

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**CONFORMITY WITH NMC GUIDELINES ON RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS:
THE CASE OF SELECTED RADIO STATIONS IN SEKONDI-TAKORADI**



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THE CASE OF SELECTED RADIO STATIONS IN SEKONDI-TAKORADI**



**A dissertation in the Department of Communication and Media Studies,
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication,
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,**

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of the degree of
Master of Arts
(Communication Media Studies)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

December, 2023

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

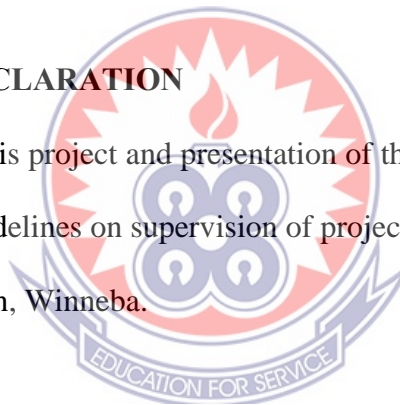
I, **CHRISTIAN BAIDOO** hereby declare that this project work is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another award in this University or elsewhere.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project and presentation of the project work were supervised in accordance with guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



Supervisor's Name:

Signature:

Date:

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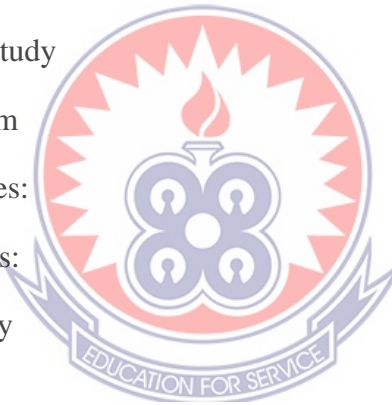
DEDICATION

To my lovely mother, Atta Kakra Baidoo, who raised me and encouraged me to push on despite the weariness along the way and also to my two sons whom I had to dodge a number of times to push through with my work.



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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the conformity of religious programmes on Twin City Radio and Skyy Power FM to the National Media Commission (NMC)'s guidelines on religious broadcasting. The study was anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory. Using the qualitative research approach and the multiple case study as the design, document analysis was conducted on selected episodes of religious programmes on the two radio stations. Interviews were also conducted with media personalities at the two stations. The study found that religious programmes on the two stations were in the form of sermons, prayer sessions, music shows, talk shows and live church services. Findings revealed that although both radio stations had knowledge about the existence of the NMC guidelines, they were not privy to its dictates. Hence, they did not implement its stipulations fully in their religious programming. Thus, radio stations in Ghana should be sensitized on the stipulations of NMC guidelines to encourage their conformity.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter gives an overview to the study focusing on the background, statement of problem, objectives, and research questions. It also outlines the significance, delimitations, and organization of the entire research work.

1.1 Background of the study

Attempts have been made by researchers from the late 20th century to study the relationship between media and religion. Studies such as De Witte (2005) have shown a striking concurrence of intensified religious mobilization and an increased accessibility of media, especially in the context of government's lessening control over national media infrastructures.

Ihejirika (2006) observes that in the 1980's, most of the writings of scholars in the field of anthropology started to shift focus to explore the religious and cultural implications of different media practices on the continent. The author identifies three different features that characterize studies from this period. The first feature according to Ihejirika (2006) is that scholars of religious studies and anthropology were the ones who started the trend of research to examine the interconnectivity between media, religion and culture in Africa. The second feature according to the author was the dominance of non-African scholars and the third feature was that studies conducted in the 1980s were done in Western or Southern African countries. Within these two areas, the most prominent studies were done in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and Zimbabwe (Ihejirika, 2006). Maxwell (1998) studied the impact and role of electronic media in the growth of African Pentecostalism. He observed:

“What is new about African Pentecostalism is its recent growth, enormous vitality and its appropriation of the electronic media to the point that this has almost become part of Pentecostal self-definition” (Maxwell 1998, p. 255).

One major theme in the studies of anthropologists such as Hackett (1998), Meyer (1998), Maxwell (1998) and Marshall-Fratani (1998) was the cultural and social consequences of the Pentecostal adoption of the electronic media. These authors observe messages that attracted audience were the insistence on the need for one to be “born again” and experience the blessings, transformation, empowerment, success, and prosperity. There were also according to the authors, healing and deliverance messages aimed at rebuking and binding demons, castigating witches and defying them by the power of God through Jesus Christ. Hackett (1998) made the Pentecostal reliance on mass media technologies in Nigeria and Ghana the focus of her paper. The author maintained that through this appropriation, the media have transformed the meaning of religious practice in the two countries. Marshall-Fratani (1998) drew out the political significance of the transnational character and mediation of the Pentecostal message, exploring how the global traffic in religious media enables Nigerian Pentecostals to take up religious identities which transcend or even reject the nation-state. Maxwell (1998) also explored Pentecostalism’s relations with modernity, and showed how Zimbabwean Pentecostals have fashioned their own version of the prosperity gospel with the help of the media to help them make the best of rapid social change.

The millennium marked the beginning of the second era of the history of research in media, religion and culture in Africa (Ihejirika, 2006). Especially characteristic of this period according to the author is the involvement of many new scholars, notably

those of African origin such as: Abdoulaye Niang, Asonzeh Ukah and Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu. Also important according to Ihejirika (2006), was an exponential increase in the related literature published in journals or edited books and greater participation of Africans in international conferences on media and religion such as the biannual International Conference on Media, Religion and Culture.

Hackett (2010) rightly identified the liberalisation of the African airwaves as the most significant development that facilitated the rise of religious broadcasting particularly of the Pentecostals in the continent. This appears to have occurred in conjunction with, or as a consequence of the democratisation processes in many African states. According to Hackett (2010), the dismantling of state monopolies of the broadcast media and the commercialising of airtime and ownership have radically altered the media landscape, with significant consequences for religious communication and practice. This may be attributed to the proliferation of both radio and television stations in the 90s. Hackett (2010) notes that between 1993 and 2001, the number of radio stations in Sub-Saharan Africa region had grown from 40 to 426 stations. They also became more diversified and commercialised in that period, moving from the region's capital cities to local neighbourhoods where they broadcast their programs predominantly in FM (Hackett, 2010).

In the Ghanaian setting in particular, liberalization of the broadcast spectrum and rising social inequalities spurred the expansion and spread of the neo-Pentecostal movement (De Witte, 2018). The proliferation of the broadcast media appeared to have considerably fuelled the growth. Asamoah Gyedu (2005) had earlier indicated that religious innovation such as spiritual warfare, prosperity gospel, and the use of the mass media had become the engine for the promotion and growth of Pentecostalism. The opening up of radio and television stations in Ghana according

to the author had motivated those who have the money to purchase airtime and mediate their programs to the public (De Witte, 2005). The author observes that various forms of religious practices ranging from the sale of anointing oils, car stickers, and wristbands to the charging of fees for counselling services grew rapidly. Essentially, on a daily basis, religious individuals and groups were trying new market techniques by utilizing the mass media, especially on radio and television to advertise their services and create a niche for themselves (Asamoah Gyedu, 2005).

This opportunity presented by the media has also opened the floodgate for all kinds of fraudsters usually referred in the Ghanaian media as charlatans who present themselves as religious individuals to take advantage of unsuspecting vulnerable people. The activities of these so called fraudsters are not peculiar to Ghana. Mujaji (2015) gives a perspective on how the activities of self-proclaimed pastors are threatening human security on the African continent and in effect has crippled sustainable development. The author describes the use of tactics such as to manipulate and control through the deployment of religion and observes that many innocent people are being abused and exploited using the name of God. Apparently, while many are called 'prophets' of God, not all are genuine and serve as God's prophets. Some are con artists hiding behind the pulpit, deceiving believers when, in fact, they are philanderers (Mujaji, 2015). The author notes that due to this factor, believers' lives have rested in the wrong hands hence compromising human security. The author argued that con artists have preyed on religion's capacity to rouse the most profound feelings and emotions in individuals to dig into their already torn pockets, sexually violate them, among other dreadful acts hence threatening human security.

In Ghana, sections of the public have raised concerns about the influx of these self-acclaimed prophets in religious broadcasts and the attendant effects on the vulnerable, mostly women and children or the distressed. Speaker of Ghana's Parliament, Professor Mike Oquaye observe that it is common knowledge that self-acclaimed pastors keep people in camps to heal them and when they get worse, they rush them to the health facilities (Nyarbor 2018). Yet, people cannot be held accountable. The author adds that also in a statement on the floor of Parliament, Member of Parliament for Mfantseman East, Mr. Ekow Hayford noted instances where supposed fake pastors use media platforms to take huge sums of money to give out lotto numbers, sell paraphernalia at exorbitant prices among others.

Activities of some of these charlatans prompted the need for the state to take action to protect poor people from the ravaging effects of abuse under the guise of religion (Nyarbor 2018). Following several calls to address the issue, an initiative was started in 2015 by the National Media Commission (N.M.C.), Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (G.I.B.A.), Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (G.B.C.), National Communication Authority (N.C.A.) and some religious heads to develop guidelines for religious broadcasts (Pwaberi 2018). The guidelines launched in 2018 were for the media to among other things prevent abuse and exploitation of vulnerable individuals. However, the question is, how are these guidelines to be implemented; how are the media conforming to these guidelines?

The National Media Commission (NMC) is responsible for regulating religious broadcasts but its regulation mandate seems to be on low key since the Commission lacks the power to enforce. Already, the NMC has come out with a number of instruments including the National Media Policy and Broadcasting Standards which have mandatory implementation but those who fail to comply often do not get

punished but rather advised or cautioned (Da Costa et al., 2020). A point in reference is when the NMC was petitioned by some broadcasters on the issue of three television stations in Ghana (TV XYZ, Thunder TV and Ice TV) broadcasting pornographic content on free-to-air television (Da Costa et al., 2020). According to the authors, the petitioners pointed that the action of the TV stations was against Section 7 (e) of the NMC Broadcasting Guidelines provision which states that actual sexual intercourse between humans should at no time be transmitted. In response, the NMC noted that the actions of the television stations were against the Broadcasting Standards, however, due to the limitations of the NMC in punishing, the stations were barred from airing such content and were only cautioned against such practices (Dadzie, 2017). Per its constitutional mandate, the NMC's powers to punish media houses and media practitioners that default in set regulation targets are weak. A study by the World Bank Group, according to Da Costa et al. (2020) indicates that the NMC's mandate is not enough to address content based problems like what the guidelines on religion are meant to deal with. They have no authority to punish offenders but to appeal to social responsibility, professionalism, ask for retraction of offending publications or request for apology on behalf of affected individuals or media houses. Stakeholders in the media industry perceive that the NMC has not lived up to expectations regarding its mission and even some media practitioners do not have confidence in them (Da Costa et al., 2020). According to the authors this explains the numerous complains about media performance in Ghana. The NMC has consistently been criticised for paying lip service to media accountability standards in Ghana, thus, impacting negatively on its reputation. Tettey (2006) notes that the failure on the part of monitoring institutions to perform their watchdog role could damage their reputation and affect their credibility as well.

The NMC Guidelines on religious broadcasting charges the media to protect the interests and welfare of the public through their broadcast with particular reference to religious content and programming. However, the submissions above suggest that the media in Ghana have failed to discharge this responsibility. It is therefore important to critically examine the nature of the content of religious radio programmes and evaluate religious programming that are acceptable to the public as stated by the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting and how the media are faring with this responsibility (especially in a country where human security and social justice is less achieved).

1.2 Statement of problem

There is not much literature in Ghana on how media organizations implement guidelines. This is primarily because generally, guidelines are considered recommendatory and so they have optional usage. Bustelo (2006) researching on the potential role of standards and guidelines in an evaluation culture in Spain found out that guidelines regulate professional practice within different fields. The researcher explained that guidelines are established to give direction on how to achieve broad policy issues that are outlined in policies and standards. Thus, when a broad policy is issued, an attendant guideline will then be issued to provide the step-by-step processes required to achieve the provisions in the policy. The study however, does not relate specifically to implementation of guidelines on religious broadcasting nor controlling forms of exploitation of the vulnerable under the guise of religion in the media.

Although guidelines on religious broadcasting have been issued by the state, there is no guarantee that media houses have adopted and are implementing them.

Guidelines may not have legal backing but represent the state-of-the-art practices (Schwartz et al., 1999). Thus, guidelines are designed after careful research, based on years of past experience, as well as expert knowledge. This also implies that, though they are not statutory and as such recommendatory, they can only serve as reference and assist legislators in issues of regulation. Although the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting may not have been developed after years of careful research, they have come to the fore, according to Pwaberi (2018), following concerns expressed by the state leadership and other important sections of society.

Schwartz et al. (1999) assert that associational and societal guidelines are often written and peer reviewed by recognised experts, thus, increasing the legal significance of guidelines. In this current study, it can be understood that the NMC is a recognized authority to develop and promulgate guidelines for the media. In a study of the legal implications of medical guidelines, Damen et al. (2003) contended that guidelines do not have direct legal status but have gained significance. The authors note that in the Netherlands for example, the Supreme Court ruled in March 2001 that not following a medical guideline or protocol could be judged as an answerable shortcoming.

In the European context, Bustelo (2006) notes that, evaluation guidelines have been approved by the evaluation societies of France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and, thus, have legal backing which makes implementation highly recommended. The author argues that some guidelines are very general, while others are specific. Specific guidelines, the author explains, are concerned with defining quality and therefore, they provide more specific and concrete actions on the best ways to undertake an activity. As suggested by Schwartz et al. (1999), such specific

guidelines can serve legislators in the regulation and arbitration of difficult professional cases and so they must be implemented. Although the studies above do not focus on guidelines and standards bringing sanity in religious broadcasts, they add voice to the significance of guidelines in professional practice. It could be understood from the studies above that although the media are not under compulsion to adopt and implement the guidelines on religious broadcasting, they should be recognized as necessary for implementation to help control professional practice in line with social interest.

