa, the impact of AI-generated content on personal and brand reputation. While global research has addressed AI ethics and misinformation in Western contexts (e.g., Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020; West, 2019; Hancock et al., 2021), limited empirical studies have examined how such phenomena affect communication practitioners and brand figures in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Ghana. This research therefore fills a contextual gap by offering insights into how AI technologies are reshaping media credibility and trust within emerging digital economies.

From a professional standpoint, the findings of this study are particularly relevant to public relations practitioners, brand managers, communication consultants, and digital strategists. The study's results will help professionals understand the mechanisms through which AI-generated misinformation spread and the reputational risks it poses to clients and ambassadors. Furthermore, it will offer evidence-based strategies for crisis management, image restoration, and ethical communication practices in a digitized environment. The insights drawn from the lived experiences of the brand ambassadors and the stakeholders will serve as a framework for developing localized PR interventions that respond effectively to AI-driven disinformation.

From a societal and policy perspective, the study contributes to ongoing conversations about digital ethics, AI governance, and media literacy in Ghana. As speakers at the recent Africa Digital Festival emphasized, the rapid integration of AI tools across sectors must be accompanied by a strong ethical and educational framework to prevent abuse and misinformation (Africa Digital Festival, 2025). The festival's keynote discussion on "Responsible AI for Africa's Digital Future" particularly stressed the need for proactive policies to safeguard citizens and public figures from reputational manipulation through

synthetic media. This aligns with the study's broader objective of advocating for digital responsibility and protection for individuals operating in public communication spaces.

Moreover, the study bears practical implications for Ghanaian brand ambassadors, who are increasingly exposed to digital manipulation that can distort their brand identity. By identifying effective coping mechanisms and reputation management strategies, this research will empower ambassadors to maintain authenticity and public trust despite the threats posed by AI-generated falsehoods.

Ultimately, the study will contribute to the global discourse on AI ethics and human reputation, presenting a Ghanaian case that illustrates how local actors are navigating global digital disruptions. It will also encourage institutions, such as the National Communications Authority, the Ministry of Information, and PR associations to adopt policies that address the misuse of AI technologies in media and communication.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is structured into five chapters, each addressing a key component of the research process.

Chapter One presents the background to the study, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope, limitations, and definitions of key terms. It also outlines the organization of the entire thesis.

Chapter Two provides a review of relevant literature. It examines theoretical perspectives on misinformation and deepfakes, empirical studies on AI-generated false content, reputation management, and the digital media ecosystem in Ghana. The chapter also identifies gaps in existing research that justify the present study.

Chapter Three describes the methodological approach adopted for the study. It outlines the research design, sampling strategy, participant profiles, data collection procedures, interview guide, ethical considerations, and the data analysis procedures guided by thematic analysis.

Chapter Four presents the results and analysis of the study. The chapter includes the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews, supported by direct quotations from participants. It also integrates the findings with existing literature and discusses their theoretical and practical relevance.

Chapter Five concludes the study by summarizing the key findings, drawing conclusions, and presenting practical, academic, and policy recommendations. It also proposes areas for future research in relation to AI-generated misinformation and reputation management in Ghana.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews existing scholarly and professional literature related to the impact of artificial intelligence (AI)-generated content on brand ambassadors, focusing on global perspectives and contextualizing them within the Ghanaian digital communication environment. The purpose of the literature review is to provide a conceptual and theoretical foundation that informs the study, identifies knowledge gaps, and situates the research within ongoing academic discourse.

The chapter begins by defining key concepts such as artificial intelligence, AI-generated content, brand ambassadors, misinformation, and disinformation. It then explores the evolution of AI in communication, the emergence of synthetic media, and their implications for personal and brand reputation management. Scholarly and industry-based perspectives are reviewed to understand how digital manipulation and automated content generation influence audience perceptions, trust, and authenticity in brand representation.

Furthermore, the chapter draws attention to theoretical frameworks that explain communication credibility, technology adoption, and information disorder. These frameworks help guide the interpretation of findings in later chapters. By the end of this literature review, the reader should have a clear understanding of the academic landscape surrounding AI, branding, and ethics as well as the critical gaps this research aims to address, particularly in the context of Ghana's media and marketing industries.

2.2 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

To ensure conceptual clarity and consistency, this section defines the key terms that underpin the study.

Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Artificial intelligence refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, perception, and problem-solving (Russell & Norvig, 2021). In communication and marketing, AI is used for data analysis, audience targeting, and increasingly, content creation.

AI-Generated Content:

AI-generated content is any form of text, image, video, or audio produced or significantly modified by artificial intelligence algorithms without direct human authorship (Crawford, 2021). This includes tools like ChatGPT, Midjourney, or deepfake generators that automate creative or persuasive messaging. While such tools enhance efficiency and personalization, they also pose ethical risks such as misinformation and deception.

Synthetic Media:

Synthetic media refers to AI-produced or manipulated media that can convincingly simulate real people, voices, or events (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Deepfakes, hyper-realistic digital fabrications of individuals, are a notable example. These technologies can be used creatively in advertising but also maliciously to spread false information.

Brand Ambassador:

A brand ambassador is an individual, often a public figure or influencer, who represents and promotes a company's products or image to a target audience (Keller, 2013). The ambassador's credibility and public image directly affect consumer perception and brand equity. In the digital age, these figures play dual roles as both marketing agents and online personas vulnerable to digital manipulation.

Misinformation and Disinformation:

Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information shared without harmful intent, while

disinformation denotes deliberately deceptive content created to mislead or manipulate audiences (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). The distinction is critical in understanding how AI-generated falsehoods may affect brand ambassadors' reputations, regardless of the creator's intent.

Digital Reputation Management:

Digital reputation management involves strategies and practices used to monitor, influence, and protect an individual's or organization's image across online platforms (Jones, 2020). For brand ambassadors, maintaining a positive digital reputation requires proactive engagement, verification mechanisms, and crisis communication planning.

Information Disorder:

Coined by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), information disorder refers to the complex ecosystem of misinformation, disinformation, and misinformation that distorts truth and trust in digital communication. It serves as a conceptual lens for analysing how AI-generated content disrupts authenticity and credibility in the public sphere.

2.3 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.3.1 Introduction to AI and Content Generation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized global communication by enabling machines to perform cognitive tasks such as content creation, prediction, and personalization. The advent of deep learning and natural language processing has led to the creation of AI-generated texts, images, and videos that mimic human production with alarming precision (Chesney & Citron, 2019). According to Vaccari and Chadwick (2020), deepfake technologies now play a crucial role in spreading misinformation, leading to a "crisis of authenticity" in digital communication. These technologies challenge the traditional boundaries of human creativity and factual credibility, creating serious ethical and reputational risks.

2.3.2 Reputational Risks and Brand Ambassadors

Brand ambassadors rely heavily on authenticity and trust, making them highly vulnerable to AI-generated deception. Hancock and Bailenson (2021) observed that synthetic media can irreversibly damage a person's image by circulating realistic but false narratives. When audiences encounter such content, they may internalize it as truth, leading to long-term reputational harm.

In Ghana, Appiah and Boateng (2024) reported that manipulated videos and AI-edited voice clips have targeted public figures such as politicians, journalists, and entertainers. Such misinformation has led to public backlash, endorsement withdrawals, and credibility erosion. These developments highlight a widening gap between technological innovation and the preparedness of Ghana's communication professionals.

2.3.3 Ethical and Institutional Implications

Beyond reputational concerns, scholars have pointed out broader ethical dilemmas surrounding AI-generated misinformation. Floridi et al. (2020) introduced the notion of *moral opacity*, where it becomes difficult to determine who is responsible for harm caused by autonomous systems. This creates accountability challenges for organizations and PR practitioners. Similarly, Macnamara (2021) warns that PR professionals must now manage "technological truth" where what appears real may not necessarily be authentic.

The National Media Commission of Ghana (2024) observed a 35% annual increase in online misinformation, with AI-generated visuals contributing significantly. These findings reveal institutional unpreparedness for combating synthetic disinformation and highlight the urgent need for ethical frameworks.

2.3.4 The African Context and the 2025 Africa Digital Festival

At the Africa Digital Festival (2025) held in Accra, experts stressed that Africa must establish localized frameworks for AI governance and digital responsibility. Ethel Cofie (2025)

emphasized that while AI promises innovation and inclusion, its misuse represents a "new frontier of reputational warfare." She urged African communicators to integrate AI literacy and ethics into strategic communication practice. Kwame Opoku (2025) added that African nations should not rely solely on Western ethical models but instead develop homegrown AI ethics that reflect local socio-cultural realities.

These conversations highlight Africa's dual role as both a consumer and a creator of AI technology, one that must balance opportunity with accountability.

2.3.5 Psychological and Societal Implications

Misinformation does not merely distort facts; it manipulates emotions and deepens societal divisions. Marwick and Lewis (2020) found that false narratives spread more effectively than factual ones because they appeal to emotions such as fear, anger, or humour. Boateng and Asare (2022) observed similar trends in Ghanaian digital spaces, where fake content has influenced public opinion, intensified political polarization, and triggered online harassment.

For PR practitioners, this means crisis communication strategies must account for emotional contagion, the process by which misinformation evokes intense emotional responses that shape audience perception.

The reviewed literature establishes that AI-generated misinformation is a multifaceted challenge with technological, ethical, and reputational dimensions. Global research underscores its impact on authenticity, credibility, and crisis management. However, Ghanaian scholarship on this phenomenon remains limited. There is insufficient empirical understanding of how brand ambassadors and PR professionals in Ghana perceive and respond to AI-generated falsehoods. This study therefore contributes new insights by exploring localized experiences and proposing context-specific strategies to protect digital reputations in an AI-driven era.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on Framing Theory, Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), and Agenda-Setting Theory (AST), providing a comprehensive lens for understanding how AI-generated content influences the reputation of brand ambassadors in Ghana and how they strategically respond.

2.4.1. Framing Theory

Framing Theory, as articulated by Entman (1993), posits that the presentation of information through selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration significantly shapes audience perception and interpretation of reality. In the digital age, AI-generated content such as deepfake videos, synthetic news articles, and manipulated audio can manipulate frames, distort public perception and potentially undermine the credibility of high-profile individuals. Understanding these framing processes is crucial for PR practitioners and brand ambassadors as it allows them to anticipate, counter, and strategically reframe misinformation to protect reputation and maintain audience trust.

2.4.2. Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Complementing the framing theory is the Situational Crisis Communication Theory. SCCT provides practical guidance for responding to crises based on the level of perceived responsibility and reputational threat (Coombs, 2007, 2015). When brand ambassadors become targets of AI-generated false content, they are often classified within the victim cluster, as the falsehood originates externally. SCCT outlines response strategies ranging from denial, excuse, and justification to corrective action, emphasizing ethical and transparent engagement to maintain credibility. The theory is particularly relevant in Ghana's social media landscape, where public judgment is often immediate, and reputational damage can escalate rapidly. Applying SCCT helps explain how affected individuals can manage crises, choose appropriate response strategies, and mitigate long-term reputational harm in the context of AI-driven misinformation.