One relevant study in sub Saharan Africa is that of Ukah (2015), who researched on the law, authority and religious broadcasting in Nigeria. The researcher observed that the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) needed to enforce regulations fearlessly because failure to do so results in a kind of sensational atmosphere where the religious propaganda of millionaire pastors and imams take control of the airwaves with no regard to balance, truth or attention to diversity. The researcher observed that Nigeria's broadcasting law of 1992 precludes religious organizations from obtaining broadcast licences. However, the law did not specify reasons for the prohibition. The researcher noted that the law considerably deregulated the broadcast industry. Meanwhile, the regulatory function of the NBC included determination of the broadcast content, setting of standards, quality control of programming and the exercise of oversight function on the industry. Ukah's work also showed that competition for patronage and resources among broadcast stations instead of improving the quality of broadcasts has rather compromised standards (Ukah, 2015). According to Odjebode (2009, p. 54), the culture of programming in Nigeria had been reduced to the "sale of the sacred" and "the reign of junk".

Adekoya and Ajilore (2012) researching on how national communication development is empowered attested that there was no problem with Nigeria's communication policy itself and the roles assigned to various media towards achieving national development. However, the problem was in the implementation, particularly, the execution of the various roles. The authors assert that Nigeria's Communication Policy was bedevilled with fundamental implementation problems attributed to economic and ethical factors including pervasive corruption, difficult operational climate, urban-centred journalism, weakening government investments, and the failing public sector. Meanwhile, the government and the media fraternity had been blamed for non-commitment in the implementation of the policy in some instances (Adekoya and Ajilore, 2012).

In a Zimbabwean case, Mabika and Salawu (2014) attest that the Broadcasting Services Amendment Act which had guidelines of implementation incorporated into its formulation had been challenged with implementation issues. According to the researchers, the Act which was supposed to be implemented by all broadcasting stations seems to be a burden only of indigenous language radio broadcasting services since it places restrictions on them in their programming content, thus, their programmes do not seem to be attractive and competitive. They confirmed that English language stations had been spared in that regard. Secondly, the act seems to have singled out and enumerated guidelines for public broadcasters to implement but private stations, though guided by the same Act do not adhere to the Act on the ticket that no guidelines had been attributed to them (Mabika and Salawu, 2014).

In Ghana, some of the problems of implementation of media guidelines have been highlighted in a report by the World Bank Group (Da-Costa et al., 2020). Whilst

studying the implementation of the NMC guidelines on local language broadcasts, the authors observed that the Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting (GLLB) lacks impetus. The guidelines was introduced to solve an existing problem but its tenets cannot be used to hold local media accountable for any infractions. According to their study, the NMC had not done due diligence in popularizing the document among the media fraternity. The study revealed a situation where people at the helm of affairs in one radio station, Hello FM, which is considered the ‘best’ and most popular FM station in the Ashanti Region of Ghana were not aware of the guidelines. According to their study, the zeal that accompanied the launch of the document in 2009 faded afterwards. Implementation and monitoring has, just like Mporu and Mutasa (2014) attest, been faced with poor commitment to planning and policy making. Findings from the interview of unit heads at Hello FM according to Da-Costa et al. (2020) indicated that they were not aware of the GLLB, indicating that the NMC had not been upbeat in promoting the document.

Factors that influence implementation may vary. Implementation is viewed as the process of interactions between setting goals or policy intent and the actions taken towards achieving set goals or outcomes (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, according to the authors, studies on implementation stress the need to understand the peculiar factors that affect the success or failure of guidelines or policies.

Literature on the trends and impacts of religious broadcasting abounds. Examples of such studies are Ihejirika (2006), Hackett (1998) and Asamoah-Gyedu (2005). However, there seems to be scant literature on religious broadcasting, programming and conformity to the stipulations of the NMC guidelines by FM stations in Ghana. This study therefore seeks to examine the nature of the content of religious programs

broadcast on two radio stations in Ghana (*Twin City radio and Skyy Power FM*) and to further evaluate their conformity to the NMC 's guidelines on religious broadcasting.

1.2.1 Research objectives:

1. To identify how much airtime is allocated to religious programmes on the selected radio stations.
2. To explore the nature of religious content aired on the two radio stations in Sekondi Takoradi.
3. To investigate the conformity of religious programmes of the two stations with NMC's religious broadcasting guidelines.

1.2.2 Research questions:

1. How much airtime do the two stations allocate to religious programmes?
2. What is the nature of religious content aired on the two stations?
3. How do the two stations ensure that their religious programmes are in conformity with the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasts?

1.3 Significance of study

The study intends to determine conformity of religious broadcasts to Ghana's National Media Commission's guidelines to religious broadcasts. The study is significant because it can be useful to academia by adding valuable research information on religious content and programming as well as how radio stations adhere to NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting. The findings are expected to inform policy makers, industry players and other stakeholders on religious broadcasting and how to conform to the NMC's guidelines.

In addition, it will also serve as a source of reference for future research work for stakeholders in the broadcast industry who want to advance their knowledge on religious content programming and broadcasting guidelines.

1.4 Scope of study

The study was limited to two (2) radio stations in the Western Region of Ghana; Twin City Radio and Skyy Power FM. Twin City Radio is a state-owned media and Skyy Power FM is a privately-owned media. The study focused on programmes and content such as preaching of sermons by pastors excluding other religious programmes such as gospel music, praises or worship, and the period of study was from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

1.5 Organization of Study

This study is organised and presented in five chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and research questions, significance of the study, scope of study and organisation of the study. Chapter two presents a detailed review of other works by researchers in relation to this study. In addition, the chapter includes the National Media Commission's guidelines for religious broadcasts which forms the basis for this study. It also discusses the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter three discusses the methods which were used in collecting and analysing data for the research. It comprises the research approach, research design, sample size and sampling technique, data collection methods, data collection procedure, method of data analysis, ethical consideration and techniques of validating the study. Chapter four embodies the findings and discussion of the study. All major and minor findings are discussed in this chapter. Chapter five comprises the summary and conclusions

drawn from the study. It also provides a discussion of the limitations of the research study and offers recommendations for future studies in this area.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of a review of other works by researchers in relation to religious content programming and its social impacts. The chapter further explicates on the guidelines to religious content programming with a focus on the NMC's guidelines on religious broadcasting and the Social Responsibility Theory. It also shows the relevance of the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting and the theory to the study. It concludes with the summary of the chapter. As the existing literature regarding religious broadcasts content and programming is broad, it was important to focus on the study's main purpose in order to properly review key areas that relate to the study.

2.1 Media

“Media is the plural of the word medium” (Mehraj et al., 2014, p.1). According to Buckingham (2003, p.1), “the media are the mediums we use when we want to communicate indirectly with other people-rather than in person or by face-to face contact.” According to the author, the media includes the whole range of modern communications media. Kolucki and Lemish (2011) also submit that the media serve as one of the most socializing agents in forming behaviours, attitudes and world views. The authors add that, the media are also the central story tellers of our time for all ages in all cultures around the globe. This indicates that individuals cannot do away with the media as they have become part of daily lives and activities. The authors further posit that the media can be used positively to enrich lives, modify behaviours, stimulate imagination and creativity, widen education and knowledge, encourage inclusion and tolerance, narrow social gaps and stimulate development

and civil society. Theories and views of the media have also changed over time. From the 1900s to the 1930s, the media was seen as very powerful (McQuail, 2010). This, according to Price and Feldman (2009), was called the Hypodermic Needle Model (Nabi and Oliver, 2009). The assertion by Nabi and Oliver (2009) implies that the media could directly persuade and inject ideas to a passive audience. Ruggiero (2000) posit that users of the media today are not just passive but have a choice to select over what is useful or beneficial to them. As a result of this, the Uses and Gratification theory is of the view that individuals understand media products in different ways for different purposes, and receive different pleasures that are personal to them and this vary from user to user.

The relevance of the media to this study is that government and the general public believe that the media are important tools in the control of exploitation and abuse of the vulnerable through religion. For instance, because of the tendency for the broadcast media to fan divisive tendencies, religious organizations have been precluded from owning and operating any broadcasting station. This implies that the media has a considerable impact on the Ghanaian society. As a result, it is important for media organisations to be socially responsible by placing value on the content for religious broadcasting.

2.2 Forms of Broadcasting Media in Ghana

The National Media Policy of Ghana provides for a three-tier system, namely public, community and commercial radio and television stations. Public radio and television stations, according to the policy, are operated by a publicly-owned statutory body which may be wholly or partially state-funded. In all cases, a public broadcast network is accountable to all strata of people as represented by an independent board

and serves the overall public interest. This ensures that one-sided reporting and programming-be it religion, political belief, culture, race and gender-is avoided. Community radio and television stations are those that are about, for, by and of a specific marginalized community. Ownership and management of such networks are representatives of the community and pursues a participatory social development agenda which is non-profit, non-sectarian and non-partisan. Commercial radio and television stations are privately owned and operated for profit and are controlled privately by independent commercial groups or individuals. For the two selected radio stations in the study, one is a Public Service Broadcaster and the other is privately operated. Twin City Radio is a public service broadcaster and Skyy Power FM is privately owned. Twin City Radio and Skyy Power FM are located in the Western Regional capital of Sekondi/Takoradi. Twin City Radio which started airing in 1994 operates two bandwidths: 94.7 and 88.1 whilst Skyy Power which started airing in 1997 operates a bandwidth of 93.5 FM.

2.3 Brief history of radio in Ghana

The British colonial government introduced radio broadcasting in Ghana in 1935 to help promote their policies in the colonial territory (Karikari, 1993). From that period to the immediate post-independence era, the author observes that radio broadcasting remained a government monopoly. According to Karikari (1993), when the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation decree was passed in 1968, radio and television broadcasting became the monopoly of the state-owned GBC. This meant that in the media history of Ghana- from the independent era to the early 90s- private radio stations were not licensed or decreed to operate. However, the Author notes that the situation changed in 1996 when the airwaves were liberalized in line with constitutional provisions of the fourth republic of Ghana (Karikari, 1993).

Radio stations have always had immense impact on the development of nations across Africa, and Ghana is not an exception. However, the spread of radio stations in the country in the last 10 years according to Karikari (1993) has created a new media environment that has enabled discussions of a broad array of socio-cultural, political and economic issues at every level of the social strata. This implies that the numerous FM stations have created diversity in public discourse to include other issues that hitherto would never have been on the media agenda. Most of the FM stations also operate in the local languages and have as such infused a lot of cultural diversity and free expression through the medium. Karikari (1993) explains that since the media landscape was deregulated in Ghana, radio has become the most common form of media outlet. This means until the coming of the 1992 fourth Republican Constitution, radio broadcast was the monopoly of the government. According to Karikari (1993), only radio station that broadcasted across the country was operated by Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) whose programs were received on the short wave bandwidth. Gadzekpo (2005) observed GBC was also a government owned media outlet whose sole responsibility, like the state owned newspapers was to promote national integration, education and development. Though a few communities and districts could boast of community radio stations, the author observes that they were under the control of local government offices which funded them through central government subventions and as such controlled their program contents. However, in 1996 licenses were granted to some private radio stations to operate of which Skyy Power FM was one of them. The period according to Gadzekpo (2005) marked the beginning of real mass media liberalization in Ghana as radio stations inundated almost every part of the country. Since then, many radio stations operating on FM frequencies have sprung up in

several districts and communities. Even though most of the radio stations are concentrated in the urban centers and cities, the mere fact that they have a wider reach across the country is quite remarkable. Currently there are 680 radio stations that have been licensed to broadcast (N.C.A. 2018). GBC still continues to be the major nation-wide broadcaster even though its audience has dwindled. According to Gadzekpo (2005) the largest audiences that are highly concentrated in the urban centers belong to the private commercial FM stations. Again many, of these influential private commercial FM stations are concentrated in the regional capitals including Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Tamale. Currently, some of the most vibrant private commercial FM stations include Peace FM (Accra), Joy FM (Accra), Fox FM (Kumasi), Skyy Power FM (Takoradi), Space FM (Sunyani) and Diamond FM (Tamale).

2.4 The Concept of Religion

Religion is found in all human race or societies, but what precisely do we mean by religion? Well, there is no uniformity in the way the concept has been defined. Over the centuries, influential thinkers have offered their own definitions on the term religion. However, virtually all of such definitions have been critiqued. In some cases, the definitions are too narrow or too broad. In other cases, the definitions are so vague and inclusive that they do not sufficiently delimit religion from other areas of human thought.

Mangai (1999) describes religion as a joint style of beliefs and practices through which a combination of people gives explanation to real life predicaments and to things that are sacred. Clifford Geertz (1973) defines religion as a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations

in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. Going by the above definitions, we will discover that religion, as a kind of human behaviour can be verbal or non-verbal; the non-verbal aspect including rites and specific religious acts and activities. The verbal aspects include beliefs, mythology, ethical standards and conception of the supernatural and religious ideology. Religion is broad enough to apply to all human population, that is, it is encountered in all human societies. Religion is concerned with the supernatural, which is the non-natural, the more than natural, and a realm outside of the everyday world, strange and mysterious in ordinary terms. One of the most widely acceptable definitions of religion is the one offered by (Durkheim 2016). According to him, religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden- beliefs and practices which unite into one moral community. From the above, we can safely say that religion developed as a result of man's attempt to establish a link with the un-known or the.

2.5 The Media and Religious Institutions

According to Ogwo et al. (2013), the media as the watchdog of society cannot be divorced from religious institutions. The media need the religious institutions to survive while the religious institutions also need the media to survive. The authors explain that the broadcast media can be used to propagate morals, ethics and godliness which are the basic principles for nation building in a country that forbids the establishment of broadcast stations for outright religious broadcasting. This implies that power of the media can be used to redress and reconstruct a country's national value system by carrying out religious activities. The media can be used to

communicate religious messages that will assist the shaping of peoples ambitions through hard work, godliness and civic principles. Ogwo et al. (2013) observe that the media as social institutions have the potential to affect our religiousness. This implies that religious institutions use the media to carry out their activities so that the members of the public will know about their programmes. There are several religious programmes on the electronic media, which are aimed at inculcating certain morals and attitudes into the people. Today, churches use radio, television, newspapers, magazines, handbills, books, posters and many other mass media channels to carry out evangelism. Many churches today use the mass media to reach out to millions of people in Ghana and other countries. Thus, the media provide or serve as means through which churches carry out their religious programmes. We can say that the media and religious institutions are inter-dependent (Ogwo et al., 2013). The authors also note that media need religious institutions because religious institutions like churches, mosques serve as sources of news. Through this, they get news. Religious institutions also need the media because the only means through which they can reach out to a large audience is through the mass media and not through interpersonal communication. Media technology has a complex relationship with religion or at least, with organised religion (Ogwo et al., 2013). According to the authors, many faith communities have noticed that media messages can affect the attitudes and behaviours of their followers, often in ways contrary to religious teachings. The relationship between religion and the media has recently been subject to more thorough reflection in academics as well as in public debate. Today, we witness not only a spared of televangelical format in Pentecostal religious bodies, but, also, there is the deliberate and skillful adoption of various electronic and digital media- cassettes, radio, video, television, internet and the format associated with

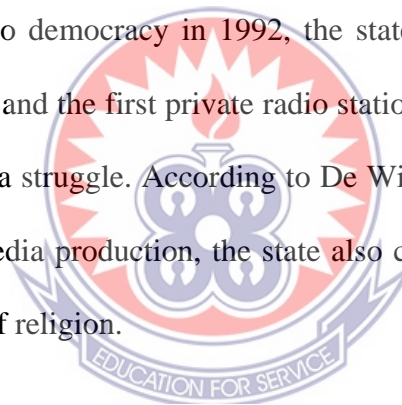
these media. New forms of religion not only transform religious discourses and practices, but religion also features in films, videos and television programmes in framework of entertainment or infotainment (Ogwo et al., 2013).

Chapter 12, particularly, Article 162 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, stipulates the freedom and independence of the media. The main focus of this provision in the 1992 Constitution is that the mass media should be the pivot through which citizens establish and sustain the democratic culture. Littlejohn and Foss (2005, p.273) also assert that the media “affect and reflect the cultures of society and also provide information simultaneously to large heterogeneous audiences”. According to Dakroury and Eid (2012, p.3), “Communication and media have great power in society”. It can therefore be considered that the relationship between the media and communication has become inseparable as individuals cannot appreciate any without knowledge of the other. For instance, Okwuchukwu (2014) in his study on the influence of media ownership and control on media agenda setting in Nigeria asserts that, in contemporary society, the requirements for relating to and understanding the wider world have been narrowed to the effective use of information communicated through the media. Kimmel (2003) also argues that the media as a primary institution of socialisation do not only reflect, but also create culture. Bulbulia (2007) notes that as media has become increasingly global, their role in protecting the vulnerable through religious broadcasts and for cultural identity is a topic of concern. The media can, therefore, influence the culture of society either positively or negatively as what they provide is vital to individuals in the society. This makes it very important to study the nature of the content of religious programming and how the media as an institution put the interests and rights of individuals particularly the vulnerable to the fore through religious programs particularly on radio.

2.6 Religious programming in Ghana's media

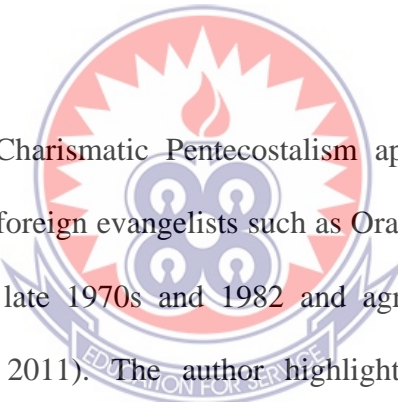
From the introduction of radio in the Gold Coast in 1935 until 1995, radio was under the control of the colonial and postcolonial state and this greatly shaped programming and media practice in general (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). According to the author, various subsequent political regimes: colonial, independent, military and civilian differed much in their use of the media. Throughout the history of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), development of the broadcast infrastructure and programming policies were closely tied to particular state ideologies: colonial, anti-colonial, Panafricanist, revolutionary or other and were seen as a tool for creating the desired citizens. A major concern always was to educate the people and to build a nation. In colonial times, media ideology stressed education and civilization, and programming served to bind people to the British Commonwealth through news about parts of the empire, European music and information about colonial state policies (Larbi, 2001). After independence, the processes of nationalization, in terms of ownership and programming, and popularization, through the promotion of widely accessible radio technology, served the education of national citizens and the creation of a national identity. As this also implied a nationwide sharing of the same programming, the state, thus, created shared understandings of past and present events, of inside and outside the nation of Ghana, of morality and immorality (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). Interestingly, the most authoritarian regimes were also those that invested most in the media infrastructure, clearly inspired by the belief that when you have the media you have the nation. Indeed, most coups started with the seizure of the GBC complex and the new, self-declared regime addressing the nation through the airwaves. Although today the profusion of private FM and TV stations has drastically changed the media field and undermines the nation-building

potential of the media, the belief in the political power of the public media is still strong and up till today the GBC grounds are heavily protected by soldiers and not easily accessible for non-staff. The state's concern with control over the means of communication was informed by a strong belief in the power of radio to shape people's minds. The idea that radio and television serve as transformative forces is still strong in media debates today. Media debates and media policy are characterized by a view that attributes to media an almost magical power to influence the thoughts and habits of the people (De Witte, 2011). The author notes that national consciousness and identity, education and social development are all supposed to be largely shaped by media programming. This is one of the reasons why, after the return to democracy in 1992, the state found it hard to give up its control over the media and the first private radio station could start operating only in 1995, and not without a struggle. According to De Witte (2011), with the monopoly over the media and media production, the state also controlled programming or the public representation of religion.



Officially, the state extended its policy of religious neutrality to its media policy, but in practice a link between the state and mainline Christianity informed programmes such as Church Service, the main religious broadcast on 'GBC-TV'. Although the programme was meant to represent 'the various Christian churches in Ghana', it clearly favoured the established mainline churches to the exclusion of independent, 'spiritual churches' and Charismatic-Pentecostal churches (De Witte, 2011). The author observed, African traditional religion was first of all framed as 'cultural heritage', and Islam was hardly represented at all. In addition, there was a big difference between the frames in which mainline Christianity and African traditional religion were represented. The TV talk show Cultural Heritage, for example, hosted

cultural specialists who elaborated on specific topics like ‘traditional religion’, ‘cultural festivals’ or ‘libation’, meant to educate the people about diverse cultural aspects of the nation, to restore their pride in Ghana’s rich and colourful heritage and to promote unity in diversity (De Witte, 2011). According to the author, the talk show disseminated knowledge about, rather than stimulating participation in traditional religion and was based on an abstract sense of cultural ownership. People were to identify with it in a cerebral, almost distanced way as citizens. Church Service was rather intended to promote balanced and mature Christian growth, to bring a life changing transformation and personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. This framing promoted involvement and personal identification as believers.



A small opening for Charismatic Pentecostalism appeared when GBC received programme tapes from foreign evangelists such as Oral Roberts and Benson Idahosa (Nigeria) between the late 1970s and 1982 and agreed to air them on national television (De Witte, 2011). The author highlights that together with media programmes and live crusades, the opening of charismatic Pentecostalism on GBC inspired a wave of Charismatic Christian enthusiasm in Ghana. In December 1981, however, flight lieutenant Jerry Rawlings took power and he was highly suspicious of this new strand of Christianity with its generally negative attitude towards traditional culture running counter to the ideals of his ‘cultural revolution’. He thus banned all foreign religious radio and TV programmes from the airwaves (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). From then on the neo-traditionalist Afrikania Mission, also known as the religious branch of the revolution, was the only religious group granted airspace on state radio and for a long time the airwaves remained inaccessible for any other religious group.

In 1992, presidential elections effectuated a return to democratic rule and the adoption of a constitution that guarantees freedom and independence of the media and forbids censorship and licensing of any media outlet as stipulated in article 162 (3), of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Gradually, once the fences were down with the establishment of 'Joy FM' in 1995, the state loosened control over the media, thus giving way to a rapidly evolving private media scene (De Witte, 2011). By 2005, the number of FM radio stations in the country had risen to 60. The public TV channel had been joined by five private TV stations in Accra and Kumasi and a number of cable television providers.

According to De Witte (2011), the nature of programming in the new broadcast stations has two consequences that are worthy of note. First, airtime slots are sold for privately produced programmes. Access to the airwaves is thus available to those with money, excluding those without. Charismatic churches appear to be the keenest buyers. Even GBC compelled by media competition now sells airtime to churches. According to De Witte (2011), more than 30 different Christian broadcasts throughout the week fill about 22 hours of airtime on the TV channels in Accra. Some are foreign productions, but most are produced by Ghanaian Charismatic churches that have the resources to pay for airtime. Second, though broadcasting locally, De Witte (2011) observes that commercial stations are much more transnationally oriented than the national GBC used to be, and in many cases establish transnational business links. They air much foreign, especially American entertainment programming, both through buying the rights to old foreign productions at very low cost and through relay agreements with global media networks, including religious ones such as Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), Trinity Broadcasting Network and the Catholic Eternal World Television Network.

According to De Witte (2011), such foreign programmes provide reference points for local productions. Vice versa, local productions may reach much wider audiences throughout Africa through arrangements with stations in other African countries or networks such as the African Broadcast Network. Private radio and television stations thus participate in a global context of broadcasting and generate a globalized entertainment culture that partners well with the equally globalized culture of Charismatic Pentecostalism.

2.7 Media ownership and commercial programming

According to De Witte (2011), although Ghanaian media law prohibits religiously based radio or TV stations, the personal religious affiliation of the owner or manager greatly influences programming, especially because Christian conviction partners well with commercial interest. One example is ‘Channel “R”’, established in 2001. It is, according to the director, ‘not exactly a religious station in the strict sense of the word’ (*Radio and TV Review* 28, 2001: 50), and so dodges the law against religious broadcast stations. Yet, also known as ‘the Channel of Righteousness’, it plays only gospel music, hosts a lot of preachers and has phone-in talk shows where people give testimonies of what Jesus has done in their lives, ‘all geared towards campaigning for the Kingdom of God’. Indeed, the director of ‘Channel “R”’ according to De Witte (2011), is born again and his radio station is a response to ‘what the good Lord has done for him when he forgave him his sins and thus won him for his salvation’.

The Managing Director of ‘Radio Gold’, Mr Baffou-Bonnie, broadcasts a lot of Christian programmes including preaching, programs from churches, and pastors who come live to the studio. De Witte (2011) observes that most are paid for by the

churches, but some are aired free of charge. The Author also observes that many radio stations also employ pastors or evangelists as part-time presenters, DJ's and talk show hosts, independent of their particular church, although most of them are Charismatic. Some have become popular personalities, are interviewed for entertainment magazines, present gospel shows, and are hired by various churches to host or perform on special occasions (De Witte, 2011).

Another instance where programming is influenced by the religious inclination of media ownership is Metro TV. It shows relatively many Islamic programmes, four hours on Fridays. Still, it has a lot more Christian programming and with ten hours a week even more than any other TV station in Ghana (De Witte, 2011). The Author notes that Mr Fattal is not interested in or involved with the content as the tapes are just submitted to the station to be played. Metro also has a broadcasting agreement with the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) Africa for five hours a week.

Crystal TV in Kumasi carries a broadcast by the Etherean Mission, a 'church' that seeks to combine Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and African traditional religion. The station owner, Mr Crystal, who has himself 'a tendency towards Hinduism', was glad about the broad orientation of the Etherean Mission, including Hindu worship, and decided to put their videos on 'Crystal TV' for free (De Witte, 2011).

A similar discrepancy between the non-Christian ideology of the station owner-director and religious programming can be discerned in TV Africa. TV Africa was founded as a free-on-air station in 1995 and started operating in 2003, with the slogans: "TV Africa": Truly African,

Proudly Ghanaian’ and ‘projecting African values’. The station’s mission to ‘uplift and enhance the soul and image of the African, both on the continent and in the diaspora’ strongly echoes the ideology of Sankofaism that seeks to decolonize the African mind by shedding of European perversion and retrieving African heritage. The station’s founder, the celebrated filmmaker Kwaw Ansah, indeed comes from the Sankofaist intellectual tradition. What is new about his TV project is the programming nature of the TV station, and its explicit branding and marketing strategy that targets a particular niche market of ‘those who have an African lifestyle and taste for African products’ with a ‘brand [that] has been made to look indigenous’. The owner of TV Africa, Kwaw Ansah, a member of the Afrikania Mission, is highly critical of Pentecostal churches and their negative attitude towards traditional African culture that goes directly against the mission of the station (De Witte, 2011). Yet, in order to survive as a commercial station, ‘TV Africa’ cannot do without Pentecostal churches buying airtime and thus carries many Pentecostal broadcasts. Similarly, Kwaw Ansah is very critical of the Pentecostally inspired Ghanaian and Nigerian video movies and their tendency to depict African tradition as the realm of dangerous powers (Meyer, 2006). But this genre of movies is very popular and attracts large audiences and thus ‘TV Africa’ frequently shows them. Non-Christian media owners such as Mr Crystal and Kwaw Ansah thus, much like Christian media owners, seek to use their TV station as a channel for propagating their religious or ideological conviction. At the same time, the commercial power of Pentecostalism makes them sell airtime to churches that directly and sometimes aggressively challenge these convictions. This confirms the statement the ‘religious broadcasting has become the bedrock of the media industry in the country’.