2.4.3 Agenda-Setting Theory

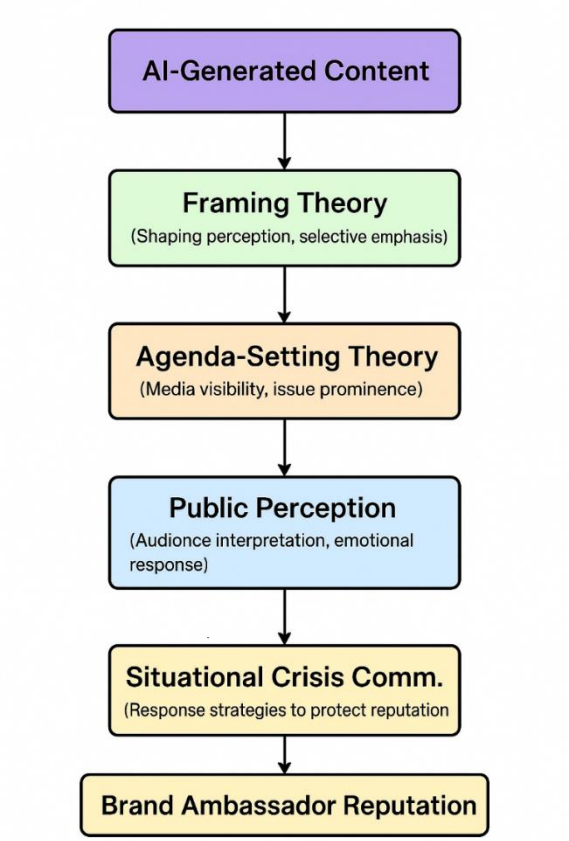
Lastly, the Agenda-Setting Theory further enriches this framework by explaining how media and digital platforms influence public attention and the salience of issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). AI-generated misinformation can gain traction not only because of its content but also due to algorithmic amplification, digital echo chambers, and user engagement that prioritize certain narratives over others. This process shapes what audiences focus on and how they interpret brand ambassadors' reputations. Integrating AST allows this study to analyze the mechanisms through which false narratives dominate public discourse, the role of media in either amplifying or mitigating these narratives, and the interplay between visibility, attention, and audience perception in shaping reputational outcomes.

Together, these three theories offer a multidimensional framework: Framing Theory addresses how misinformation is constructed and perceived; SCCT explains how brand ambassadors can respond strategically to reputational threats; and AST illuminates the dynamics of media attention and narrative prominence. By combining these perspectives, the study gains a holistic understanding of AI-generated misinformation, its impact on public perception, and the strategies available for effective reputation management within Ghana's evolving digital communication environment.

2.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between AI-generated content (independent variable) and the reputation management of brand ambassadors (dependent variable), mediated by public perception, media visibility, and crisis response strategies. Table 1 presents a visual representation of this framework.

Table 2.5.1



AI-generated content has the potential to shape public perception through selective presentation, framing, and algorithm-driven visibility. Drawing from Framing Theory, the study posits that the way false or manipulated content is constructed significantly influences audience interpretation and emotional response. Information framed to appear credible or urgent may alter perceptions, manipulate trust, or evoke reputational harm.

The Agenda-Setting Theory complements this perspective by explaining how media channels, both traditional and digital, determine which narratives gain prominence. AI-generated content amplified through social media algorithms can prioritize certain issues, stories, or individuals, shaping what the public focuses on and potentially escalating reputational risk before corrective action is taken.

Once public perception is affected, Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) provides a framework for understanding how brand ambassadors can strategically respond to

reputational threats. Depending on the perceived responsibility and severity of the crisis, responses such as denial, justification, or corrective action may be applied to protect credibility and mitigate harm. SCCT emphasizes the alignment of response strategies with the type and attribution of the crisis, highlighting the importance of ethical, timely, and transparent communication.

The integration of these three theories in the conceptual framework allows for a multidimensional analysis: Framing Theory explains content construction and audience interpretation, Agenda-Setting Theory illustrates the role of media in influencing attention and visibility, and SCCT guides strategic responses to reputational threats. Together, they establish a lens through which the mechanisms of AI-generated misinformation, public perception, and reputational management can be systematically studied in the Ghanaian context.

This framework informs data collection, guiding the exploration of how AI-generated false content is disseminated, interpreted by audiences, and addressed by brand ambassadors. It also provides a basis for analysing patterns in media coverage, audience reactions, and strategic crisis communication practices.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and justifies the methodological approach adopted for the study. It outlines the research paradigm, research approach and design, as well as the population, sampling strategy, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and data analysis procedures employed. These methods were carefully selected to ensure that the research objectives were effectively addressed and that the study produced credible, valid, and contextually relevant findings.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Researchers' beliefs in conducting research are emphasized by the research paradigm. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) noted that researchers' beliefs are centered on either positivism, interpretivism, or pragmatism. These beliefs describe the researcher's position in terms of his or her views and beliefs about reality and knowledge (ontology) and the process of acquiring this knowledge (epistemology) (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Accordingly, this study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm.

Interpretivism is premised on the assumption that reality is multiple, socially constructed, and context-dependent (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It recognizes that the experiences and perceptions of individuals such as Ghanaian brand ambassadors are shaped by their interactions, societal norms, and media contexts. Unlike positivism, which emphasizes objective measurement, interpretivism seeks to understand subjective realities through participants lived experiences.

Knowledge is therefore co-constructed between the researcher and participants, emerging from dialogue, reflection, and interpretation (Schwandt, 2000).

This paradigm also accounts for the role of researcher values in the study. Axiologically, the researcher acknowledges that personal experiences, ethical stance, and reflexivity influence the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Ethical engagement, empathy, and transparency guide the interpretation of participants' narratives, ensuring that their voices are represented authentically.

Methodologically, the interpretivist paradigm supports the use of qualitative approaches, including phenomenological research and case study analysis, which enable the exploration of participants' experiences with AI-generated misinformation in depth. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were employed to gather rich, detailed data, and manual thematic analysis using Microsoft Word was applied to identify patterns, themes, and meanings across participants' narratives. This approach ensures that insights are grounded in the social and cultural context of Ghana's digital communication environment.

By adopting the interpretivist paradigm, the study emphasizes understanding meanings, perspectives, and coping strategies of brand ambassadors in navigating AI-generated content. It allows the researcher to explore the nuanced effects on reputation, professional credibility, and communication practices while maintaining a rigorous, ethical, and contextually grounded approach.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach provides the procedural framework that connects the study's philosophical assumptions to its practical design. Consistent with the interpretivist paradigm, this study adopts a phenomenological research approach to explore the lived experiences of Ghanaian brand ambassadors affected by AI-generated content. Phenomenology focuses on

understanding how individuals perceive, experience, and assign meaning to a particular phenomenon within their social and cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The choice of phenomenology is justified by the study's aim to examine *how AI-generated* misinformation influences the professional identities, reputations, and coping strategies of Ghanaian brand ambassadors, as well as how they interpret and navigate such crisis. This approach is ideal for capturing firsthand accounts of how participants experience the emergence of synthetic content (such as deepfakes or fabricated news) and the emotional, social, and professional implications that follow. It allows the researcher to move beyond surface-level observation toward understanding the *essence* of these experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological research aligns with the interpretivist assumption that reality is subjective and constructed through individual meaning-making. The researcher seeks to understand the phenomenon as it is experienced by participants rather than imposing external interpretations. Through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the study will elicit rich descriptions that reveal both the commonalities and variations in how brand ambassadors experience and respond to AI-generated misinformation.

Furthermore, phenomenology enables reflexivity an essential aspect of qualitative inquiry where the researcher continuously examines personal biases and perspectives to ensure that interpretations remain faithful to participants lived realities (van Manen, 2016). This approach therefore supports a deeper, more empathetic understanding of how public figures in Ghana construct their sense of authenticity and credibility in a digital landscape increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence.

In summary, the phenomenological approach allows the study to illuminate the essence of the experience of being a brand ambassador in the age of AI-generated misinformation. It provides

a structured yet flexible framework to uncover the meanings, perceptions, and coping mechanisms that define this complex social phenomenon.

3.4 POPULATION

This study focused on Ghanaian brand ambassadors, communication professionals, fact-checkers and tech experts who have directly experienced or responded to AI-generated misinformation and deepfake. The target population was selected because these individuals possess firsthand knowledge of how AI-generated content can influence personal and professional reputation.

Given the phenomenological approach, which seeks to uncover shared lived experiences rather than generalize to a larger population, a purposive sampling strategy was employed to identify participants capable of articulating their experiences clearly and reflectively (Moustakas, 1994). The study engaged six participants across the groups and used snowball referrals until thematic saturation was achieved, meaning no new insights emerged from additional interviews (Guest et al., 2020). Consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring voluntary and ethical engagement throughout the study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

For the phenomenological approach, the study focused on gathering rich, descriptive accounts of the participants lived experiences with AI-generated misinformation. The primary data collection technique employed was in-depth, semi-structured interviews, supported by reflective field notes and documentary materials.

In-depth Interviews

Phenomenological research relies heavily on in-depth interviews to uncover the meanings that participants assign to their experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Each interview lasted between 30

and 45 minutes and was conducted either in person, or via phone calls depending on participants' preferences. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions that encouraged reflection on personal encounters with misinformation, emotional and reputational impacts, and coping or management strategies.

Reflective Field Notes

During each interaction, the researcher maintained reflective field notes to document non-verbal cues, contextual observations, and interpretive reflections that enriched the understanding of participants' experiences. These notes also supported the process of bracketing, a key step in phenomenological research where the researcher sets aside personal biases to focus on participants' authentic experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019).

All interviews were recorded with participants' consent, transcribed with transcription software and edited, and anonymized to ensure confidentiality and data integrity.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The phenomenological data collection process was structured to capture the essence of participants lived experiences with AI-generated misinformation and its effects on their professional identity and reputation. The process unfolded in three systematic stages—preparation, engagement, and consolidation.

Stage One: Preparation

Before data collection, the researcher conducted a literature-informed review to identify key themes and guide the design of the interview protocol. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling, ensuring that each had experienced or managed an incident of AI-driven misinformation. Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained, and

participants were briefed on the research objectives, confidentiality measures, and voluntary nature of participation (Moustakas, 1994).

Stage Two: Engagement

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six participants, including brand ambassadors, public personalities, PR professionals, fact-checkers and cybersecurity personnel. Interviews were held either face-to-face or virtually, depending on participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and followed a conversational yet reflective format to elicit detailed, emotional, and cognitive reflections on participants' experiences (Seidman, 2019).