2.8 Charismatic Pentecostalism and commercial programming

In Ghana's commercialized media field, media entrepreneurship and Pentecostalism have become intertwined to the extent that, as the famous radio pastor Rev. Cephas Amartey of 'Joy FM' puts it, 'religious broadcast has become the bedrock of the media industry in the country' (De Witte, 2011). In order to better grasp the relationship of media production and religious practices in Ghana, and the implications of this relationship for new media entrepreneurs, it is key to understand Charismatic Pentecostalism and its place in Ghana's religious and media broadcasting landscape. As in many sub-Saharan African countries, Ghanaian Charismatic-Pentecostal churches have been booming over the last two decades. In the 1970s the availability of foreign evangelical newsletters, books, cassettes and television programmes and several mass conventions held by foreign itinerant evangelists stimulated a Charismatic revival in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). Locally established prayer groups evolved into full-fledged churches that attracted exponentially growing numbers of followers, especially among young educated upwardly mobile people in the urban areas, where almost half of all Christians regard themselves as Charismatic Pentecostal (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000). But more than in numbers alone, the impact of this new type of Pentecostal churches lies in the strong public presence they have established. Their extensive media activity attracts broad audiences far beyond their memberships and influences not only other Christian denominations, but also non-Christian religions (De Witte, 2005). The doctrines, structures of authority, and ways of worship of these churches fit well with their positive and productive attitude towards mass media. First of all, they place high value on evangelization. Media are seen as effective channels for spreading the gospel of Christ to the masses, channeling God's miracles for an

audience outside the churches, and transferring the power of the Holy Spirit to listeners and viewers at home. In addition, locating religious authority in Charismatic leadership and divine inspiration rather than institutionalized power, they use media to boost the charisma of the leader and manage his public personality (De Witte, 2005). Thus pastors become media celebrities. The author notes that the message of these churches evolves around success, achievement, self-making and prosperity. Most use English and have a modern and rich outlook. Media and technology are also used to enhance a self-image of success, prosperity and modernity as a sign of God's blessing. Lastly, the Pentecostal emphasis on the personal experience of the Holy Spirit, emotional expression and dramatic healing and deliverance links up easily with the formats of show and spectacle popular with commercialized television programming. Most Charismatic churches then have a 'media ministry', a church department that occupies itself entirely with the production, sales and broadcast of radio and/or TV programmes, audio and/or videotapes and CDs, and PR material such as TV commercials (De Witte, 2011). Some have their own fully equipped media production studio and a professional media team. The financial resources needed to produce their own programmes and buy airtime on radio and/or TV derive largely from the churches' membership. De Witte (2011) observes that some churches are rather successful at implementing their doctrine of tithing as well as soliciting other forms of money gifts from their followers, among whom are successful executives, businessmen and politicians. Apart from this, Charismatic churches can fairly easily find sponsorship for their broadcasts as their huge popularity makes them commercially interesting.

2.9 Media Monitoring and Regulation in Ghana

There are two monitoring and regulatory institutions that have oversight responsibilities over public, community and commercial broadcasting. These are the National Communication Authority (NCA) and the National Media Commission (NMC). Also the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) strives to ensure that Journalists achieve higher professional standards as well as promote and defend press freedom. This is intended to create solidarity among Ghanaian journalists. Article 172 of the 1992 Constitution provides for the establishment of the NMC and specifies its independence with the provision that: Article 167 of Ghana's 1992 constitution stipulate that except as otherwise provided by the Constitution or by any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, the National Media Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority in the performance of its functions. The NMC was established in 1993 by the NMC Act (Republic of Ghana, 1993) and it has been in existence to date. The NMC is mandated by the Constitution and the Act to promote freedom and independence of the media, to ensure the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, to insulate the state-owned media from government control and to discharge their roles without exercising direct control over the operations of the media. The NMC is charged to ensure responsible practice of the media by investigating, mediating and settling complaints regarding the operations and the content of the media (Oberko, 2010). The NMC's role, especially the one about media content, is of much relevance to this study. Thus, the NMC is supposed to ensure that the media content and programming cater for and protect the interests and rights of all citizens including the vulnerable. Therefore, the nature of Skyy Power FM and Twin City radio's religious programmes and how the two radio stations' religious programming seeks to

protect the interests and rights of the vulnerable is worth studying. The National Communications Authority is the regulatory body for communications in Ghana. The NCA's role regarding the media industry corresponds to a global push for separate national regulatory bodies that are different from the regular ministries or departments of state. This is in consonance with Samarajiva's (2001) claim that national communications regulatory agencies emerged as part of the global demand for the creation of independent, non-arbitrary and consistent decision-making agencies to guarantee a stable environment for long-term investment in the telecom sector. As at 1990, only twelve (12) of such communication regulatory bodies were in existence (Samarajiva, 2001). According to the NCA, 1996 (Act524, p.3), the NCA was established in Ghana in 1996 and became one of the 53 communications regulatory bodies in the world. The NCA is responsible for the allocation of frequency spectrum for broadcasting. Ghana's NCA has the regulatory responsibility of ensuring a level playing field in the industry and the attainment of public policy goals in communications. Specifically, its functions include the regulation of communications by wire, cable, radio, television, satellite, and other related technologies in Ghana. The NCA act defines the responsibilities of this regulatory body as setting technical standards, licensing service providers, providing guidelines on tariffs chargeable for services, monitoring the quality of service providers and initiating corrective action where necessary and setting terms and guidelines for interconnections of the different networks. It also considers complaints from telecom users, takes corrective actions, controls the assignment and use of the radio frequency spectrum, resolves disputes between service providers and customers, and controls the national numbering plan as well as the importation and use of types of communication equipment (NCA, 1996, p.4).

The NMC Guidelines on Religious Broadcasting

Following the proliferation of religious faiths and concerns about the activities of religious organizations and individuals in the media, the National Media Commission organized a seminar on December 15, 2015 with stakeholders such as the Religious broadcast Advisory Council, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association and other stakeholders to deliberate on the launch of guidelines the following year to regulate religious broadcasts (Nyarbor 2018, Oct. 21).

In an interview with GBC 24 after the seminar, a member of the National Media Commission, Apostle Abraham Ofori-Kuragu noted that it had come to the fore that religious broadcasting space is being abused. He observed that even children are being shown openly supposedly confessing to witchcraft, wizardry or other powers. According to him, some supposed pastors come on air to even predict days under the guise of directive prophecies for the demise of others. He says some claim to be doubling money inviting people to come over to them to have their money doubled. These occurrences give credence to Mujaji (2015) assertion that activities of some of the pastors is a threat to human security. Mr. Ofori-Kuragu noted in the interview that media content regulators, the NMC, felt that it was about time to come out with religious broadcasting guidelines to regulate any persons or organizations who go on air to ventilate their religious beliefs that there are certain benchmarks in the industry they have to adhere to.

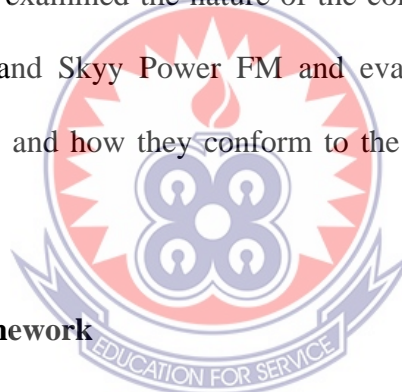
On 31st of October 2018, the guidelines were launched (Nyarbor 2018). The guidelines are the following:

1. Religious broadcasts should always endeavour to promote cultural, moral and ethical values and respect personal freedoms rights obligations and privacy.
2. Religious broadcasts should not involve any abuse, exploitation, intimidation and manipulation of people especially the vulnerable: and should reflect respect or fundamental human dignity.
3. Religious broadcasts should protect children and the vulnerable.
4. Religious broadcasts should promote and defend the public interest, national identity and cohesion.
5. Religious broadcasts should not be used to incite, denigrate, ridicule and humiliate any faith, sect or people.
6. Religious broadcasts should not be used for the promotion of extremism, religious violence and recruitment of people for religious militancy.
7. The content of religious programmes should have high regard and respect for the cultures and beliefs of the Ghanaian society.
8. Religious broadcasters should use language with decorum and decency.
9. Religious broadcasts should not show nudity and graphic images that undermine the dignity of the human condition.
10. Religious programmes that contain manifestations within the healing, deliverance and prophetic ministry should be done with discretion, circumspection and respect for human dignity. This should be especially so in the case of children.
11. Public proclamations of directive prophecies or pronouncements that have the potential to cause fear and panic in people and threaten stability and social cohesion should be avoided.

12. Rebroadcast of materials especially from social media should be handled with care and circumspection.

Whilst sections of the public lauded the NMC for the introduction of the guidelines, shortly after the lunch, the founder and leader of the Glorious Word Power Ministry, Rev. Isaac Owusu Bempah described the guidelines as ‘bogus’ (Washman K.E.A. 2018, Nov. 11).

The relevance of the NMC guidelines to the study is that media houses or radio stations in particular have an obligation to adhere to principles of social responsibility and plays an important role in the collective development of the nation. Thus the study examined the nature of the content of religious broadcasting by Twin City Radio and Skyy Power FM and evaluated the two radio stations religious programming and how they conform to the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting.



2.10 Theoretical Framework

Social Responsibility Theory serves as the theoretical framework for this study. The concepts and tenets of the Social Responsibility theory are discussed.

2.10.1 Background of Social Responsibility Media Theory

The concept of Social Responsibility (SR) for journalism was initially introduced in the United States based on the outcome and recommendations of the Hutchins Commission, formally known as the Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947). Research literature has it that the Social Responsibility Theory was born as a result of problems created by its predecessor, the Libertarian Theory of the Press This was in the twentieth century (Uzuegbunam, 2015, p.2). The Social Responsibility theory is one of the four theories of the media (Siebert et al., 1963). The partnership

assigned to the media in catering for the interest of the child can be said to be entrenched in the Social Responsibility Theory. One of the foremost Communication scholars, McQuail (2010, p.147) gives a summary of the basic tenets of Social Responsibility Theory by indicating that the media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to society. These are;

- The obligation of the media to set high or professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
- In accepting and applying these obligations, media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions.
- The media should avoid offensive content triggering crime, violence, or civil disorder or harm to minority groups.
- The media as a whole should be pluralist and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and rights of reply.
- Society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance, and intervention can be justified to secure the, or a, public good.
- Journalists and media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to employers and the market.

McQuail (2005) argues that society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance from the media. As noted by Middleton (2009), the concept of public interest lies inexplicitly at the heart of the definition of social responsibility which highlights the crucial role of the communications sector in shaping societal processes. Thus, the media are expected to play a pivotal role in delivering public good to the society. Also, among the tenets of Social

Responsibility Theory outlined by McQuail (2005) is the media's obligation to protect the rights of the individual. This is an indication that one can justifiably establish that the media have responsibility to serve the interest of or offer social protection to the vulnerable.

One of the tenets of the Social Responsibility Theory outlined by McQuail (2005) specify that the media should avoid offensive content triggering crime, violence, or civil disorder or harm to minority groups. Thus, a greater focus on women and children's rights in making sure that media content targeted at them is not offensive, violent, and does not trigger crime, is a responsibility by the media as an organisation. Another obligation provided by the Social Responsibility Theory is for the media to be self-regulatory within the framework of law and established institutions. This aspect of what the theory stipulates is in line with Section 9 (d) of the Ghana Broadcasting Standards which states that broadcasters should ensure that the contents of all programmes are not at variance with the Constitution of Ghana nor infringe laws and regulations such as any other relevant laws, regulations, international treaties or obligations relating to broadcasting and the standards set out in these guidelines. Thus, it is the responsibility of the two media organisations to ensure the protection of the vulnerable through their broadcast by conforming to the National Media Commission (NMC) guidelines on religious broadcasting.

2.10.2 Relevance of Theory to Study

Most of the literature reviewed have argued that religious programmes in the media could have both positive and negative impacts on audiences. Insights from the Social Responsibility Theory justify the need for the two radio stations to work within the established framework of the law and institutional guidelines. Thus, by examining

the nature of the content of religious programmes broadcast as well as evaluating their programming in line with the framework of NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting, the study establishes whether the two radio stations were socially responsible to the needs of listeners who patronize their religious programmes. The NMC guidelines on religious Broadcasting can be said to be an established framework of rules to help control the content of religious broadcasting and eventually help to control the activities of charlatans who brand themselves as pastors on the airwaves. Religious radio programmes and religious programming cannot be studied without an adherence of the Social Responsibility Theory when the focus of the study is on the media as an organisation and their role in working within established framework of rules and institutions. Understanding from the Social Responsibility Theory as well as the guidelines on religious Broadcasting was important for the objectives of this study.

2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at related literature on the topic of research from the global worldview to the African setting. Also, the theory and framework underpinning the study-Social Responsibility Theory and the NMC guidelines for religious broadcasting were discussed to show their significance to the present study. It has been established through the review of the literature that religious programmes and programming are crucial to the media as an organisation. It further established that the media has a role in protecting the interest and rights of the vulnerable through the nature of programmes broadcast as well as the measures that are put into place in drawing programmes for the general public. Hence, the use of the Social Responsibility Theory and the NMC guidelines on religious Broadcasting.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the processes and methods adopted in undertaking the study. It discusses in detail the research approach, research design, population, sample size and sampling strategy, data collection instruments, data analysis methods, validation of instruments, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

In the three research approaches usually employed in social science research i.e. qualitative, quantitative and mixed method, the qualitative research approach was chosen for this study. According to Creswell (2017), this approach is applied when little research has been done on the phenomenon being investigated. This is one of the reasons that informed the researcher's choice of the qualitative approach because in Ghana, little attention had been given to the study of religious programme content and programming's conformity to such guidelines as outlined by the National Media Commission for religious broadcasting.

According to Creswell (2017), qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, use of a theoretical lens or the study of a research problem which investigates the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Similarly, it is assumed that radio stations in Ghana, as part of their societal role of complementing development, plan and execute their on-air programmes in accordance with stipulated guidelines of the National Media Commission which is the institution responsible for the regulation of media content. Compliance with the guidelines will imply that the two radio stations as media organisations are responsible in catering for the needs interests of listeners especially the vulnerable

through their programming. Therefore, the study evaluated the religious programming of *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* and further examined the nature of the content of religious programmes broadcast by the two stations from the perspective of the Social Responsibility Theory to establish whether their religious programming conform to the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting which include set policies for the media and the needs and welfare of listeners especially vulnerable groups or individuals through their broadcast. Creswell (2017) asserts that sometimes the available literature to researchers may not yield a lot of information about a phenomenon under study. That is why it is considered appropriate to use qualitative approach to elicit information-rich responses from participants who are knowledgeable for the objectives of the study. In line with this assertion, the researcher did not only employ qualitative content analysis as a data collection process but equally employed document analysis and interviews to ascertain how the two radio stations' conform to the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting through their religious programming.

This current study did not only rely on one source of data to gather information but as advised by Creswell (2017) adopted multiple data sources and employed document analysis and interviews as key major data collection methods to aid in providing adequate information to help achieve the goal of this study.

Also, a rigorous mathematical computation was not the focus of the study because the study was more concerned about delving into the explanations and interpretations of the issues that arise from studying the data collected and this is reiterated by Hancock et al. (2009) who explain that qualitative research focuses on reports of experience or on data which cannot be adequately expressed numerically.

Creswell (2017) and Hatch (2002) have illustrated some key factors a qualitative research must exhibit. They include the researcher being a key instrument in the entire research process. In line with this, the researcher was very instrumental in the entire research process, verifying and cross-checking information, as well as insisting on getting credible, authentic and viable facts that were devoid of all personal biases to successfully complete this research. All the proceedings in playing this role were actively prepared and completed by the researcher. Not as in purely scientific research where the variables are put in an artificial environment and manipulated to get the desired results, this study being qualitative was carried out in the natural environment of the participants.

3.2 Research Design

Yin (2009) posits that research design is the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of the study. In other words, a research design is an action plan for getting the research done from the initial set of questions to be answered to the conclusions of these questions. A research design is very crucial to every research process because it gives the direction for the researcher to follow. The direction provided by a research design guides the collection of data as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data. Creswell (2017) explains a research design as a strategy, plan, and a structure of conducting a research project. The current study adopted case study as its design as the researcher considered it as most appropriate for this study.

3.3 Case Study

According to Yin (2018), a case study research provides an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon that is analyzed in its own context, especially in instances where the researcher has no control over either the phenomenon under study or its

environment. In recent times, the application of case study research continues to surge (Yazan, 2015). Stake (2005) considers cases as bounded systems that enjoyed a clear delimitation. For example, to study organizational culture, researchers analyze internal interactions among employees, their rites, rituals, and behaviours, without taking into account the external environment in which the company operates. By contrast, for Yin (2018), the boundaries between the phenomenon under study and its environment are hard to distinguish (Yazan, 2015). Therefore, when studying corporate culture it becomes important to consider the context in which firms operate, namely the political and economic systems and the cultural milieu. It is in this light that the current study peers into the culture of the two radio stations in the Western Region. A case study research should follow a traditional research path that starts with an extensive literature review, ascertains a research gap, determines research questions, and proceeds to the selection of a case (Yazan, 2015). In this current study, the nature of the contents of religious programmes on *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* stations was the phenomena which the researcher delved into over a period of one year to get an in-depth understanding of how their content and programming conformed to the NMC's guidelines on religious broadcasting.

Yin (2018) also stipulates that when the behaviour of the participants of the research cannot be manipulated, a case study design is appropriate for the research. Therefore, this design ensured an objective collection of data for this study. Yin (2018) also outlines different types of case studies and provides two ways of categorizing case studies. While Yin's first categorization based on the aim of the study, the second is on the number of cases (hence provides single or holistic case studies and multiple-case studies).

Adapting to Yin's description with regards to the number of cases, this study specifically adopts a multiple-case study design. Thus, two cases, consisting of the nature of religious content broadcast on *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* and the two radio stations' religious programming were the cases studied.

3.3.1 Multiple-Case Study

A multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. The goal is to establish findings across cases so comparisons are drawn (Yin, 2009). Thus, multiple-case study enables a researcher to compare and contrast issues in the case being studied so as to “predict similar results or predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons” (Yin, 2003, p.47). Yin (2003) adds that, it is imperative that the cases are chosen carefully to enable the researcher predict similar results across cases, or predict contrasting results based on a theory (Yin, 2003).

Similarly, this study carefully selected and compared two radio stations which are similar in many areas. Both stations operate in Sekondi Takoradi, sell airtime for religious programmes and use both English and Fanti Languages in their religious programmes. This ensured some form of standardization in the data collection and data analysis stages of the study. Additionally, both stations recognize themselves as key players in social development and appear to be concerned about the impact of their programmes on their listeners, especially the vulnerable.

3.3.2 Sampling Technique

There are different sampling strategies available to every researcher, these include; simple random sampling, stratified sampling, purposive sampling, to mention just a few. For this reason, a sampling strategy is important in every research work to

ensure that data is appropriately and conveniently collected. For the purpose of this study, purposive sampling was employed. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) define purposive sampling as identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest in a study. Etikan et al. (2017, p.3) also consider purposive sampling as “a form of sampling technique in which the researcher chooses his or her informant based on the judgment that the informants chosen will provide the best information to succeed for the objective of study.”

Twin City Radio and *Skyy Power FM* stations were purposively selected as cases for this study. This was done because the two stations are the first to be established in Sekondi Takoradi and have been in business much longer than all other radio stations in the Western Region (NCA, 2018). Therefore, the two stations are presumed to have experience in religious programming. Additionally, according to the Ghana Media Measurement Reports, *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* are among the top 15 radio stations in the Western Region. Also, the Heads of Programmes in the stations were selected as interviewees due to their experience and expertise on the subject of the study. Besides, 2020 was selected as the period of study because it was two years after the introduction of the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasts. Therefore, it is expected that the two stations should be aware or might have made attempts to implement the guidelines.

Finally, three episodes each from *Twin City Radio*'s religious programmes (Apovision Religious Broadcast, Air Power Religious Broadcast and Bible Akwankyere) and *Skyy Power FM*'s (Asempa Kanea, Encounter with truth and Glory Action Time), were purposively selected because they represent the only

religious programmes with pastors preaching which were broadcast within the period of study.

3.3.3 Sample Size

It has been established by Creswell (2017) that in qualitative studies, smaller sample sizes can be purposively selected for better understanding of the research problem. Also, Creswell (2017) establishes that the sample size depends greatly on the type of design employed by the researcher. For this study, case study is the design and for this, Creswell (2017) advances that cases can be up to four or five.

Lindlof and Taylor (2017) posit that a qualitative researcher needs to consider the scope of the study, the complexity of the research problem, the accessibility of potential participants and the time and resources that are available for working on the field. Based on this, the researcher selected two radio stations (*Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM*) as the sample size for the study. One (1) copy of weekly programme schedules each for the two stations used for the twelve (12) months from January to December 2021 making twenty-four 24 copies in all. One episode each month of the weekly religious programmes selected from both *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* representing eighteen (6) programmes each month in the year 2021. In all seventy-two (72) episodes in all throughout the period of the study served as the sample size for the study. In all four participants were interviewed. Two (2) each from *Twin City* and *Skyy Power FM* comprising one head of programmes and a producer of religious programmes for both stations as respondents.

3.4. Data Collection Methods

Aina (2004) submits that data refers to facts that are raw and unprocessed and when data is converted or processed, it becomes information. Data collection falls within two main categories, namely primary and secondary. According to Malhotra and

Birks (2006), primary data collection methods often refer to information that are originally gathered by the researcher at first-hand to address an issue which is specific, and information gathered from this method require proper interpretations. The current study adopted multiple data sources because Creswell (2017) posits that such an approach aids in providing adequate information to help achieve the goal of investigations of this nature. Document analyses and interviews were employed as data collection methods.

Creswell's assertion affirms Patton's (1990) and Yin's (2009) claims that the adoption of multiple-methods approach is a good strategy in research because they ensure data credibility. For this, the researcher saw the need to use the three data sources to gather data for the study.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). Prior (2003) also considers documents to have been produced in social settings and are always to be regarded as collective (social) products. This justifies the collection of the programme schedules of *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* as they are all documents produced at the radio stations and were made available to the researcher.

The programme schedules (documents) for the stated period of study also aided the researcher to evaluate the religious programming of the two radio stations and how much time was allotted for religious programming. This justifies the researcher's use of document analysis as one of the sources for data collection.

Interviews

According to Neuman (2006), interview is a short-term social interaction between two people with a clear purpose of one person obtaining specific information from the other. Also, Lindlof and Taylor (2017) assert that interviews are helpful in qualitative studies because they help the researcher understand people's experiences and perspectives in order to obtain answers to a particular research question. Boyce and Neale (2006) also posit that in-depth interview is a qualitative research strategy that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents with the aim of exploring respondents' views or perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation. Therefore, five respondents comprising two heads and two producers from *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* were interviewed to ascertain their station's conformity to the NMC's guidelines on religious broadcasting because of their experiences and expertise in the production of religious programmes as well as partaking in religious programming. The researcher booked interview appointments with the Head of Programmes and producers of religious programmes of the two stations. The researcher additionally, obtained the phone contacts of the Head of programmes of both stations. Through this, further clarifications were sought and provided to ensure clarity on data collected.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017), qualitative interviews are conducted with persons whose experiences are central to the research problem. This was one of the key reasons for interviewing the producers and heads of the religious programmes of the stations. The researcher learned that the interviewees play active roles regarding religious programmes, hence, their experiences are very much useful in providing in-

depth information regarding how their stations conform to the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting.

The interview style adopted for the in-depth interview conducted with the heads and producers of the religious programmes was semi-structured with an interview guide. According to Magaldi and Berler (2020) semi-structured interviews are exploratory interviews. They further explain that semi-structured interviews are generally based on a guide and that they are typically focused on the main topic providing a general pattern. In addition, Megaldi and Berler (2020) argue that with semi-structured interviews, researchers are able to go deep for a discovery in a study of a phenomenon.

In semi-structured interviews, an interviewer generally has a framework of themes to be explored (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Rubin and Rubin (2005, p. 171) suggest that “good interviews usually consist of a balance between main questions, follow-ups, and probes.” However, a specific topic or topics that an interviewer wants to explore during the interview should be well-prepared in advance.

Lindlof and Taylor (2017) suggest that it is generally beneficial for interviewers to have an interview guide prepared, which is a type of informal grouping of topics and questions that the interviewer would ask in different ways to different participants. The guide enables researchers to focus on the topic at hand without limiting them to a particular format. This freedom could help interviewers shape their questions to the interview context or situation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017).

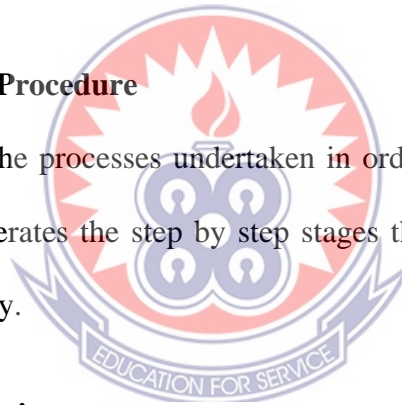
Despite variations in style and traditions, the semi-structured interview has peculiar characteristics. Mason (2017) suggests that all such interviews have the following key features. First, the interview is a type of internal dialogue exchange. This means that qualitative interviews must involve one-to-one interactions, large group

interviews, or *focus groups*. It may also take place face-to-face, over telephone, or via social media channels such as whatsapp and other types of Internet platforms. Second, the semi-structured interview has a relatively informal style. For example, the interviewer and interviewee(s) engage in a *face-to-face* conversational discussion instead of the formal questions prescribed (Mason 2017).

This study adopted face-to face interview. According to Creswell (2017) , a face-to face interview enables participants to provide holistic information and also allows the researcher to have control over the line of questioning (p.191).This method employed by the researcher afforded him the opportunity to observe the non-verbal cues of the interviewees that provided insights for some follow-up questions.

3.5.1 Data Collection Procedure

This section presents the processes undertaken in order to collect the required data for the study. It enumerates the step by step stages the researcher went through to gather data for the study.



3.5.2 Document Analysis

With the aid of introductory letters, copies of the weekly programme schedules from *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* for twelve (12) months from January to December 2020 were obtained. In all twenty-four weekly programme schedules of *Twin city Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* for the stated period were handed over to the researcher.

Each programme schedule (day, time and duration) for the selected religious programmes as well as the schedule for non-religious programmes were analyzed with particular attention to the duration allotted to religious programmes. This was to enable the researcher establish how much time both radio stations allotted for

religious programmes and to provide a perspective on the situation described by Asamoah-Gyedu (2015) that following the liberalization of the airwaves, religious programmes have flooded the media. Again, the programme schedules specifically the weekly programme slots with particular attention to the days, time and duration of the programme were examined to ascertain regular time slots of religious programmes. The documents played a vital role in the analysis for this study as it gave the researcher in-depth information for the evaluation of how significantly religious broadcasting features in the media space two decades after the liberalization of the airwaves.

The programme schedules of *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* were analyzed by the researcher as documents have manifest interpretation as well as latent ones which can only be revealed to show the why, how or when of a phenomenon. Prior (2003) considers documents to have been produced in social settings and are always to be regarded as collective (social) products. This justifies the collection of the programme schedules of *Twin City* and *Skyy Power FM* as they are all documents produced at the radio stations and were available for the researcher's collection. Unfortunately, both stations neither had the NMC guidelines for religious broadcasting nor their own documented guidelines for the researcher to aid in the analysis.

3.6 Interviews

Again, after presenting introductory letters, the programme heads and producers of religious programmes of the two stations scheduled a day and time with the researcher for the interview. Interviews with the heads were scheduled on 22nd June, 2021 at their offices whilst the interviews with the producers were scheduled on 24th July, 2021 at the stations' premises. Some face-to-face and telephone interviews

were conducted for both heads and producers of religious programmes of *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* on the scheduled date and time using the designed interview guide. These interviews were guided by open-ended questions to produce personal and hidden views and opinions from the interviewees on their radio stations' conformity to the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting through their religious programming. The interviews were conducted with the respondents, taking into consideration the NMC guidelines. Themes were already generated by the researcher from the NMC guidelines on religious Broadcasting and questions were asked in line with the generated themes to elicit responses from the interviewees under each specific theme. In all the interviews, the researcher noted down pertinent issues that came up out of the interviews and added follow up questions when necessary. On the average, each interview lasted thirty minutes. All interviews were recorded with an Android Samsung phone and a back-up copy was saved on a laptop. The recorded interviews were transcribed and cleaned before coding.