The researcher maintained reflective field notes to document contextual cues and personal impressions while employing bracketing to minimize personal bias. Audio recordings were securely stored, and participants were given opportunities to clarify or elaborate on key points during or after interviews.

Stage Three: Consolidation

Following data collection, all interviews were transcribed. Each transcript was anonymized and assigned a participant code (e.g., P1, P2) to ensure confidentiality. The researcher then engaged in initial memo writing, noting preliminary impressions, emotional tones, and recurring ideas that would later inform the thematic analysis.

This iterative process helped ensure that the data captured the authentic voices of participants while maintaining ethical integrity and phenomenological rigor.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before the commencement of the study, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the academic institution to ensure compliance with established research ethics and professional standards. Permission was also sought from relevant authorities and media institutions connected to the research. These clearances served as formal approval to conduct the research and demonstrated the study's commitment to integrity, transparency, and ethical responsibility.

Prior to data collection, participants were briefed on the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the study. They were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without providing a reason or facing any consequences. Participants provided verbal consents before interviews commenced.

The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym or code to protect their identity, and no identifying details were disclosed in the final report. Data collected, including audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored in a password-protected digital folder accessible only to the researcher.

Participants were treated with respect and dignity at all stages of the research process. The study was guided by an ethical commitment to protect participants from any potential psychological, social, or professional harm.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data in this research were analysed using manual thematic analysis, an interpretive method suitable for qualitative studies aiming to uncover patterns, meanings, and insights within participants' experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Prior to analysis, all interview responses and field notes were carefully reviewed for completeness and clarity.

Audio recordings were transcribed with the help of transcription software, and each transcript was cross-checked to ensure accuracy and consistency.

The transcribed data were systematically coded manually using Microsoft Word. Significant phrases, sentences, and ideas were highlighted and assigned codes that captured key concepts, such as "AI misinformation," "public trust," "reputation recovery," and "digital ethics." Similar codes were grouped into broader categories to form preliminary themes, enabling the researcher to detect patterns and recurring ideas relevant to the research questions.

Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework: data familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and report production. Themes were refined through iterative review, where transcripts were repeatedly examined to ensure that the identified themes accurately reflected participants' narratives. For instance, themes such as "AI misinformation and image distortion," "reputation management strategies," and "public trust in the digital era" were reviewed, adjusted, and clearly defined to reflect participants' experiences authentically.

Finally, a coherent narrative was produced, integrating direct quotations from participants to illustrate key findings and support interpretations. This manual thematic analysis process using Microsoft Word provided a systematic, transparent, and credible approach to understanding how AI-generated content affects the reputation and professional conduct of Ghanaian brand ambassadors.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with six participants: two public figures/brand ambassadors, two PR and communication professionals, a senior digital forensics expert from the National Cybersecurity Authority, and a fact-checking specialist from Media General. The analysis follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, progressing from open coding to axial and selective coding.

Findings are presented thematically, supported with direct quotations, tables, and interpretive discussions. The results are also examined in relation to existing literature and relevant theoretical frameworks, including Framing Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT).

4.2 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

After coding and thematic analysis across all six participants, five major themes emerged:

a. Prevalence and Forms of AI-Generated Misinformation
b. Reputational Impact on Public Figures and Brand Ambassadors
c. Detection Challenges and Systemic Capacity Gaps
d. Crisis Response Mechanisms and Mitigation Strategies
e. Recommendations for Strengthening National and Organizational Protocol

4.3 THEMATIC FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION, AND SUPPORTING QUOTES

4.3.1 Theme 1: Prevalence and Forms of AI-Generated Misinformation

4.3.1a Findings

All participants confirmed having experienced or encountered AI-generated or manipulated content, though the forms varied. The table below shows a breakdown of the common forms identified.

Table 4.3.1b: Forms of AI-Generated and Manipulated Misinformation Identified Across Participant Groups

Participant Type	Forms of Misinformation Identified
Public Figures	Fake statements, altered videos, impersonation
PR Professionals	Tampered creatives, fabricated news graphics
Forensics Expert	Deepfake audio/video, cloned voices, impersonation scams
Fact Checker	Manipulated quote cards, fake political cartoons, edited audio

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

4.3.1c Illustrative Quotes

- *"People take my voice and make it say things I never said."* — Public Figure
- *"Fake news cards with our branding altered circulate fast."* — PR Professional
- *"Deepfakes are increasingly realistic; even trained eyes struggle."* — Digital Forensics Expert
- *"Someone tweaked audio to communicate a completely different message."* — Fact Checker

4.3.1d Interpretation

Participants experienced both advanced and low-tech misinformation, consistent with West (2021), who argues that AI-driven misinformation ranges from sophisticated deepfakes to simple but deceptive graphic edits.

4.3.1e Connection to Literature

- Research by Hancock & Bailenson (2021) identifies audio manipulation as one of the fastest-growing global misinformation formats, a trend confirmed by participants.
- Similar to findings by Adu-Gyamfi & Nyarko (2022), Ghanaian public figures face misrepresentation primarily through image/graphic tampering and fake statements.

4.3.1f Theoretical Link

- Framing Theory: Manipulated content reframes public figures' words and actions, altering audience interpretation.
- Agenda-Setting: Viral AI content sets negative agendas before PR teams can intervene.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Reputational Impact on Public Figures and Brand Ambassadors

4.3.2a Findings

Participants described significant consequences for reputational capital, audience trust, and brand alignment.

4.3.2b Key Impact Areas

- Damage to credibility
- Misinterpretation of political affiliations
- Emotional distress and safety threats
- Brand partnership risks

- Online backlash and trolling

4.3.2 c Representative Quotes

- *"You wake up trending for something you didn't do."* — Public Figure
- *"Once the damage is done, you spend weeks correcting it."* — PR Professional
- *"Ghanaians hardly fact-check… trust becomes difficult to rebuild."* — Fact Checker

4.3.2 d Interpretation

AI-generated misinformation erodes trust, which aligns with research by Chesney & Citron (2019) that deepfakes immediately undermine public confidence in real content.

4.3.2 e Theoretical Link

- SCCT: Public figures often face "victim crises" where they did not cause the event but still suffer reputational harm.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Detection Challenges and Systemic Capacity Gaps

4.3.3a Findings

Participants highlighted structural weaknesses that make early detection difficult. The barriers that were identified have been simplified in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.3.3b : Key Institutional Barriers Hindering Effective Detection and Management of AI-Generated Misinformation

Barrier	Description
Lack of proactive monitoring	No advanced tools for early detection

Resource constraints	No dedicated crisis or digital forensic teams
Reliance on public alerts	Issues are detected only after going viral
Technical complexity	Deepfakes becoming increasingly convincing

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

Quotes

- *"We mostly see the aftermath."* — Fact Checker
- *"There is no early warning system."* — PR Professional
- *"Detection requires expertise and tools many organisations don't have."* — Forensics Expert

4.3.3c Interpretation

The industry functions reactively, not proactively, mirroring findings by Koenig & Rasmussen (2022) that most African media organizations lack advanced misinformation detection infrastructure.

4.3.3d Theoretical Link

- Agenda-Setting Theory: Early misinformation sets the narrative before correction systems activate.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Crisis Response Mechanisms and Mitigation Strategies

4.3.4a Findings

Despite limited resources, participants described a variety of mitigation and response strategies. These strategies that were identified has been put in the table below.

Table 4.3.4b: Institutional and Professional Strategies for Detecting and Responding to AI-Generated Misinformation

Strategy Type	Examples
Verification	QR codes on creatives, official statement templates
Corrective Communication	Press releases, visual comparisons of fake vs real
Technical Forensics	Metadata analysis, voice pattern matching
Public Education	LPMs (Live Presenter Mentions), on-air discussions
Legal Action	Reporting to cybercrime units

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

4.3.4c Representative Quotes

- *"We issue a statement and compare fake vs original."* — PR Professional
- *"Every creative now has a QR code to verify authenticity."* — Fact Checker
- *"We trace the origin using forensic tools when necessary."* — Digital Forensics Expert

4.3.4d Interpretation

Responses combine traditional PR crisis management with emerging digital verification methods, consistent with literature on hybrid crisis communication in African media (Asiedu & Bediako, 2023).

4.3.4e Theoretical Link

- Situational Crisis Communication Theory: Corrective action and bolstering strategies dominate the response.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Recommendations for Strengthening National and Organizational Protocols

4.3.5a Findings

Participants proposed multi-level solutions.

4.3.5b Key Recommendations

- National regulations on deepfake and synthetic media
- Early detection tools (AI monitoring systems)
- Stronger account verification
- Public digital literacy campaigns
- Cross-platform reporting collaborations
- Organizational crisis protocols and social listening unit.

4.3.5c Illustrative Quotes

- *"There must be a national policy for repeated offenders."*
- *"Monitoring tools are essential."*
- *"People need to know how to identify fake accounts."*

4.3.5d Interpretation

Participants advocate policy, technological, and educational interventions, mirroring global calls for systemic responses (Paris & Donovan, 2019)

4.3.5e Practical Relevance

These recommendations provide actionable guidance for Ghana's PR sector, media houses, and government bodies in preparing for future AI-driven threats.

4.4 CROSS-CASE SUMMARY TABLE

The Cross-Case Summary Table 4.4 provides a consolidated view of how the six participant groups, which are the public figures, PR professionals, fact-checkers, and cybersecurity experts, experience and respond to AI-generated misinformation. By comparing their perspectives across key dimensions such as types of misinformation, its impact, detection pathways, response mechanisms, and recommended solutions, the table highlights both shared challenges and role-specific insights. This summary enables a clearer understanding of how AI misinformation operates across different layers of the information ecosystem and illustrates where responsibilities, vulnerabilities, and strategic interventions align or diverge.

Table 4.4.1a: Cross-Professional Perspectives on AI-Generated Misinformation in Ghana

Theme	**Public Figures**	**PR Professionals**	**Fact Checker**	**Cybersecurity Expert**
AI Misinfo Types	Voice cloning, fake statements	Altered creatives	Fake cartoons, edited audio	Deepfake audio/video

Impact	Emotional, reputational	Trust erosion, crisis workload	Audience confusion	National security risk
Detection	Followers alert them	Seen after going viral	Reports from audience	Forensic tools required
Response	Statements, clarifications	Press releases, comparisons	QR verification	Digital trace analysis
Recommendations	Reporting tools, verification	Monitoring units	Literacy programs	National policy

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

4.4.1b Implications of Findings

4.4.1c Theoretical Implications

- Supports Framing Theory: AI manipulates meaning and shapes perception.
- Reinforces Agenda-Setting Theory: Misinformation gains prominence rapidly, setting public debates.
- Applies SCCT: Public figures face victim crises requiring corrective communication.