3.6.1 Method of Data Analysis

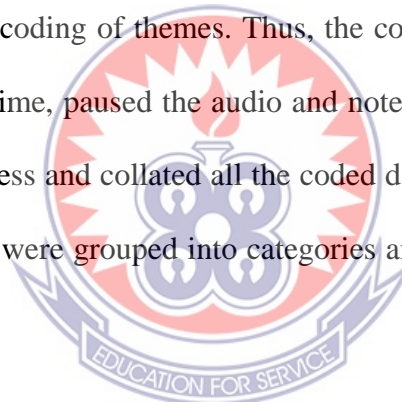
When a research work such as this study is conducted in the area of radio and television, Creswell (2017) advises that because texts and image are so dense and rich, not all of the information can be used in qualitative research. Therefore with the aim of reducing the information and selecting the most important ones to the study, Guest et al. (2012, p.37) used the term “to winnow” in explaining the process of focusing on some of the data and disregarding others. Hence, Lecompte and Schensul (1999) explain data analysis to be a process that provides the researcher room to reduce large amounts of data in order to make sense of them. Patton (1999) proposes three general ways of conducting a data analysis namely, data organisation, data reduction through summarization, categorization, identifying and linking of data

through patterns and themes. Thematic analysis is the method used in analyzing the data and this involves all the steps enumerated by Patton (1990).

3.6.2 Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2016) assert that the stages involved in objective thematic analysis are coding of data, searching for and reviewing of themes, defining and naming of the themes and writing of the elements of the themes. Creswell (2017) also avers that qualitative thematic analysis aggregates data into smaller themes, ranging from five to seven. This begins with categorization which according to Lindlolf and Taylor (2017) is a process of grouping the meaning of a unit of data with respect to certain generic properties. This assertion was inculcated in making sure that the themes developed from the episodes of the religious programmes could tell a convincing and compelling story about the data. As a result, the researcher with the help of two briefly trained coders who were graduate assistants from the University of Cape Coast identified the units of analysis for the coding of the episodes of the programmes for research questions two and three. According to De Wever et al. (2006), messages have to be unitized before they can be coded. An episode each of the religious programmes served as the unit of analysis. The next step employed by the researcher was the coding stage. By analyzing the content of the religious programmes, coding of the content of the episode of the programmes became necessary for the researcher to help examine the nature of the content of the religious programmes broadcast by *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM*. Basit (2003, p.144) posits that “codes or categories are tags or labels for allocating units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled through a study”. Weber (1990) also avers that to ensure the consistency of coding, especially when multiple coders are involved, it is required of the researcher to develop a coding

instruction to guide the coding process and coding instructions usually consist of category names, definitions or rules for assigning codes, and examples. The researcher was therefore assisted by two graduate assistants with the coding following the coding instructions developed by the researcher. The coding instruction was to make sure the process of grouping the meaning of a unit of data was done with respect to certain generic properties. After listening to each episode for three consecutive times, the coders paused for a day. Having done this, the second listening of episodes of the religious programmes was much more intense which enabled the coders to code the text into minor and major themes. This second listening was done at a slow pace because a lot of verifications were being made in connection to the first coding of themes. Thus, the coders critically listened to each recorded episode at a time, paused the audio and noted down important information during the coding process and collated all the coded data relevant to the focus of the study. Thus, the codes were grouped into categories and emerging patterns were put under themes.



The following themes below emerged out of the analysis of the episodes of the religious programmes broadcast by *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* for research question 2: sermon tapes, live phone-in talk shows, church service, music shows and prayer sessions.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Schwandt et al. (2007) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. This is concerned with how trustworthy the instruments of collection of data are to the study. Creswell (2017) submits that credibility is used to determine whether the processes of findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the reader's account. These

procedures, Creswell (2017) noted, include triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, prolonged time spent on the field by the researcher, clarification of bias that the researcher may bring on the study and presenting negative discrepant information that runs counter to the themes.

Creswell (2017) agrees that in qualitative research, at least two of these verification procedures must be used. Therefore, the researcher employed a number of procedures in order to make sure all information collected and analyzed in this research was nothing but the most accurate truth. First, the researcher's approach involves consulting two sources for information and this helped in the credibility of data gathered as well as trustworthiness of findings.

Creswell (2017) explains triangulation in this way, "different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes" (p.251). Hence the researcher used document analysis (programme schedule and audios of religious programmes) of *Twin City Radio* and *Sky Power FM*, and conducted interviews with the heads and producers of the religious programmes to probe for more insights on the outcomes of the document and content of the audios. Getting information from these different sources enabled the researcher to employ methodological triangulation and this helped in ensuring the trustworthiness of the outcome of this study.

The interview guide used in this study was designed with the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting in mind. The guidelines was put together by a credible and objective body (the National Media Commission) in the year 2018.

Yin (2009) suggests the need to document the procedures of the case studies and to document many of its steps as possible. In tune with this, the researcher kept good

records of the study each step of the way. The time, location and site were all documented to depict a true account of the data collection process. Also, Gibbs (2018) asserts that while validating a qualitative research, the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures. Therefore, the procedures followed to ensure credibility of the data collection instruments ensured that valid converged and corroborated data were gathered and analyzed.

Also, member checking was another procedure the researcher employed in validating data from the interview. Thus, the researcher cross-checked the transcribed interview with interviewees to ascertain if the information they provided was captured exactly as intended in writing. Due to the fact that the transcribed interviews were very lengthy, the researcher ascertained the major issues by interacting with the respondents through face-to-face interviews. This helped to get the true and exact representation of the opinions of the interviewees devoid of all interjections of any kind from the researcher.

In addition, inter-coder reliability results justified the credibility of the coding instructions as the researcher involved the help of colleague graduate students to help in dealing with any subjectivity, favoritism or discrimination that may hinder on the accuracy of data in the process of collecting and analyzing of data. To a great extent, the foregoing enabled the researcher to bracket potential biases.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2005) asserts that in research, it is unethical to enter into an organization or social groups to collect data without permission from the gate-keepers of the organization. Given the justification above, an introductory letter from the researcher was sent to *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* in Sekondi Takoradi in the Western

Region of Ghana, seeking approval of the authorities. Halai (2006) avers that good research is a moral and ethical task and the researcher should be very knowledgeable in making sure that the interests of a study's participants are not taken for granted in any way. Ethical principles must be adhered to in any kind of study in order to do away with any harm altogether. This is because the protection of human subjects or participants in any research is imperative (Orb et al., 2001). Ethical considerations are very vital in qualitative because; Qualitative researchers focus their research on exploring, examining, and describing people and their natural environments. Embedded in qualitative research are the concepts of relationships and power between researchers and participants. The desire to participate in a research study depends upon "a participant's wiliness to share his or her experience..." (Orb et al., 2002, p. 93).

In consonance with this, Halai (2006) outlines three ethical issues researchers must adhere to in the course of a study. He captured them as voluntary consent, confidentiality of information shared, anonymity of research participants and protection of participants from harm. This study made a great attempt at complying with these ethical objectives in order to ensure high standards.

In the area of informed and voluntary consent, the researcher informed the two radio stations and their heads and producers of the religious programmes about the study and the purpose for the study as well as the scope of the study and its significance. The two radio stations were made aware that the episodes of the religious programmes and the programme schedule within the period of study would be analyzed for the study.

The consent of interviewees was also sought through the station, for their participation in the interviews. The respondents were informed about the

confidentiality of information provided and their anonymity. As a result, the information provided by the respondents were with utmost privacy, especially during the data analyses stage where there was the importance to directly quote them. Specific codes such as RP1 (Respondent 1: *Twin City Radio*) Or RP2 (Respondent 2: *Skyy Power FM*) were used in the labelling of respondents to protect their identities.

Beyond these, all sources used in the study were duly acknowledged. This was done in the form of in-text citations and references. Quotations from relevant sources were given page numbers while the researcher ensured that all rules related to plagiarism were adhered to.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodology employed to examine the nature of the contents of religious programmes broadcast by *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* and also to evaluate religious programming of the two radio stations and how they conform to the NMC's Guidelines on religious broadcasting.

The approach to the study was qualitative and the design was a multiple case study. Through a purposive sampling method, *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* were the two radio stations selected for the study, owing to the fact that one is a state-owned media and the other a privately-owned media and they both air religious programmes. Data was obtained through document analyses and interviews. Steps were taken to ensure that the data obtained for the study were valid and all the methods were reliable.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The study set out to investigate how selected radio stations in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis are conforming to NMC's guidelines on religious broadcasting. The chapter, therefore, presents findings, discussions and analysis of data collected within the period of study.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How much airtime do the two radio stations allocate to religious programmes?
2. What is the nature of religious content aired on the two stations?
3. How do the two stations ensure that their religious programmes are in conformity with the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasts?

4.1 RQ1: How much airtime do the two stations allocate to religious programmes?

RQ1 explores how much time is allocated to religious programming. This is to help appreciate the significance, in percentage terms, of religious programming in the total broadcasts of *Twin City Radio* and *Sky Power FM* within the period of the study. To explore how much time is allocated for religious content in the programming of the two stations, the programme schedules of the stations were accessed and analyzed. Both religious and non-religious programmes were determined and the duration for each religious programme was considered. The episodes of religious programmes for each station were then coded after which the allocated airtime was calculated. The results are presented in the table below.

Weekly airtime for religious programmes on Twin City Radio

Table 1.1

DAY	RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME	ALLOCATED TIME	TOTAL AIRTIME
MONDAY	Morning devotion	10minutes	2HOURS 25MINUTES
	Early morning ride (Hymns)	1hour	
	Air power broadcast	15minutes	
	Methodist Hour	1hour	
TUESDAY	Morning devotion	10minutes	3HOURS 25MINUTES
	Early morning ride (Hymns)	1hour	
	Air power broadcast	15minutes	
	Church of Christ	1hour	
	Dr Kofi Hinson (Spiritual doctor)	1hour	
WEDNESDAY	Morning devotion	10minutes	2HOURS 25MINUTES
	Early morning ride (Hymns)	1hour	
	Air power broadcast	15minutes	
	Catholic Hour	1hour	
THURSDAY	Morning devotion	10minutes	1HOUR 40MINUTES
	Early morning ride (Hymns)	1hour	
	Shavey Hour	30 minutes	
FRIDAY	Morning devotion	10minutes	2HOURS 25MINUTES
	Early morning ride (Muslim)	1hour	
	Air power broadcast	15minutes	
	Muslim broadcast	1hour	
SATURDAY	Morning devotion	10minutes	2HOURS 10MINUTES
	Early morning ride (Hymns)	1hour	
	Bible Akwankyere	1hour	
SUNDAY	Morning devotion	10minutes	4HOURS 55MINUTES
	Early morning ride (Hymns)	1hour	
	Gospel music	30minutes	
	Local gospel music	30 minutes	
	Hymns and their meanings	45minutes	
	Church service	1hour	
	Apovision religious broadcast	1hour	
TOTAL			20HOURS 42MINUTES

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 1.1 presents all the religious programmes aired in a week on *Twin City Radio* and the airtime allocated for each of the programmes. It also shows the total number of hours for religious broadcasts each day and also for the week on the station.

From the table, it can be determined that Sundays have the longest airtime allocation for religious programmes on *Twin City Radio* spanning up to some four hours fifty-five minutes (4.55minutes) of airtime. This is because Sunday is a day most Christians worship. Thursdays have the shortest allocated time for religious programmes which is an hour and forty-five minutes (1.45minutes). Throughout the week, *Twin City Radio* broadcasts twenty hours forty-two minutes (20.42hours) of religious content which is fifteen point five percent (15.5%) of the total broadcasts for the week. It was determined that Christian religious programmes dominated religious content on the station, which is about 18hours 42 minutes (18.42) per week, whilst Muslim religious programmes were allocated two hours (2hours) of airtime on Fridays. Fridays are special days for Muslims because Muslims worship on that day. The researcher was informed that during the special Islamic festival days of 'Id Al Fitr' and 'Id Al Adha', regular programmes on the schedule were suspended to provide for more airtime for Islamic programing.

Twin City Radio is a regional wing of GBC which is headquartered in Accra. As observed by De Witte (2011), the market logic governing the new media field has forced GBC which is strictly a public broadcaster to, in recent times, go commercial too by selling airtime to any interested religious individual or groups. A few of the religious programmes on the list of *Twin City Radio* are broadcast within the commercial airtime. The researcher obtained the information that thirty minutes (30minutes) of airtime on *Twin City Radio* for religious programmes goes for GHS

200. Out of the twenty hours, forty-two minutes (20hours, 42 minutes) of weekly religious broadcasts on *Twin City Radio*, eight hours thirty minutes (8hours 30minutes) was on commercial airtime whilst twelve hours, twelve minutes (12hours, 12minutes) were non-commercial. This implies that the selected religious programmes constitute approximately thirty-three hours of commercial religious broadcast in a month. The data also shows that *Twin City Radio* had a dedicated one hour ten minutes (1hour 10 minutes) of non-commercial airtime in the mornings for religious programmes throughout the week. The rest of the station's religious programmes were all commercial with the exception of Sundays which also had some one hour forty-five minutes (1hour 45minutes) of non-commercial airtime for religious programmes in addition to the daily one hour ten minutes (1hour 10minutes).

In an answer to how non-commercial religious programmes are funded, respondent one from *Twin City Radio* had the following to say:

Sometimes we do our own religious programmes. We allow people to request gospel songs, and with that one, we take the bill. We sponsor it ourselves. Sometimes we get some organization to sponsor. (RP. 1).

Respondent two, from *Skyy Power FM* also explained that producing our religious programmes is usually not different from our other programmes.

If it is a discussion programme you just choose your topic and identify resource persons who are knowledgeable in the subject area of the topic. Only that when the resource persons come and they are done, the station has to provide them with water and transportation that is the challenge.

The above findings show that not all allocated religious airtime on *Twin City Radio* are up for sale.

Weekly airtime for religious programmes on Skyy Power FM**Table 1.2**

DAY	RELIGIOUS PROGRAMME	ALLOCATED TIME	TOTAL
MONDAY	Skyy Christian Radio	1hour 45minutes	1HOUR 45MINUTES
TUESDAY	Skyy Christian Radio	1hour 45minutes	1HOUR 45MINUTES
WEDNESDAY	Skyy Christian Radio	1hour 45minutes	1HOUR 45MINUTES
THURSDAY	Skyy Christian Radio	1hour 45minutes	1HOUR 45MINUTES
FRIDAY	Skyy Christian Radio	1hour 45minutes	1HOUR 45MINUTES
SATURDAY	Skyy Christian Radio	6hours 30minutes	6HOURS 30MINUTES
SUNDAY	Skyy Christian Radio	7hours 30minutes	9HOURS 30MINUTES
	Christian News	30 minutes	
	Asempa Kanea	30 minutes	
	Glory Action Time	1hour	
TOTAL			25HOURS 15MINUTES

Source Field Data (2022).

Table 1.2 presents all the religious programmes aired in a week on *Skyy Power FM* and the airtime allocated for each of the programmes. It also shows the total number of hours for religious broadcasts each day and also for the week on the station.

From the table, it can be determined that Sundays have the most time allocation for religious programmes spanning up to some nine hours thirty minutes (9.30hours). Throughout the week, *Skyy Power FM* broadcasts twenty-five hours fifteen minutes (25.15hours) of airtime for religious content which is fifteen percent (15%) of the total broadcasts for the week. It can be determined that all religious programmes on the station's schedule within the period of the study were Christian without any allocation for Muslim broadcasts. The researcher was however informed that during the Islamic festival days, regular programmes on the schedule were suspended to make ways for Islamic programmes. As observed by De Witte (2011), the religious

inclination of the media owner largely influences the religious programming of a particular station. The Chief Executive Officer of *Skyy Power FM* Wilson Arthur and his wife Adwoa Amofa Arthur are both Christians. This reason may be adduced for the dominance of Christian religious programmes at the station. At *Skyy Power FM*, the researcher obtained the information that thirty minutes (30minutes) of airtime goes for GHS 300.

Airtime allotted to religious and non-religious programmes on Twin City Radio and Skyy Power FM for year 2021

Table 1.3.

PROGRAMME	HOURS ALLOTTED TWIN CITY RADIO	PERCENTAGE (N %)	HOURS ALLOTTED SKYY POWER FM	PERCENTAGE (N %)
ALL PROGRAMMES	6,094	100%	8,760	100%
NON-RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES	5,032.4	83%	7,453	85%
RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES	1,062.4	17%	1,307.8	15%

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the Table, it was established that the number of hours for all programmes broadcast on *Twin City Radio* from January to December 2021 was 6,094 hours. Out of the 6,094 hours broadcast, 5,032 hours, representing 83% of all the programmes broadcast within the period of the study was for non-religious programmes. This implies that 1,062 hours, representing 17% of the total broadcast time was used for the broadcast of religious programmes within January to December, 2021. *Twin City Radio* had a daily broadcast of 17hours 15minutes for all their programmes. The station starts airing from 4:45am and closes at 10:00pm each day.

For *Skyy Power FM*, the data also shows that all programmes broadcast within the period of the study was 8, 760 hours. Out of that, 7,453 representing 85 percent of the total airtime was for non-religious whilst 1,307.8 hours representing 15 percent of the total airtime was used for religious broadcasts. It could be noted that whilst the daily broadcast time for *Sky Power FM* is 24 hours a day, *Twin City Radio* broadcasts only fifteen hours after which the station goes blank.

The results affirm the claim by Asamoah-Gyedu (2011) that religious programmes remain a prominent fixture in Ghanaian media programming barely three decades after the liberalization of the broadcast spectrum. The findings also confirm, as observed by De Witte (2011) that airtime slots are sold for privately produced programmes and therefore access to the airwaves is available to those with money, excluding those without. It was also confirmed that even *Twin City Radio* which is a public service broadcaster, forced by media competition, now sells airtime to churches even though there are a few non-commercial religious programmes.

4.2 RQ2: What is the nature of religious content aired on the two stations?

The nature of religious programmes can be understood from two perspectives. One is the form by which the programme is delivered and two, the kind of message in the content. As observed by Meyer (2004), religious programmes in the media include phone-in talk shows, worship and sermon tapes, church services, popular gospel music, and phone-in prayer sessions among others. Ogwo et al. (2013) also observed that there is a deliberate and skilful adoption of various electronic and digital media-cassettes, radio, video, television, internet and the format associated with these media. The findings showed that both stations in the study aired live and recorded

church services particularly on Sundays. There were phone-in talk and music shows, local and foreign gospel music, sermon tapes and prayer sessions.

Table 1.4: Forms of religious programmes on Skyy Power FM and Twin City

Radio

PROGRAMME	TWIN CITY	SKYY POWER
Sermon tapes	Air power Dr. Kofi Hinson (spiritual doctor) Shavey hour	Voice of hope Liberty Hour Zion Praise (Time with the prophet) Pastor Asare (God's power at work) Encounter with truth
Music shows	Early morning ride Gospel music Local gospel music Hymns and their meanings	Gospel music Gospel chat show Glory Action time
Live phone-in/ talk shows	Muslim hour Apovision religious broadcast Bible Akwankyere	'Ye na ye nie' Valor ministries (prophet Asensu) Grace and faith (Rev Taipen-Quaye) Skyy bible review
Church service	Methodist hour Catholic hour	Zion Praise Ministries (Rev Bob Asare)
Prayer sessions	Morning devotion	Latter rain

Source: Field Data (2022)

Sermon tapes

For sermon tapes, the client acquires airtime slots and supplies the station or producer with the content usually in electronic mp3 audio file format. The producer or the station therefore usually obtains the content through electronic mail or on electronic storage device and plays the file on air within the stipulated time acquired by the client. Sometimes after the sermon on air, social media channels such as Whatsapp and Facebook are used to distribute the content. Sermon tapes reach out to the audience with no active participation control or manipulation of the content of the message by the producers or programmes heads. Therefore, although the producer of the programme may be present at the time the programme is being aired,

he does not have control over which content goes out or an opportunity to intervene in the details of the message to ensure that it is in line with any policies, regulations or expectations of the station.

An example of sermon tape is *Air Power* which is a 15 minutes podcast of the teachings of Kakra Baiden aired every 12:45PM to 1:00PM four days in a week on *Twin City Radio*. The programme is sponsored by Alpha Delta Pharmacy. Kakra Baiden is one pastor who has gained popularity through the use of various media channels and products. He is the head pastor of the Light House Chapel International Sakumono Branch who is introduced at the beginning of all his broadcasts as well-known and respected for his decency and circumspection in the delivery of the word of God. As observed by De Witte (2005), religious groups and individuals use media to boost the charisma of the leader and manage his public personality. Thus, making pastors media celebrities. Kakra Baiden is touted on his social media handles as a 'walking bible', being able to teach and preach without opening the bible; one endowed with prophetic gifts and miraculous anointing. Each *Air Power* programme aired on *Twin City Radio* precedes with a 30 seconds introduction about Kakra Baiden that proclaims his religious achievements and gifts and helps to court attention of the audience to his programme:

Welcome to Air Power teaching the nations with signs and wonders. Kakra is a teacher of the word and also ministers with miracles and the prophetic anointing.

The introduction beckons the audience to have trust and hope for signs of wonders and miracles in their lives.

A similar programme on Skyy Power FM is *Encounter with Truth* which is a broadcast from the seventh Day Adventist church presented by Pastor Dr Andrews

Lawrence Ewoo who is introduced at the beginning of the sermon as an international evangelist. Pastor Ewoo is also a media celebrity who usually invited as a guest speaker to seminars and programmes. The encounter with the truth sermon tape ends with the following:

Yes my friend, it is so important that you practice what you have heard today. God is willing and ready to help you to become spiritually strong. We have audio CDs and we have DVDs. We have made them ready so you can ask for them and you can share them with other people. We also welcome your donations to keep this programme on the air..as you do that we pray the Lord will richly bless you next week the same day same time the encounter with truth is coming back with another message from the scriptures. God bless you.

The analysis of the programmes on both stations also showed that messages broadcast on both *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* were educational, and motivational in nature. They were teachings usually intended for moral, spiritual, doctrinal empowerment or for spiritual advancement. The episodes analyzed were devoid of any sale of anointing oils, car stickers, and wristbands or charging of fees for counselling services as described by (Asamoah Gyedu, 2005) as typical of some religious broadcasts. There was no sign of any attempt for audiences to pay any money for issuance of lotto numbers or for them to buy any paraphernalia which is characteristic of false prophets, for which reason the NMC guidelines were developed according to Nyarbor 2018, Oct. 21.

Episodes of another programme on *Twin City Radio, Air Power* analyzed exhibited discretion, decency, respect for human dignity and circumspection.

In one of the broadcasts titled ‘financial mistakes-why you are not rich’, the preacher neither propounded any mechanism for spontaneous wealth nor lured the audience to any reliefs for which they have to pay anything. In this broadcast, the pastor appropriate biblical quotations to encourage his listeners to invest their time and other resources prudently.

...so it is clear that it is God’s will that his children will not be poor; but although it is God’s will there are things that we have to do to be able to make that promise come to pass. We must understand that there are financial mistakes. Today I will like to talk about one of the mistakes which is the mistake of not being an investor.

Uncharacteristic of the operations of false prophets, the preacher dismissed short-cuts in life to financial success and encouraged his audience to make a conscious effort to invest their time and energy and to manage their personal affairs wisely as well as preparing themselves for strenuous pursuits to financial success.

Episode 10 of *Air Power* also teaches how to avoid bitterness in believers and having cordial relations with others. In this episode, Kakra Baiden emphasizes and promotes the Ghanaian value of peaceful coexistence regardless of ethnic, personal and other differences.

Ghanaians are diverse in culture but the society is not divided because our way of life as a people does not encourage anarchy.

Here, Kakra Baiden appropriates biblical quotes to teach and encourage the values of peaceful coexistence, humanness and hospitality among people. This demonstrates an attempt to promote cultural, moral and ethical attitudes or values, and respect of personal freedoms, rights, obligations and privacy among other practices.

Episodes of another programme, *Bible Akwankyere* analyzed centered on the churches' stance on baptism, offertory, marriage, spiritual gifts, and human relationship among others. None of the episodes exhibited any attempt to manipulate audience for material provisions or any inducement for victory in spiritual warfare. There was neither any issuance of lotto numbers nor sale of paraphernalia. One episode that touched on prosperity encouraged proper planning and prayerfulness and discouraged the pursuit of any get-rich-quick means.

In one of the broadcasts of Bible Akwankyere titled 'false prophets' broadcast in May 2021, the preacher Brother Joshua Midson highlights the incidence of false prophets who claim to reveal prophecies on which political parties or individuals are to win elections in Ghana. He cited an example of a prophesy from one pastor who claimed that God has revealed to him that the New Patriotic stands to lose the 2024 elections should they field in Vice President Mahmoud Bawumia as a presidential candidate because he is not a Christian. The preacher indicated that such prophecies creates divisive tendencies among the people citing biblical references such as first timothy chapter two verse one to seven to reject such prophecies. The preacher said his objective for the broadcast was to unveil the falsities in such prophecies by some so called pastors.

The pastor describes a trend among desperate believers who, for want of easy and quick relief from their troubles and distress, are inclined to look anywhere or accept any forms of manipulations to solve their problems. He encourages such believers to beware of the fact that not all who call themselves pastors are genuine and of God.

Brethren we are in the end times and the bible states that in these times shall arise false prophets.

Such references and explanations serve to create awareness among the audience of the presence and activities of fake pastors and cautions them to be wary. It also gives credence to the Bible Akwankyere programme whose purpose, according to the preacher, “brings light to the paths of darkness.” Warnings by the pastor is in line with the NMC Guideline on religious broadcasting that states that public proclamations of directive prophecies or pronouncements that have the potential to cause fear and panic in people and threaten stability and social cohesion should be avoided.

In *Apovision broadcast* which is a live studio production on *Twin City Radio* every Sunday, a pastor of the Apostolic Evangelic Vision Church in Takoradi, Apostle Christopher Arhin Etrue and a team of members go live on air to deliver a sermon. The sermon is usually on a particular topic. Similar to Bible Akwankyere, the *Apovision broadcast* also aims at teaching church doctrines and drawing followers to the church with a promise that their lives would not be the same. The Apostolic Evangelic Vision Church operates a center in Takoradi which they call the ‘*Apovision Grounds*’. It is a prayer site where people with problems and believe in spiritual intervention are hosted sometimes for a few days with the view to addressing their problems through prayer sessions. The radio programme serves as a platform to advertise this venture. In one of their sessions, the preacher uses the media platform to invite listeners to the church’s prayer grounds.

Brethren, I extend a hand to you to come to our prayer grounds at Nkroful. The Lord is doing many wonderful things for people there. Financial, marital, employment problems are addressed; spiritual burdens and chains are broken for you to experience the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

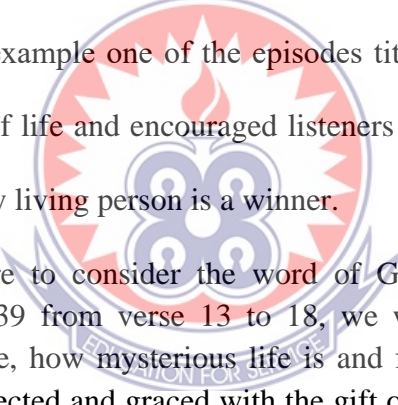
The pastor mentions a wide range of problems and encourages the audience to seek divine intervention at the Apovision Grounds.

Religious programmes on *Skyy Power FM* analysed were also educational and motivational in nature. Encounter with truth which is aired on Sundays from 6:30PM to 7:00PM is a recorded message from Pastor Lawrence Ewoo's a well-known pastor with the Seventh Day Adventist Church of Ghana. His programme, sponsored by a company known as Crownsters Roofing Engineers centers on educating listeners about the will of God. Pastor Ewoo selects biblical texts and anecdotes to impart moral traits such as brotherly and sisterly love, good neighbourliness, respect and generosity to encourage and strengthen righteousness. In one of the episodes entitled 'what happened to Dan and Ephraim', the pastor employs the persona of these two characters which, according to him were detrimental to the spiritual condition of the Israelite nation. As observed by Ogwo et al. (2013), the media as social institutions have the potential to affect our religiosity. In this episode, the pastor highlights and explains certain attitudes by these two characters that brought no peace to the nation of Israel. The pastor discourages listeners from leading lives exemplary of these two characters to bring anarchy and rancour in society and rather emulate and promote good neighbourliness and the progress of the human spirit in societies.