4.4.1d Practical Implications

- PR practitioners need AI literacy and crisis protocols.
- Media houses should adopt verification technologies (e.g., QR systems).
- National cybersecurity bodies must create deepfake regulations.
- Public education is essential to reduce misinformation susceptibility

Table 4.5 below summarizes the demographic and professional backgrounds of the six participants involved in the study. The individuals represent a diverse range of roles across

media, cybersecurity, public relations, and corporate communication. Their positions place them at different points within the misinformation ecosystem as targets of AI-generated falsehoods, investigators of synthetic content, or managers of crisis communication. This diversity ensures that the study captures a holistic understanding of how AI-driven misinformation emerges, spreads, and is addressed across various sectors.

TABLE 4.4 Participant Demographics and Roles

Participant	Role / Profession	Sector	Relevance to Study
P1	Public Figure / Brand Ambassador	Media / Entertainment	Target of misinformation
P2	Public Figure / TV Host	Media	Target of deepfake scams
P3	Digital Forensics Expert	National Cybersecurity Authority	Detects & investigates deepfakes
P4	PR / Communications Specialist	Media House (Media General)	Manages misinformation crises
P5	Tech & Communications Officer	Mining Industry	Handles fake news involving executives
P6	Digital Head (Citi FM / Channel One TV)	Media / Fact-checking	Conducts forensic verification

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

The table below presents the coding framework developed from the analysis of all participant responses. It outlines the progression from initial open codes to broader axial categories, and

finally to the core themes that emerged from the data. This framework captures how participants described the nature of AI-driven misinformation, its impact on public trust, the challenges organizations face in detecting such content, and the strategies they employ in response. It also highlights participants' recommendations for strengthening the broader information ecosystem. Together, these themes provide a structured overview of the key patterns that shaped the study's findings.

TABLE 4.5: Coding Framework (Across All Participants)

Open Codes	**Axial Codes**	**Final Themes**
Fake statements, altered videos, cloned voice, edited creatives	Forms of AI misinformation	**Theme 1: Prevalence & Forms**
Audience confusion, emotional distress, backlash	Reputation & trust	**Theme 2: Reputational Impact**
Lack of tools, reactive detection, manual monitoring	Detection challenges	**Theme 3: Capacity Gaps**
Press releases, visual comparisons, QR verification, legal teams	Crisis management strategies	**Theme 4: Response Mechanisms**
National policy, public education, verification systems	Strengthening the ecosystem	**Theme 5: Recommendations**

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

Table 4.6 presents the core insights from the interviews in a structured and accessible format, the major themes that emerged during the analysis were organized alongside direct quotations from participants. These illustrative excerpts capture the lived experiences, professional reflections, and expert observations that informed each thematic category. The table provides

a concise synthesis of the dominant patterns identified across the dataset, highlighting both the recurring concerns and the practical realities surrounding AI-generated misinformation in Ghana's public communication space.

TABLE 4.6: Themes With Supporting Participant Quotes

Theme	**Evidence From Participants**
Theme 1**:** Prevalence of AI-Generated Misinformation	*"People take our creatives and alter them to send a different message."* (PR Specialist) *"Someone took my voice and made it say things I never said."* (Public Figure)
Theme 2: Reputational Impact	*"Once the public believes it, rebuilding trust is very difficult."* (Fact Checker)
Theme 3: Detection Challenges	*"We don't detect early… we mostly see the aftermath."* (PR Specialist) *"Some deepfakes are so humanized that even experts struggle."* (Cybersecurity Expert)
Theme 4: Response Strategies	*"We issue immediate statements and show the real vs fake content."* (Media House PR) *"Cross-platform visibility and 24-hour response are key."* (Tech Professional)
Theme 5: Recommendations	*"There must be AI laws and punishments for repeat offenders."* (Tech Professional) *"Monitoring tools and verification platforms are essential."* (PR Specialist)

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

To better illustrate the varying intensity of the consequences associated with AI-generated misinformation, the study synthesized participants' insights into an impact-severity framework. The visual summary in table 4.7 below categorizes the key areas affected by

deepfake-related incidents and assigns a severity rating based on frequency, intensity, and the scale of disruption reported during interviews. The heat chart provides a quick comparative assessment of which impact domains pose the highest threat to public figures and their communication teams, and where mitigation efforts may be most urgently needed.

Table 4.7: Impact Severity Heat Chart

Scale: Low = Yellow | Medium = Orange | High = Red

Impact Area	**Severity**	**Notes**
Reputation Damage	🔴 High	Trending false stories, misrepresentation
Audience Trust Loss	🔴 High	"Trust hard to rebuild"
Mental/Emotional Stress	🟠 Medium	Distress, fear, harassment
Brand Partnership Risk	🟠 Medium	Misalignment concerns
Operational Crisis Workload	🔴 High	PR & digital teams overloaded
Legal Exposure	🟡 Low–Medium	Only escalates when lawsuits occur

(Source: Field Data, 2025)

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings from interviews with six participants. AI-generated misinformation commonly takes the form of altered audio, fabricated statements, and manipulated graphics. These incidents significantly damage public trust and brand reputation. Detection remains challenging due to limited resources and absence of early monitoring

systems. Participants use a combination of verification tools, press releases, and public education to mitigate harm. The findings align with global literature and reinforce the need for stronger national, organizational, and technological responses.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter synthesises the key insights from the study and aligns them with the study's purpose: to explore how AI-generated misinformation affects public figures and brand influencers in Ghana and the strategies used by PR professionals and digital forensics experts to mitigate such threats. It summarises the major findings, draws conclusions, and provides practical, policy, and academic recommendations. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research as AI technologies continue to evolve.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The findings of the study show that AI-generated misinformation in Ghana appears in several distinct forms that reflect both technological advancements and local communication patterns. Participants indicated that manipulated audio content is currently the most common, largely because audio is easier to alter and circulate across platforms such as WhatsApp and TikTok. Deepfake images and videos are also emerging, particularly those targeting politicians, journalists, and other visible personalities. Additionally, altered creative cards—especially news cards from major media houses—have become a growing concern, as perpetrators modify official designs to spread political narratives or commercial scams. Although the level of sophistication in deepfake production is still moderate compared to Western contexts, the rapid speed of digital dissemination and generally low public awareness amplify the impact of such content significantly.

Across all interviews, participants consistently emphasized that AI-generated misinformation has serious implications for public figures and the institutions that represent them. The effects are most visible in the erosion of audience trust and brand credibility. Public figures often experience reputational damage because many Ghanaians do not verify online content before believing or sharing it. This makes them particularly vulnerable to narratives that seem credible or emotionally charged. Media institutions also suffer a loss of public confidence when audiences cannot easily distinguish authentic content from fabricated versions. Participants observed that once misinformation gains traction, reversing its effects becomes challenging and often requires strong corrective communication strategies, repeated clarification, and long-term efforts to rebuild trust.

The study further revealed variations in detection and verification capacity across institutions. Participants described a range of verification practices, including frame-by-frame video auditing, reverse image searches, metadata analysis, and comprehensive audiovisual forensics to establish authenticity. Editorial cross-checking remains a crucial component, particularly for media houses that must verify content before publication. A notable innovation mentioned by one participant was the use of QR-coded verification systems to help the public distinguish genuine creative cards from manipulated ones. Despite these efforts, capacity gaps remain. Larger media houses with established digital teams are able to detect and respond to misinformation more efficiently, whereas smaller platforms, PR teams, and individual public figures struggle due to limited resources, lack of forensic tools, and insufficient staff dedicated to monitoring content across digital platforms.

The findings further demonstrate that misinformation amplification varies significantly across digital and traditional platforms, with each ecosystem playing a distinct role in shaping public perception. Participants consistently noted that digital media especially social platforms such

as Facebook, TikTok, X (Twitter), and WhatsApp functions as the primary amplifier of AI-generated misinformation. Its speed, algorithmic virality, and minimal editorial oversight allow manipulated content to circulate rapidly before verification can occur. In contrast, traditional media, including radio and television, provides a slower but more structured mechanism for correction. Although these traditional outlets carry greater credibility due to their institutional gatekeeping processes, their corrective role often comes too late. By the time factual information is broadcast, the false content may already have reached large audiences and shaped public opinion.

A central theme in the findings concerns the response strategies employed by PR teams and institutions when confronting AI-generated or digitally manipulated content. Participants emphasized the pivotal role of rapid communication, particularly through timely press releases and official statements that formally deny or clarify circulating misinformation. Many institutions now rely on presenting evidence-based comparisons, displaying authentic content alongside fabricated versions to visually demonstrate inaccuracies. Innovative approaches such as QR-coded verification systems embedded into creative materials also emerged as effective solutions to help audiences distinguish official publications from manipulated ones. Beyond immediate damage control, participants highlighted the growing importance of social listening, continuous audience education, and internal collaboration between legal, digital, and creative units. The pattern across interviews indicates that speed, transparency, and cross-platform coordination are essential for mitigating reputational harm and restoring audience trust.

Despite these efforts, the study revealed persistent regulatory and policy gaps that hinder national-level responses to AI-generated misinformation. Although Ghana has introduced an AI strategy and maintains cybersecurity institutions, enforcement remains weak and inconsistently applied. Participants noted the absence of strong deterrent penalties for

malicious actors who create or disseminate fabricated content. The problem is compounded by low levels of digital literacy among both the public and some institutional actors, limiting their ability to critically evaluate media content. Moreover, the findings suggest that Ghana lacks a unified, coordinated national framework for responding to deepfakes or AI-driven misinformation, often leaving media houses, PR teams, and individual public figures to manage incidents independently. These gaps highlight a pressing need for coherent policy, stronger enforcement structures, and broader public education initiatives to effectively address the growing threat of AI-enabled misinformation.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The findings suggest that AI-generated misinformation poses a significant and evolving threat to public figures and media institutions in Ghana. While the technological sophistication of deepfakes may still be emerging, their social impact is already substantial due to low digital literacy and high content virality on social platforms.

PR professionals, digital forensics experts, and media houses are actively adapting their strategies, yet institutional and infrastructural gaps constrain proactive detection. The study concludes that effective mitigation requires a multi-stakeholder ecosystem involving PR agencies, media houses, fact-checkers, policymakers, and public education bodies.

Ultimately, reputation management in the age of AI cannot rely solely on technology; it must integrate credible branding, consistent communication, and public education to counter misinformation effectively.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Practical Recommendations for PR Practitioners, Media Houses, and Brand Managers.