Another programme on *Skyy Power FM* 'Asempa Kanea' is a 30 minutes live studio programme broadcast on *Skyy Power FM* on Sundays. In an episode entitled, 'the deception of religious dominance', Reverend Boamah Agyekum of the Emmanuel Community Church in Takoradi explains the essence of his message to create awareness about religious deception, to warn one another about religious deception and to help listeners to recognize the weaknesses in individuals to the susceptibility of religious deception. In this episode, the pastor explains the tendency for religion

to be used as a means for control and tries to educate audience of his message to be conscious of themselves and not fall foul of would-be deceivers. Such message is in line with the second NMC guideline on religion which states that religious broadcasts should not involve any abuse, exploitation, intimidation and manipulation of people especially the vulnerable.

Glory Action Time is an hour programme hosted by Bishop Oppong Ankomah of the Christian Faith Church. Analyses of episodes of the programme showed that each programme is themed on a topic selected by the host either to educate or motivate listeners. The episodes analyzed were devoid of any of the practices that contravene the NMC guidelines on religion. They rather sought to improve the human condition. For example one of the episodes titled: “Only winners are born” explained the essence of life and encouraged listeners to see the value of their lives and recognize that every living person is a winner.



If we are to consider the word of God in Psalm 139 from verse 13 to 18, we would recognize, how mysterious life is and for us to be selected and graced with the gift of life, we may recognize that we are winners.

The above message motivates listeners to place value on the human condition; not undermine their lives but rather appreciate their lives on earth, have hope and see it at a privilege to survive and emerge the conception of birth.

Live phone-in talk shows

Another form of religious programme broadcast by the two radio stations is the live phone in talk show. An example of this is the *Bible Akwankyere* programme on *Twin City Radio* aired on Saturdays from 9:00PM to 10:00PM. For the live broadcasts, the pastor or leader sometimes accompanied by their associates come live on air in the

studio for the broadcast. The producer is usually present. He or she controls the console and the microphones of the guests and offers other technical support in the production. In this setting, the producer is an active participant with an opportunity to intervene or call the pastor to order if the message being delivered is going contrary to set guidelines or policy of the station. Live broadcasts are usually accompanied by live call-ins. Listeners are allowed to call into the programme to make contributions and sometimes to request for special prayers.

‘Ye na ye nie’ is another example of the live phone-in talk shows broadcast on Skyy Power FM. In this programme listeners are encouraged to call in and share their testimonies about what God has done in their lives or ask for special prayers. Each caller is allowed about a minute of airtime to interact with the host and guests who are usually pastors in the studio. This form of programme also teaches the bible by informing and educating listeners about the church’s doctrines.

Church service

Church service is another kind of religious programme which is either recorded or broadcast live. With this type of broadcast, a part of the church service usually the delivery of a sermon is aired live. An example of this on *Twin City Radio* is Catholic hour where the sermon of the Father of a selected catholic church is broadcast live. The producer of the programme announces a cross-over to pick the live feed of the sermon being delivered. In the course of the broadcast, the station ID is played a number of times. When the period is over, the feed is truncated with the producer once again announcing to listeners the source of the feed. A similar programme on *Skyy Power FM* is the Sunday sermon of Reverend Bob Asare from the Zion Praise Chapel International in Sekondi.

Music shows

For music shows, *Skyy Power FM* rarely plays orthodox Christian music. All music observed in the period of the study was the charismatic gospel type. *Twin City Radio* however represents both charismatic and orthodox Christian music. Hymns and their meanings for example were music from either the Methodist hymn book or the Catholic hymnal. Both *Twin City FM* and *Skyy Power* had a Gospel music session on Sundays where listeners could phone-in and request a particular track for their loved ones.

Prayer sessions

Prayer sessions are also special Christian type of programmes where pastors encourage listeners to call in and request for various kinds of prayers such as intercession, thanksgiving, consecration among others. The prayer sessions are usually interspersed with solemn music.

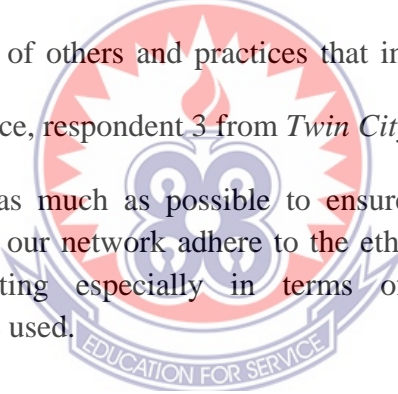
4.3 RQ 3: How do the two stations ensure that their religious programmes are in conformity with the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasts?

This research question first sought to evaluate how religious programming strategies and policies of the two selected radio stations fall in line with the NMC Guidelines and second to determine the awareness of the NMC guidelines by staff of the two stations.

Schwartz et al. (1999) had observed that although the media are not under compulsion to adopt and implement guidelines, they should be recognized as necessary for implementation to help control professional practice in line with social interest. The NMC guidelines are broadly organized into two sets: Those that restrain and those that encourage certain practices. Guidelines number (2,5, 6 and 9)

which are four out of the twelve point guidelines spell out practices that must not be allowed in religious broadcasts. They constitute any form of manipulation, abuse, extremism, humiliation inciting or denigrating others. Also, showing nudity and graphic images that undermine the dignity of the human condition. The remaining guidelines constitute practices recommended to make religious broadcasts more socially responsible. They include the promotion of cultural, moral and ethical attitudes and values, respect for personal freedoms, rights, obligations privacy among other practices.

The findings from the producers and heads of religious programmes revealed that some strategies or policies had been adopted to ensure that manipulation, abuse, extremism, humiliation of others and practices that incite or denigrate others were not tolerated. For instance, respondent 3 from *Twin City Radio* cited that:



We try as much as possible to ensure that those on our network adhere to the ethics of broadcasting especially in terms of the language used.

His counterpart from *Skyy Power FM* also noted that:

One of our policies is to make sure that our religious programmes are devoid of insults. It shouldn't attack others.

When asked how they ensure that their religious programmes are devoid of insults, the respondent from *Skyy Power* explained that the station engages and spells out their policies to those who buy airtime for their religious programmes. Although these policies were not documented and physically displayed at the station's premises, the findings indicate that both *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* try their best to control or guide the airing of religious content. This implies that although the state may have lost grip on control of content due to liberalization and

proliferation of the airwaves, some radio stations have adopted their own control mechanisms to keep track of religious content. These policies are however in sync with the highest journalistic standards expected of journalists and media content.

Awareness of the NMC religious guidelines by the two stations

The researcher, through interviews, established that the stations do not have copies of the NMC guidelines and also heads and producers of religious programmes were aware of the existence of the guidelines but were not privy to the details. The following are responses given on whether the stations or producers of religious programmes on the two stations were aware of the NMC guidelines:

(Respondent two from *Twin City Radio*)

We've heard of the media commission guidelines for religion. That was when it was launched. But we are still yearning for a copy. As of now we've not been given any copy of that. The funny part is that it is not even on the internet that we can go and look at. We are still yearning that it is given to us but we don't have it currently.

(Respondent one from *Skyy Power FM*).

Sincerely we do not have those guiding our programme policies but I think with the policies that we have drawn and are working with, they are ones that meet broadcasting standards.

This gives credence to the claim by Da Costa and Ganaa (2020) that the NMC had not done due diligence in popularizing the guidelines among the media fraternity. There has not been any efforts to ensure that media houses have copies or are compliant to the guidelines after their launch. There is therefore no guarantee for effective implementation of the guidelines because according to Sharkansky (1978), the first consideration for effective implementation is that those responsible for

carrying out a decision must know what they are supposed to do. It can be clearly stated that though the two media organizations do not have access to the content of the NMC's guidelines on religious broadcasting, they enforce the available broadcasting standards in the country to guide the nature of religious programmes that are aired on their stations.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on the findings of this study by providing answers to the research questions that sought to examine the nature of the content of religious programmes broadcasts on *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM*. Document analysis helped to confirm that religious programming was a key source of airtime market for both *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM*. Through thematic analysis, selected episodes of religious programmes of the two stations were found to be educative, motivating and empowering for listeners. These programmes were predominantly in the form of sermons, talk shows, prayer sessions, church services and Christian music shows.

The second and third research questions employed interview and document analysis to evaluate the nature of religious programming and the conformity of the two radio stations to the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting. It was discovered that both media organisations had knowledge of the existence of the NMC guidelines on religious programming but were not privy to its stipulations and therefore did not fully conform to them. Nonetheless, both stations had their own set of strategies and policies which in their view sought to make their religious programmes socially responsible.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter comprises the summary and conclusions drawn from the study which set out to investigate how selected radio stations in the Western Region of Ghana specifically in Sekondi Takoradi are conforming to the National Media Commission's guidelines on religious broadcasting. The chapter also offers a discussion on the limitations of the research study and offers recommendations for future studies in this area.

5.1 Summary

The study sought to determine how much airtime *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* allocated for religious broadcasting; examine the nature of the content of their religious programmes and then evaluate their conformity to the NMC guidelines on religious Broadcasting. Data was drawn from document analysis and interviews and thematically analyzed. The study was underpinned by the Social Responsibility Theory.

5.2 Main Findings

On the first research question of the study which sought to examine how much airtime is allocated to religious programing, it was found that out of the total broadcast time for the period of study, 17% and 15% was allocated by *Twin City Radio* and *Skyy Power FM* respectively to religious programmes. Although the total broadcast time for both stations varied significantly, it was observed that their allocation for religious broadcast had a marginal difference. The study established that the sale of religious airtime was a key source of revenue for the stations. Also,

the rate of airtime varies for each station. However, not all religious airtime was commercialized. For both stations, the least commercial airtime for religious programmes was fifteen (15mins) whilst the most commercial airtime was one hour (1hour). For both stations religious programmes were run throughout the week with Sundays having the most airtime allocation.

The second research question of the study was to examine the nature of the content of religious programmes broadcast by the two stations. It emerged that the nature of the content of religious programmes on the two stations varied. Some were aired live whilst others were recorded. Some were sermon tapes, talk or discussion shows, prayer shows whereas others were musical shows. Much as opportunity was available for any religious faiths to acquire airtime, Christians were most pronounced.

The study showed that commercial airtime programmes on both stations contained messages that sought to educate, motivate, inspire, strengthen or empower listeners. It was determined that both stations had their own in-house principles and guidelines for religious content on air. The analysis did not identify any content in violation of the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting.

The third research question sought to evaluate how religious programmes of the two stations conform to the National Media Commission guidelines on religious broadcasting. First, it was discovered in the interviews that both stations were completely oblivious of the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting. Neither of the stations had a copy or were aware of the stipulations of the NMC guidelines.

The findings of the study confirms the assertion that religious programming remains an important part of programming and constitute an important source of revenue for the radio stations. However, not all religious programmes are commercial.

The study also confirms the assertion that the National Media Commission does not orientate all radio stations on its broadcast guidelines and needs to do more in popularizing its guidelines among the media fraternity.

The study finds that though oblivious of the stipulations of the NMC guidelines on religion by the period of the study, the two stations claim to maintain their own principles and programme guidelines some of which in the analysis were evaluated to be consistent with some stipulations of the NMC guidelines. For example both stations upheld media ethics and observed broadcasting standards which encouraged the use of decent language for broadcasts, prohibit the display of nudity as well as the use of graphic images that undermine the human condition.

5.3 Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the conformity of selected radio stations in Sekond Takoradi with the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting. The following conclusions were drawn based on the outcome of the study: Findings of the study confirm the assertion by De Witte (2005) that religious programming constitute an important aspect of radio programming and the opening of radio stations has encouraged those who have money to purchase airtime to propagate their messages. Also as indicated by Asamoah Gyedu (2005), the study affirmed that the media has become a vehicle for healing and deliverance messages aimed at rebuking and binding demons, castigating witches and defying them by the power of God through Jesus Christ. Despite this development, the study found that there is no guaranteed

security against tactics such as described by Mujaji (2015) to manipulate, exploit and abuse innocent people through the deployment of religion in the media. The study concludes that although the National Media Commission has developed guidelines on religious broadcasting and expects the media to conform to them, some radio stations are not even aware of these guidelines. These radio stations however adhere to their own forms of guidelines and policies to control religious content and protect listeners from abuse and exploitation. This implies that regardless of their interest in generating revenue from the sale of airtime to religious individuals, the radio stations maintain some sense of social responsibility through content regulation.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the conformity to the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting by selected radio stations in the Western Region of Ghana. One clear limitation of this study was that the investigation was focused on only two radio stations (*Sky Power FM* and *Twin City Radio*) in the Western Region. Again, documents or content selected for the analysis may not be enough to represent all religious programmes in Ghana. It was also difficult getting enough literature on religious programming in the Ghanaian context and also on how radio stations conformed to NMC guidelines. There was no literature on conformity of radio stations to NMC guidelines from any part of Ghana. This also owes to the fact that not many studies have been done on the subject. Despite this limitation, it is hoped that this study contributes to literature on religious programming on radio stations within the African and Ghanaian context.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Studies

Future researchers can widen the period of study beyond one year and include more radio stations for a broader perspective on the subject. Future researchers can also

look at a study that focuses on the perception of National Media Commission on conformity to their religious guidelines. Again, future researchers could expand on the study to include other media outlets instead of only radio stations.

5.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the research questions and objectives, findings, discussions and conclusions of the research in the area of religious programming. Findings from the study confirm the assertion that religious programmes on radio educate and motivate listeners, it is important for radio stations to work within established framework of law and institutions. The study therefore recommends the need for the major stakeholders in the Ghanaian broadcast environment to find ways of disseminating the NMC guidelines on religious broadcasting in order for radio stations to have access to them. For instance, the National media Commission (NMC) needs to popularize and encourage conformity to its guidelines to ensure that religious programmes on air are socially responsible and are not used as vehicles for abuse and exploitation of listeners. Although commercial airtime is essential for the sustenance of religious programmes on air, the excuse of lack of sponsorship should not be allowed to hinder the broadcast of socially responsible religious programmes. It is therefore recommended that the government sponsors religious programmes.

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