The findings of this study highlight the urgent need for PR teams and media organizations to develop stronger digital readiness in order to effectively manage AI-generated misinformation. First, institutions should consider establishing dedicated digital monitoring units equipped with social listening tools and staffed with trained personnel who can actively scan online platforms for suspicious or manipulated content in real time. This proactive approach allows organizations to detect emerging reputational threats before they escalate. Additionally, there is a need for robust verification systems, as demonstrated by best practices from media houses such as the use of QR-coded creative materials, digital watermarking, and consistent branding markers. These tools help audiences easily distinguish authentic publications from altered or fraudulent ones.

Equally important is the development of rapid response protocols that enable institutions to react swiftly when misinformation appears. Such protocols should include pre-approved crisis communication templates, clear timelines for internal verification, and structured collaboration among legal, digital, creative, and editorial units. Speed and coordination are crucial for mitigating damage before misinformation spreads widely. PR teams should also invest in audience education initiatives, using platforms such as live presenter mentions (LPMs), talk shows, and social media campaigns to teach the public how to identify manipulated or AI-generated content. Finally, public figures themselves must strengthen their personal branding strategies. Consistent communication of values, predictable behavioural patterns, and maintaining a clear and visible digital footprint can help audiences quickly recognise impersonation attempts and reduce susceptibility to misinformation involving well-known personalities.

5.4.2 Policy and Regulatory Recommendations

The study also points to significant regulatory gaps that must be addressed at the national level to strengthen Ghana's resilience against AI-generated misinformation. A major policy recommendation is the acceleration of enforcement of the National AI Strategy, including the development of operational guidelines that clearly define platform accountability and outline penalties for individuals or groups who create or disseminate deepfakes. Strengthening enforcement will deter malicious actors and provide institutions with clearer legal backing during crisis response.

Another important recommendation is the creation of a national verification infrastructure, such as a unified database containing authentic public statements, images, videos, and other official communications from public figures and institutions. A standardised national authentication system for media house content would also reduce the circulation of counterfeit materials. In addition, stronger inter-institutional collaboration is essential. Cybersecurity authorities, media houses, PR associations, and fact-checking organizations should work together to share intelligence, coordinate messaging, and harmonize response procedures. Finally, the government and civil society partners should fund nationwide digital literacy campaigns targeted at schools, churches, workplaces, and community groups. These programs should focus on misinformation detection, responsible content sharing, and awareness of AI manipulation techniques.

5.4.3 Academic Recommendations

From an academic perspective, the study underscores the need to integrate AI-related media literacy into communication, journalism, and public relations education in Ghana. Tertiary institutions should introduce modules on AI-generated misinformation, verification technologies, and digital reputation management as part of communication and PR training.

This will prepare future practitioners to navigate the evolving digital landscape. Researchers should also be encouraged to develop context-specific theoretical and analytical frameworks that explain how AI-generated misinformation operates within Ghana's unique sociocultural and media environment. Lastly, there is growing value in interdisciplinary collaboration between computer science, cybersecurity, and communication departments. Joint research and curriculum development would promote a holistic understanding of AI threats and equip students with the technical and strategic skills needed to confront them

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

a. Future research on AI-generated misinformation in Ghana can be expanded in several important directions. First, there is a need for quantitative audience-based studies that examine how different demographic groups such as age, education level, media consumption patterns, and digital literacy perceive, interpret, and respond to AI-generated misinformation. While the present study provides qualitative insights from professionals and experts, large-scale surveys would offer empirical data to better understand variations in public vulnerability and perception.
b. Also, further research should also involve comparative analysis across African countries. As deepfake technology continues to spread throughout the continent, comparing Ghana's emerging digital ecosystem with nations such as Nigeria, Kenya, or South Africa could provide valuable regional insights. Such studies would help identify shared risk patterns, differing levels of exposure, and policy gaps that transcend national boundaries.
c. Longitudinal research is also needed to track the evolution of AI misinformation over time, particularly across political seasons and election cycles. Continuous monitoring

would reveal whether deepfake sophistication increases, whether public awareness improves, and how institutional responses adapt to new forms of digital manipulation. Additionally, platform accountability studies focused on major social media platforms such as Meta, TikTok, X, and YouTube would provide deeper understanding of how algorithms, content moderation systems, and reporting mechanisms contribute to either mitigating or amplifying deepfake content.

d. Conclusively, future research may also explore the psychological impact of misinformation exposure, especially its influence on public trust in media institutions, governance structures, and public figures. Understanding these behavioural and cognitive outcomes is critical for designing effective communication and educational interventions. Finally, scholars should examine advancements in digital forensics and AI-detection tools to assess how emerging technologies can help identify increasingly sophisticated deepfakes. Such studies would contribute to building a stronger technical foundation for media houses, cybersecurity agencies, and PR practitioners working to safeguard Ghana's information environment.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite the valuable insights generated, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. First, the research relied primarily on qualitative interviews with a small purposive sample of six industry professionals drawn from PR, media, digital technology, and communications sectors. While this provided rich and contextually grounded perspectives, the limited sample size restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalised across Ghana's broader media and PR ecosystem. A larger or more diverse participant pool, particularly including policymakers, cybersecurity officials, or commercial brand ambassadors, could have offered a wider range of perspectives.

Secondly, the study explored a topic that **is** technologically evolving at a rapid pace. AI-generated misinformation, deepfake sophistication, and platform algorithms change frequently; thus, some observations captured in this study may shift as new tools emerge or existing technologies become more accessible. The findings therefore reflect the state of knowledge and digital capabilities at the time of data collection rather than a static reality.

Another limitation relates to access to sensitive or proprietary information. Some participants were unable to disclose detailed internal protocols, case files, or forensic reports due to organisational confidentiality policies. As a result, the study depended largely on personal accounts, expert reflections, and illustrative examples rather than full datasets of verified misinformation cases.

Additionally, the research depended on participants' ability to recall incidents accurately**.** Memory-based accounts carry inherent risks, including selective recall, subjectivity, or interpretive bias. This limitation is common in qualitative research that examines media events or crisis communication experiences.

Furthermore, the study focused on misinformation affecting public figures within Ghana's media and communication landscape. It did not include extensive perspectives from affected individuals such as politicians, entrepreneurs, influencers, musicians, or other high-visibility figures who could have provided direct experiential insights. Their exclusion narrows the personal impact dimension of the findings.

Finally, although the study referenced Ghana's national AI strategy and regulatory gaps, it did not conduct a full policy analysis or evaluate the implementation challenges of existing digital governance structures. Such an examination could have provided deeper insight into systemic constraints and national-level preparedness.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes significantly to understanding the emerging dynamics of AI-generated misinformation in Ghana and offers a foundation for future empirical and policy-oriented research.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Title:

Exploring the Impact of AI-Generated Content on Brand Ambassadors in Ghana and Strategies for Mitigation

Purpose of Interview:

To gain qualitative insights into how AI-generated misinformation influences brand ambassadors' reputations and professional roles in Ghana, and to explore strategies they use to protect and restore credibility.

Section A: Background Information

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your professional background as a brand ambassador, media personality, or public figure?
2. How would you describe your typical relationship with digital and social media platforms in your work?

Section B: Experiences with AI-Generated or False Content

3. Have you ever encountered AI-generated or false online content (such as deepfakes, manipulated images, or fake statements) about yourself or another public figure in Ghana?
4. How did that incident affect your public image, audience trust, or professional partnerships?
5. How do you personally identify or verify when content is AI-generated or manipulated?

Section C: Public Reaction and Media Environment

6. From your perspective, how does the Ghanaian public react to viral misinformation or deepfake content about celebrities and public figures?

7. What role do you think traditional media (radio, TV, print) and social media platforms play in spreading or correcting such content?

Section D: Response and Crisis Management Strategies

8. How have you or others in your field responded to misinformation crises?

9. Which communication or PR strategies proved most effective in addressing or correcting false narratives?

10. Have you collaborated with digital experts, PR agencies, or legal institutions to manage misinformation?

Section E: Recommendations and the Future

11. In your opinion, what can be done to prevent or reduce the spread of AI-generated misinformation in Ghana?

12. What skills or systems should Ghanaian brand ambassadors develop to safeguard their online credibility?

13. How can government agencies, tech companies, or communication professionals support public figures against AI-driven reputational risks?

Section F: Closing

14. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with misinformation or AI-generated content?

15. Would you be open to a short follow-up conversation if clarification is needed?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PR PROFESSIONALS & COMMUNICATION EXPERTS

Interview Title:

Exploring How AI-Generated Misinformation Affects Brand Ambassadors in Ghana: A PR and Institutional Response Perspective

Purpose of Interview:

To gather expert insights on how PR practitioners and communication professionals perceive, manage, and mitigate reputational risks caused by AI-generated misinformation targeting brand ambassadors and public figures in Ghana.

Section A: Background Information

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and describe your professional role in PR, communication, or brand management?
2. How would you describe your experience working with public figures or brand ambassadors in Ghana?

Section B: Experiences with Misinformation and AI-Generated Content

3. Have you ever encountered AI-generated misinformation, deepfakes, or manipulated content involving a client or public figure you represent?
4. From your vantage point, how did the incident affect the client's public image, brand partnerships, or audience trust?
5. What early signs or indicators help you detect whether content circulating online is AI-generated or manipulated?

Section C: Media Environment and Public Reaction

6. How would you describe the Ghanaian public's reaction when false or AI-generated content about a public figure goes viral?

7. In your opinion, how do traditional media and digital platforms in Ghana contribute to either escalating or correcting misinformation?

Section D: Crisis Management and Strategic Responses

8. What are some crisis communication strategies you have used or seen used to address misinformation involving public figures?
9. Which PR tactics have proven most effective in restoring credibility and correcting false narratives?
10. Do you collaborate with digital forensic experts, social media specialists, or legal bodies when handling misinformation crises? If yes, how?

Section E: Recommendations and Future Preparedness

11. What systems or protocols should PR teams and brand managers put in place to manage AI-driven reputational threats?
12. What protective measures or digital literacy skills should brand ambassadors develop to safeguard their credibility?
13. How can government institutions, tech companies, and communication professionals collectively reduce AI-driven misinformation risks in Ghana?

Section F: Closing Questions

14. Is there anything else you would like to add about PR practice and AI-generated misinformation?
15. Would you be available for a brief follow-up interview if clarification is required?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TECH & DIGITAL FORENSICS PROFESSIONALS

Interview Title:

Understanding AI-Generated Misinformation and Its Impact on Brand Ambassadors in Ghana: A Digital Forensics Perspective

Purpose of Interview:

To gather expert insights on the technical nature, detection, and mitigation of AI-generated misinformation (including deepfakes and manipulated digital content) and how these issues affect the reputations of brand ambassadors and public figures in Ghana.

Section A: Background Information

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and describe your role in digital forensics, cybersecurity, or AI-related technology?
2. What type of cases or digital investigations do you typically handle, especially relating to online content verification or cyber fraud?

Section B: Nature of AI-Generated Content in Ghana

3. How common are AI-generated or manipulated digital contents such as deepfakes, voice clones, or image alterations within the Ghanaian online space?
4. What types of AI-driven misinformation incidents have you come across involving public figures, influencers, or brand ambassadors?
5. How sophisticated would you say these AI-generated contents have become in terms of detection difficulty?

Section C: Detection and Verification

6. What tools or methods do you use to determine whether a video, audio, or image has been manipulated using AI?
7. What are the most reliable forensic indicators that something is AI-generated or altered?
8. What challenges or limitations do you face when analysing AI-generated misinformation in Ghana's digital environment?

Section D: Reputational Impact and Media Environment

9. From a technical expert's point of view, how damaging can AI-generated misinformation be to a public figure's reputation?
10. In your experience, how quickly does manipulated content spread across digital platforms in Ghana, and what factors contribute to this virality?

Section E: Response, Prevention, and Collaboration

11. What immediate technical steps should be taken when AI-generated misinformation targeting a public figure begins circulating?
12. Do you collaborate with PR teams, legal institutions, or social media platforms in your investigations? If yes, how?
13. What systems, technologies, or frameworks should be implemented in Ghana to detect and control AI-generated misinformation?
14. What capacity-building measures (digital literacy, forensic skills, verification tools) would help brand ambassadors protect their online identity?

Section F: Future Outlook and Recommendations

15. What do you think Ghana needs (technologically or legally) to effectively handle AI-driven misinformation in the coming years?

16. What role should tech companies, regulators, and digital forensics experts play in building a safer information environment?

Section G: Closing Questions

17. Is there any additional insight you would like to share regarding AI-generated misinformation and its impact on public figures?

18. Would you be open to a short follow-up conversation for clarification if necessary?

APPENDIX D

Interview Title:

AI-Driven Cyber Threats and Digital Safety: Understanding National-Level Responses to Misinformation in Ghana

Purpose:

To gather insights on national cybersecurity strategies, policies, and technical measures used to detect and mitigate AI-generated misinformation that affects individuals, including brand ambassadors.

Section A: Background Information

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your role at the National Cybersecurity Office.
2. What are your main responsibilities in relation to digital threats, misinformation, or cybercrime?

Section B: AI-Generated Threat Landscape

3. How has AI-generated content (deepfakes, synthetic audio, fake websites, etc.) emerged as a cybersecurity threat in Ghana?
4. Are there any notable cases where AI-generated misinformation affected public figures or national institutions?
5. What forms of AI manipulation do you consider most dangerous in the Ghanaian context?

Section C: Detection, Monitoring & Technical Processes

6. What systems, tools, or technologies does the National Cybersecurity Office use to detect AI-generated or manipulated content?

7. How does your office verify the authenticity of suspicious digital content?
8. Are there collaboration channels with social media platforms, tech companies, or other institutions?

Section D: Legal, Policy & Regulatory Response

9. Are there any existing laws or policies in Ghana that address AI-generated misinformation or cyber manipulation?
10. What challenges does the state face in regulating AI misuse and misinformation?
11. How do you engage with PR professionals, media houses, or public institutions during digital reputation crises?

Section E: Impact and National Implications

12. In your assessment, how does AI-generated misinformation influence public trust, national security, or democratic processes?
13. How vulnerable are brand ambassadors and other high-profile individuals to AI-driven attacks?

Section F: Recommendations & Future Directions

14. What national measures or systems should be strengthened to combat AI-generated misinformation?
15. What advice would you give public figures and PR experts on protecting their digital identity?
16. What should Ghana prioritize in the next 3–5 years regarding AI governance and cybersecurity?

Closing

17. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding AI threats or public protection?

18. Would you be open to a follow-up interview if needed?

APPENDIX E

Interview Title:

AI-Generated Misinformation in Ghana: Media Verification, Detection Processes, and Impact on Public Figures

Purpose:

To understand how professional fact-checkers detect, verify, and respond to AI-generated misinformation in Ghana, especially misinformation affecting public figures and brand ambassadors.

Section A: Background Information

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and describe your role as a fact-checker at TV3?
2. How long have you worked in media verification and digital fact-checking?

Section B: Experience With AI-Generated Misinformation

3. How frequently do you encounter AI-generated or manipulated content (deepfakes, synthetic audio, edited images) in your verification work?
4. Can you describe a situation where you handled a false or AI-generated claim involving a Ghanaian public figure?
5. What indicators or tools do you use to confirm whether content is AI-generated or digitally manipulated?

Section C: Media Dynamics and Public Perception

6. In your experience, how quickly does misinformation about public figures spread once published online?

7. How does the Ghanaian audience typically react to corrections or fact-checks, especially in cases involving high-profile individuals?
8. Do you think traditional media in Ghana amplifies or helps correct AI-generated misinformation?

Section D: Verification Processes and Challenges

9. What are the major challenges you face when verifying AI-generated content?
10. Are existing verification tools adequate? If not, what gaps have you identified?
11. How difficult is it to debunk manipulated visuals or audio once they go viral?

Section E: Collaboration and Crisis Management

12. Do you collaborate with PR teams, public figures, or institutions when verifying misinformation involving them?
13. How effective is media engagement in correcting false narratives that target brand ambassadors?

Section F: Recommendations and Future Preparedness

14. What systems or technologies would strengthen Ghana's fact-checking ecosystem against AI-generated misinformation?
15. What advice would you give brand ambassadors and their PR teams on identifying and responding to manipulated content?
16. In your view, what role should media houses play in preventing the spread of AI-generated misinformation?

Closing

17. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding AI, misinformation, or verification challenges in Ghana?

18. Would you be open to follow-up questions if clarification is needed?

APPENDIX F (INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS)

PARTICIPANT 1 (JAY FOLEY)

Interviewer: Thank you for speaking with me and helping with my project. I'm researching how deepfakes and misinformation affect public figures in Ghana. To begin, please introduce yourself, your professional background, and your relationship with digital or social media in your line of work.

Jay Foley:

My name is Jay Foley. I am the Programmes Manager for 3Music TV in Accra, Ghana, and also an on-air personality, both TV and radio. I've spent about 17 years in this industry, working across two generations: the era of early social media and the current era where digital platforms dominate.

My work requires me to be active on both traditional media, radio, TV, print and digital media. To maintain relevance, I must engage audiences across platforms, increase my numbers, and build influence. But with visibility comes both the positive and negative sides, including threats like impersonation and AI-generated content.

Before AI became prominent, I dealt with impersonation in more traditional ways. I've had look-alikes who used my identity to conduct business and scam people. One case was serious enough that the Ghana Police intervened, and the person was arrested.

In recent years, I've also experienced digital impersonation. Someone created a fake Facebook account using my posts and images and used AI-manipulated versions of my videos to scam people through lottery schemes. Thankfully, Meta helped shut the account down, though the person behind it wasn't identified.

Impact on Public Image and Trust

Interviewer: How did these incidents affect your public image, your audience's trust, and your partnerships? And how do you personally identify AI-generated or manipulated content?

Jay Foley:

There was some degree of mistrust, naturally. But because of the brand and character I've built over the years, most of my loyal audience questioned anything that looked suspicious. So the damage was limited.

As for identifying AI content, experience helps. I've worked professionally with voice for many years, so my ears can detect when something lacks originality. Even though AI voices now mimic Ghanaian inflections very well, there is still a subtle unnatural element.

With visuals, AI is getting better, but there's always something slightly off. Humans can never completely perfect what is divine, so AI still misses the mark. Anyone who understands AI and studies its patterns can often tell the difference.

Public Reaction and Role of Media

Interviewer: How do you think the Ghanaian public reacts to viral misinformation or deepfakes about celebrities? And what role do traditional media and social media platforms play?

Jay Foley:

We still have some distance to cover in understanding the power of the Internet. You cannot blame Ghanaians entirely, Internet penetration and digital literacy are still developing.

Public figures must present a consistent, authentic identity both online and offline. If your digital personality contradicts your real-life behaviour like pretending to be wealthy or living a lifestyle you can't sustain ,people will believe anything about you. Authenticity protects you.

Traditional media still holds massive influence. Ghana hasn't fully transitioned into a digital-dominant society. Many people cannot afford smartphones or data, so they rely on radio, TV, and print. Major brands still advertise heavily on traditional media because it works.

Traditional media also helps verify and correct misinformation. Hearing a trusted broadcaster confirm or debunk a story on TV carries more weight than reading a post online because of the human element behind it.

Handling and Managing Incidents

Interviewer: During these incidents, did you work with any digital experts, PR agencies, or legal institutions? Which strategies were most effective?

Jay Foley:

Yes, I worked directly with the Ghana Police Service, specifically the cybercrime unit. They were effective, professional, and helpful. I had no contacts there; I simply walked in, filed a report, and they took it up. They helped arrest the impersonator in my first case and trace the location of another.

On digital platforms, I made a post tagging the incident as "fake" across my accounts. But I don't amplify negativity. Beyond correcting the misinformation once, I prefer not to keep spreading it and giving scammers more ideas.

Prevention for Brand Ambassadors and Public Figures

Interviewer: What skills or systems can Ghanaian public figures adopt to safeguard their online credibility?

Jay Foley:

1. **Be selective about what you post.** People come to us for verification. We must be sure the information we share is true.

2. **Don’t involve yourself in every trending topic.** That reduces your value.
3. **Maintain consistent brand behaviour.** People should easily recognise your digital character.
4. **Keep your pages active.** Consistency helps fans detect when something feels “off.”
5. **Treat your social media like an extension of yourself.** It has a life, character, and history. What you say today can come back years later.

Role of Government, Tech Companies & Communication Professionals

Interviewer: What can government agencies, tech companies, and communication professionals do to protect public figures from AI-driven reputational risks?

Jay Foley:

I’m happy the Ministry of Communications is actively discussing misinformation. I know certain tools and systems are being developed to detect fake information.

Government institutions and security agencies are already taking action, people have been arrested for spreading false information. That shows the systems are working.

But responsibility doesn’t lie with government alone. Everyone has a role. AI is the future. It will create millions of jobs and take away millions of jobs. We must understand it, use it responsibly, and protect ourselves.

Closing

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your insight. I truly appreciate your time.

Jay Foley:

You're welcome. Feel free to follow up anytime.

PARTICIPANT 2 (UMARU SANDA)

Interviewer: Well, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me about my thesis. As I explained earlier, it's going to be on deepfake and misinformation in our digital space here in Ghana.

As a form of introduction, could you please briefly introduce yourself, your background, and anything we should know about you?

Umaru Sanda: Yes. I don't know my height, but I know my complexion is some fair, some say chocolate. My name is Umaru Ros Amadou. I'm a journalist; I've done this for 15 years. I'm also a law student. I'm a father of girls and have been married for 11 years.

Interviewer: Can you describe your relationship with digital and social media platforms in your line of work, as a journalist and incoming lawyer?

Umaru Sanda: Digital media is a way of life now. Two decades ago, news was primarily from newspapers, radio, and a few TV stations. Today, social media, which operates in the digital space, leads news dissemination. News breaks there first.

For example, in 2012, people had to call us to report that President Atta Mills had died. Now, people immediately see news on social media, like when Kantanka passed away. Even statements from families, like when Daddy Lumba died, go through social media first.

As a journalist, we rely heavily on new media, but we sanitize what we pick before publishing to avoid problems. The challenge is that new media is mostly unregulated, with few codes of ethics. Personally and professionally, I interact with it a lot.

Interviewer: On the issue of media use, there's been a rise in deepfakes and misinformation. Do you know someone or have you experienced this yourself?

Umaru Sanda: Yes, I am actually a victim. About five or six years ago, I did an interview with John Dumelo. Recently, a portion of that interview resurfaced; someone edited the video to make it sound like my voice, but "sexier," and attributed statements to John Dumelo about government investments. People believed it was genuine and began asking me if it was true. It was scandalizing.

My new media team intervened: they blocked the video and issued disclaimers. But it keeps resurfacing, and some people still think I was behind it. It's troubling.

Interviewer: How did it affect your personality, and how were you able to detect that it was manipulated?

Umaru Sanda: I also do endorsements and promotions on social media, so I am a trusted voice. When false content appears using my likeness or voice, it undermines credibility.

I realized it was manipulated because the subject matter didn't match what John Dumelo and I discussed. It sounded like me, but the content was entirely different. Otherwise, I might have even fallen for it. It was disturbing, but my new media team helped resolve it.

Interviewer: From your perspective, how did Ghanaians react, and what role do traditional and social media play in these cases?

Umaru Sanda: Many followers recognized that the video was fake because they knew the original interview. Others, however, could have acted on the false information and potentially lost money.

Traditional media still plays a critical role as the ultimate gatekeeper. People might see news on social media but turn to traditional media to confirm its credibility. That trust is something we have to maintain.

Interviewer: Do you think the media, both traditional and digital, play any role in controlling such content?

Umaru Sanda: I'm not an expert on the technical side. I don't know if platforms like Meta have measures for deepfakes, or if the National Media Commission has policies. Locally, the Cyber Security Authority is where I reported impersonation incidents, but so far, not much has happened.

Interviewer: So, you reached out to your media team and the cyber authority. Did these steps help?

Umaru Sanda: Yes, my media team helped reduce circulation of the video by issuing official statements. As for the cyber authority, that was to potentially bring legal action, though nothing concrete has happened yet.

Interviewer: How do you think misinformation can be reduced in Ghana?

Umaru Sanda: People need to be smarter and less gullible. Don't believe everything you read or see. Double-check, triple-check, verify information before sharing or acting on it. This applies to everyone, not just journalists.

Interviewer: As a public figure and journalist, are there personal skills or systems you need to prevent misinformation about you?

Umaru Sanda: Verification principles I use in traditional journalism apply to new media. I don't share posts without confirming their accuracy. Our newsroom and new media team work together to ensure verification before publication. Personally, I follow the same standards.

Interviewer: What role do public figures need to assume to protect their credibility?

Umaru Sanda: Public figures have a duty of care. With hundreds of thousands of followers, we must ensure the accuracy of what we disseminate. Publishing unverified information can cause panic or harm. Accuracy and responsibility are crucial.

Interviewer: How can government agencies, tech companies, or communication professionals support public figures against AI-driven reputational risk?

Umaru Sanda: They should monitor influential public figures' digital activity. For instance, if someone manipulates Shatta Wale's account, it could be a national security risk. There should be state policies and proactive monitoring. Public figures also have to exercise responsibility for the content they share. It's a shared responsibility.

Interviewer: Any last words?

Umaru Sanda: We all have to be responsible for what we consume and post. Verify before sharing, otherwise the social and digital media space can descend into chaos.

Interviewer: Thank you so much, Umaru Sanda. I've gained a lot of insights from your experience.

Umaru Sanda: Thank you.

PARTICIPANT 3 (ISAAC SOCRATES)

Introduction

Interviewer: Thank you again for taking time to speak with me on my project about misinformation and deepfakes in our digital ecosystem in Ghana. Before we get started, could you please introduce yourself and describe your role at the National Cyber Security Authority?

Isaac Socrates: Yes. I'm currently a Senior Manager with the Computer Emergency Response Team. I lead the Incident Response and Threat Intelligence teams. Essentially, we handle reported incidents and proactively monitor threats to mitigate them before they materialize.

Belinda: Great. I'm confident I'm speaking to the right person.

Experience with AI-Generated Content

Belinda: Have you been in contact with any AI-generated content, and how has it emerged as a cybersecurity threat in Ghana?

Isaac: AI-related threats are still new in our space. The ones we've observed are mostly deepfakes involving politically exposed persons—like the President, ministers, and other government appointees. These images and videos have been used to promote investment scams and fake medications.

The quality of AI-generated content is improving. Early deepfakes were easy to detect, but newer ones require deeper analysis to verify authenticity.

Belinda: So, you anticipate more cases in the future?

Isaac: Definitely. Cyber threats don't exist in a vacuum; Ghana is affected by global trends. AI lowers the technical barrier for attackers, so even people with minimal coding knowledge can generate malicious content. We anticipate attacks will evolve from impersonations to more complex AI-orchestrated attacks.

Measures being considered include:

- Draft bills addressing AI issues (currently under review)
- Capacity building for personnel to mitigate attacks
- Technology solutions for identification and response

Most Dangerous Forms of AI Misinformation

Belinda: Which forms of AI-generated content are most dangerous in the Ghanaian context?

Isaac: Based on incidents we've tracked, deepfakes of public figures are the most prevalent. Ghanaians tend to trust what they see or hear. Social engineering attacks become more potent when AI videos or images appear to be from respected figures, which increases the likelihood of people falling victim.

While cloned websites and other types exist, AI hasn't significantly influenced them yet.

Detection and Response

Belinda: What systems or technologies does your office use to detect AI-generated content?

Isaac: I can't disclose specific tools, but our approach includes:

- Due diligence and direct verification with individuals implicated (e.g., MPs, ministers)
- Collaborating with social media platforms for takedowns (20–30 deepfake takedowns from January to July this year)
- Public awareness campaigns via radio, TV, social media, and blogger partnerships

Belinda: So it's a blend of traditional and digital media.

Isaac: Yes. We rely on both to reach a wider audience. Takedowns alone are insufficient; awareness and education are key.

Policies and Legal Framework

Belinda: Are there laws in Ghana addressing AI-generated misinformation?

Isaac: Existing laws don't specifically mention AI, but they address intent. For example, the Criminal Code (Act 29) covers fraud under false pretenses, which can be applied if AI is used to defraud someone. There's also legislation against charlatanic advertisements.

The gap is the lack of AI-specific legislation, hence the draft bills.

Belinda: Does regulating AI pose challenges?

Isaac: Yes. Globally, it's challenging to regulate AI without stifling innovation or freedom to use the technology. Ghana must find a balance between enforcement and encouraging technological growth.

Public Figures and Digital Identity

Belinda: How vulnerable are public figures to AI attacks?

Isaac: Public figures are often not the direct targets. Their images and influence are used to target the public. However, public figures are indirectly affected when constituents lose money to scams using their images.

Advice for public figures includes:

- Treating their digital identity as critical
- Being intentional with social media accounts
- Having verified accounts (blue ticks) to help the public identify legitimate profiles
- Educating followers about misinformation

Priorities for the Next 3–5 Years

Belinda: What should Ghana prioritize regarding AI governance and cybersecurity?

Isaac: Key priorities include:

1. Strengthening legislation to address emerging technologies
2. Building a cyber-aware population through education, starting from junior high school to universities, including mandatory cybersecurity courses

Long-term focus should be on legislation and education to ensure Ghanaians understand cybersecurity irrespective of their field of study.

PARTICIPANT 4 (DUKE OPPONG)

Interviewer: Okay, thank you so much once again for taking some time to speak with me about my project. As I mentioned earlier, the questions I sent you basically encompass everything we're going to talk about, and I hope that's okay with you.

My topic is AI-generated misinformation and how it's impacting brand ambassadors and public figures in Ghana. As a tech professional, I'd like your perspective on some findings to help make recommendations.

First of all, could you please introduce yourself and your role in your field?

Duke Oppong: My name is Duke. I'm an IT and communications professional working in the mining industry.

Interviewer: Which mining company, if you don't mind sharing?

Duke: Ghana Chamber of Mines

Interviewer: Thank you. What kind of cases have you specifically dealt with regarding online content verification?

Duke: Mostly reputational damage involving prominent figures in the mining industry. Not deepfakes per se, but fake news and exaggerated stories.

Interviewer: Can you recall any specific instances, without mentioning names?

Duke: Yes, one instance involved a very popular female professional in the industry. A story came out that misinformed the public about her activities.

Interviewer: How common do you think AI-generated content is in Ghana's digital space?

Duke: AI-generated content exists, but AI-generated misinformation isn't very common in Ghana compared to the Western world.

Interviewer: That's surprising; it seems more common from my perspective.

Duke: Yes, content is common, but misinformation isn't. However, it could get worse as people become more familiar with the technology.

Interviewer: You mentioned an incident with a public figure. Can you explain further?

Duke: It was a news article with false claims about the person's dealings with government officials, both locally and internationally. If someone had more advanced tech skills, AI-generated images could be added to make the story trend.

Interviewer: Was it difficult to detect the AI-generated content?

Duke: There are certain patterns and telltale signs. For example, AI might use hyphens instead of commas, which is uncommon in local news.

Interviewer: Are there tools to detect AI content?

Duke: Yes, tools like ChatGPT can analyze text and indicate whether it's AI-generated, providing reasons why. Other tools like TenTo can also detect AI content, but ChatGPT is the most common for now.

Interviewer: What limitations do you face when analyzing AI-generated content?

Duke: Some content is well-humanized, making detection tricky. Also, if misinformation is published on unreliable news sites, it's easier to flag, but credible-looking sources are more challenging.

Interviewer: How damaging can AI-generated misinformation be to a public figure's reputation?

Duke: Very damaging. People tend to trust what seems credible and share it widely. Once perceptions form, they're hard to change, even after corrections.

Interviewer: What contributes to this virality?

Duke: Popularity of the person is a major factor. People are eager to share news about well-known individuals.

Interviewer: As a tech person, what steps would you take when AI-generated misinformation targets a public figure?

Duke: The first step is to alert the public within 24 hours. If it's a video, point out visual inconsistencies or provide proof of the person's whereabouts. Cross-platform visibility is important. Collaboration with PR and legal teams is also crucial.

Interviewer: What systems or technologies should be implemented in Ghana to detect and control AI misinformation?

Duke: Laws governing AI use would be a good start, along with ethical guidelines. Some countries already have regulations, and Ghana could follow suit. This would reduce the occurrence of AI-generated misinformation.

Interviewer: How can public figures protect themselves while waiting for legal frameworks?

Duke: Monitoring online mentions through tools like Google Alerts is key. Early detection allows for faster response.

Interviewer: What role should tech experts play in building a safer information environment?

Duke: Communications departments now need tech skills. PR practitioners must be able to address online misinformation effectively. Traditional PR without tech knowledge is becoming insufficient.

Interviewer: Any final insights?

Duke: AI-generated content will become more humanized and harder to distinguish from real content. PR professionals must develop the skills to identify and respond to it quickly as technology becomes more sophisticated.

Interviewer: Thank you so much, Duke. I really appreciate all your insights and hope you're open to a follow-up conversation for class.

PARTICIPANT 5 (EMMANUEL PAA KWESI)

Interview Transcript – Emmanuel Paa Kwesi

Interviewer: All right, hello, thank you so much for deciding to help with this project. As I mentioned, the project is about deepfakes and misinformation in the Ghanaian digital space and how recommendations can be put in place to mitigate it. Before we start, could you please introduce yourself, your professional background, and what we can identify you with?

Paa Kwesi: Thank you. My name is Emmanuel Paa Kwesi, and I am the Head of Digital at Citi FM and Channel One TV. Essentially, my job is to build robust systems to handle the pressure of providing factual content to our audiences in real time. This includes everything from the back-end to the front-end, audience engagement, social media, streaming, and fact-checking. I have an amazing team that helps me, so essentially, in a nutshell, that's what I do.

Interviewer: What types of cases or investigations do you typically handle, especially relating to online content verification or cyber fraud?

Paa Kwesi: Due to the nature of our work, we take a nationalistic view. We're not just verifying personal content; we verify facts and figures from personalities and state actors. For example:

- In 2024, there was an incident involving a train accident. Our verification showed it was fabricated and politically motivated.
- Bernard Avle has been a victim of deepfakes multiple times. One case involved using his image to sell sex enhancement products on Facebook. It had our branding on it, which helped us identify the source. Verification included video forensics frame by frame.

Interviewer: How sophisticated have deepfakes become in Ghana, and how common are AI-generated deepfakes or image alterations in our digital space?

Paa Kwesi: Technically, they're not too hard to detect, but the problem is awareness. Many Ghanaians don't know what to trust. Most deepfakes here aren't as complicated as in other countries. The challenge is more societal than technological. Deepfakes tend to be politically or commercially motivated and not widespread for casual use.

Interviewer: You mentioned Bernard's case had your branding on it. How easy would it be for an ordinary Ghanaian to detect such a deepfake?

Paa Kwesi: Some people in the comment sections were able to spot glitches. Key indicators include artifacts around the head, hair, teeth, and lip movements. But someone who wasn't paying attention, like an interested buyer in the sex enhancement product, might take it at face value. The issue is social, not technical, most people just don't know what to look for.

Interviewer: Are there specific tools you use, and what are the most reliable forensic indicators?

Paa Kwesi: Yes. We use frame-by-frame video audits with Premiere Pro or DaVinci Resolve, comparing the deepfake to reference videos. Audio forensics, Google Image Reverse Search, metadata analysis, and Amnesty International's YouTube metadata tool are also used. Verification is comprehensive: audio + video + metadata to reach a verdict beyond reasonable doubt.

Interviewer: Are certain tools more reliable depending on the situation, like audio vs. video?

Paa Kwesi: Exactly. Verification must be comprehensive. You can't rely on a single element. For example, a fabricated audio segment may require syncing with the original video to detect inconsistencies. Multiple tools are needed to confirm whether content is fabricated.

Interviewer: Have you ever verified something but later realized it was real?

Paa Kwesi: Challenges arise mostly before publishing. If we're not sure, we don't release it. Some media houses don't have our technological resources. Local data storage and access are big issues—there's not enough digital archival of public records, which makes verification harder.

Interviewer: Do you think Ghana is prepared for more sophisticated deepfakes in the future?

Paa Kwesi: Ghana has strong policies and an AI strategy, but enforcement is weak. Policymakers and media houses must enforce guardrails, benchmarks, and penalties for unverifiable content. Education and awareness are also crucial.

Interviewer: How damaging are deepfakes to public figures, and why do they go viral so easily?

Paa Kwesi: Sensational content spreads quickly. Deepfakes are damaging, but rapid response helps. Label content as "unverified" before verifying, frustrate its distribution, and conduct crowd reporting. Quick verification, transparency, and audience education are key.

Interviewer: How can public figures protect themselves against deepfakes?

Paa Kwesi: Build a strong, consistent brand identity over time. Amplify your values and show predictability. Organizationally, use identifiable trademarks or visual markers. Technology is reactive; brand credibility is proactive. People will naturally defend and advocate for trusted figures.

Interviewer: What role do tech companies, regulators, and forensic experts play in building a safer digital environment?

Paa Kwesi: Education is the first step. Digital literacy campaigns should start in homes, schools, churches, and workplaces. Policymakers and regulators must anticipate problems, not

just react. Cybersecurity authorities and platform operators should investigate and mitigate fraudulent content. The greatest asset is an educated, aware audience.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. I've learned a lot about detecting, debunking, and preparing for deepfakes.

Paa Kwesi: Thank you.

PARTICIPANT 6 (RHESA)

Interviewer: You've dedicated this time to help me with my thesis, and I'm grateful. Before we get started, could you please introduce yourself and describe your professional role in PR and your experience with public figures or brand ambassadors in Ghana?

Rhesa: Hi Belinda. So, my name is Rhesa—Rhesa Mensah. I work with Media General. I'm not really a PR person; I'm more of a communications and social media specialist. I handle the social media side of things.

Interviewer: Great. Have you had any experiences working with public figures or brand ambassadors?

Rhesa: Yes. In terms of general work related to Media General, I've worked with some on-air personalities, but not on a personal, one-on-one basis. I work more with the brand representation side under the Media General umbrella.

AI-Generated Misinformation Experiences

Interviewer: Have you encountered any AI-generated misinformation or deepfake content involving the people you represent?

Rhesa: Yes, yes. We've experienced some. Some of the AI-generated content could be creative pieces, or audio. For example, someone would take an audio clip of something an on-air personality said, tweak it, and make it communicate something else. Sometimes even the creatives we design for example, news cards or quotes, people can take them and alter them to send a different message. So yes, we've seen this happen.

Impact on Public Image & Detection

Interviewer: From your point of view, how did these incidents affect the client's public image? And what early signs or indicators do you use to detect such content circulating online?

Rhesa: Because it's online, fake news spreads very fast. So, we don't usually detect it early, we mostly see the aftermath. Usually, someone sends it to us: a friend, a colleague in another media house, or one of our internal or external contacts. Then we address the issue.

We don't have the resources to detect things ahead of time. If we had a full crisis team with people doing constant social listening and scanning for negative or misleading content, then yes, we could detect things earlier. Because we lack that, we mostly see things after they go viral, then we fix them.

Audience Perception

Interviewer: And how have these incidents affected the public figures' image?

Rhesa: A lot of Ghanaian audiences are quite fragile when it comes to consuming information. Many don't fact-check. Whatever they see online, they quickly believe. So misinformation sometimes confuses our audience. They don't know what is credible or not. It takes a lot of work to win back the trust.

Interviewer: Are you able to change the narrative when misinformation spreads?

Rhesa: Not always. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It depends on the person receiving the information , their values, personal biases, and how they perceive the brand or personality. We try to maintain credibility and be consistent, but we can't change everyone's mind.

Role of Traditional Media vs Digital Media

Interviewer: How do traditional media and digital platforms contribute to escalating or correcting misinformation?

Rhesa: Today, digital platforms are the primary channel that escalates misinformation because of speed and the lack of editorial oversight. Digital really amplifies misinformation quickly.

Traditional media is slower because there are processes content goes through before it airs. So in traditional media, there are more opportunities to correct or filter out misinformation before it goes out.

For correcting misinformation, traditional media usually issues a press release or does a TV/radio appearance to clarify the facts. Digital spreads fastest; traditional corrects more slowly but more formally.

Strategies to Address Misinformation

Interviewer: What strategies have you used to address misinformation involving public figures?

Rhesa:

1. **Immediate Press Release:**

   We issue a statement denying or clarifying the misinformation, and we flag what part of it is false.

2. **Evidence-Based Correction:**

   After the press release, we show side-by-side comparisons , the fake content versus the real content.

3. **QR Code Verification:**

   We created a QR code system for our creatives. Every official publication from Media

General has a QR code. If a creative card circulating online doesn't have the code, it's not from us.

4. **Education:**

   We educate the public on our platforms, sometimes indirectly through LPMs (live presenter mentions), sometimes through dialogues, sometimes through our shows.

Interviewer: What is an LPM?

Rhesa: LPM means *Live Presenter Mention*. It's like a short on-air announcement—two or three lines—that educates the public in a subtle way. Not too loud, but still effective.

Example of a Recent Case

Interviewer: Do you remember any programs or incidents where you addressed misinformation recently?

Rhesa: Yes. For example, we are known for our political cartoon sketches. One time, our cartoonist did a cartoon, and then someone else created a fake one. The fake one went viral because people believe Media General is aligned politically. We had to issue a press release and show the real versus the fake version, especially because it was during the election period and tensions were high.

Internal Structures & Fact-Checking

Interviewer: Do you work with legal bodies, forensics experts, or specialists in your crisis handling?

Rhesa: Yes. The social media team works with a creative lead, a legal review person, and quality assurance. After we post content, another team double-checks grammar, accuracy, and checks for potential copyright risks. If we foresee backlash, we delete immediately.

We also retrain staff regularly, especially interns, so they can identify what could cause reputation issues.

Systems & Protocols PR Teams Should Use

Interviewer: What systems or protocols do you think PR teams or brand managers should put in place to manage AI-driven reputational threats?

Rhesa:

- **Monitoring tools** — automated tools to track suspicious content or accounts.
- **Clear verification tools** — like our QR code system.
- **Platforms for checking authenticity**, similar to how fact-checking organizations operate.
- **Policies or regulations** — something from policymakers to hold repeat perpetrators accountable.
- **Education and literacy programs** for the public on misinformation.

Final Thoughts

Interviewer: Before we wrap up, do you have anything you'd like to add?

Rhesa: I think account authentication is important. People should be able to tell which accounts are real or fake. Yes, we have two-factor authentication for personal account security, but we also need systems that help the general public detect fake pages. Some scam pages have many

followers, and people still believe them. If a tool can identify verified sources of information, that would help a lot.

THANK YOU!