

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY




GENDER AND MEDIA REPRESENTATION

Perspectives from Sub-Saharan Africa

Edited by

MARGARET JJUUKO, SOLVEIG OMLAND
and CAROL AZUNGI DRALEGA

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BOOK

Gender and Media Representation

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CREATING A FAIRER SOCIETY

A fair society is one that is just, inclusive and embracing of all without any barriers to participation based on sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ethnicity, age, class, ability or any other social difference. One where there is access to healthcare and education, technology, justice, strong institutions, peace and security, social protection, decent work and housing. But how can research truly contribute to creating global equity and diversity without showcasing diverse voices that are underrepresented in academia or paying specific attention to the Global South?

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Chapter 5

Unveiling Voices and Visibility: Women's Engagement and Representation in Three Morning Prime-time Radio Shows in Accra, Ghana

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Abstract

While women's status in Ghanaian media has improved in terms of the beats they cover, it is important to identify how this trend is reflected in such prime-time programmes as morning shows and how it has influenced gender sensitivity in content programming. This study investigates the engagement and participation of women in the three most popular morning radio shows in Accra, Ghana. We employed qualitative content analysis and systematically monitored and analysed the three shows over four weeks in terms of gender roles, issue representation, and the frequency and prominence of women's participation. The results showed that there were more men than women participating in the morning shows as hosts/journalists or guests on a daily basis. Female co-hosts hardly ever filled in as programme hosts in the absence of male hosts. The study further established that men are more often the participants in political discussions on prime-time radio as both hosts and resource persons. We recommend that media organisations establish a culture that guarantees gender-transformative

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and gender-sensitive programming and representation to increase women's participation and engagement in media projects.

Keywords: Media representation; women in news; media experts; morning shows; news sources; prime-time programmes; FM radio; Ghana

Introduction

Women's empowerment and development are closely related in theory and practice (Asuman & Moodley, 2023). Women's empowerment is crucial for the growth of every society as it frequently leads to positive outcomes (Anyamesem, 2017), and a McKinsey's (2019) Power of Parity Report found that the continuing gender gap in Africa is a potential barrier to women's development (Moodley et al., 2019). Egbetayo (2019) asserted that one of the greatest threats to Africa's future is gender inequality because women fall short in terms of basic amenities that support economic opportunity, political voice and legal protection, physical security, and autonomy (cited in Moodley et al., 2019). Indeed, the African continent's Inclusive and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework (particularly Goal 5) emphasise gender equality and the balancing of the socio-economic and environmental needs of women (African Union, 2013).

A global study on the causes and effects of gender equality in news media that sampled 123 nations showed that the representation of women in the news as subjects or sources only increased from 17% to 24% between 1995 and 2015 (Macharia, 2020). Based on this analysis, Djerf-Pierre and Edström (2020) predicted that gender parity in the news media would not be achieved for another 70 years. The Media Ownership Monitor report on Ghana (Media Foundation for West Africa, 2017) and the Status of Women in the Ghanaian Media Report (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2020) also found that men dominated the ownership of media institutions. For gender representation, coverage, and programming, only 24% of the people represented in the media are women (WACC, 2020). Such popular programmes as political and morning shows on radio and television are mostly hosted by men, and when women are included, their roles are likened to tokenism (Chavranski et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

There have been some significant improvements concerning the representation and participation of women in African media, and South Africa was considered a global leader for women's leadership in the media in 2020, ranking higher than the United States and the United Kingdom (Andi et al., 2020). A study on the status of women in the Ghanaian media found that despite the gender gaps in the media, women were covering more beats, including those traditionally reserved for men, like politics and business (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2020). It is important to ascertain how that trend has been reflected in prime-time programmes like

morning shows and how it has informed gender sensitivity in content programming and empanelling.

This study delivers valuable insights about the status of gender representation and women's engagement in prime morning radio shows and ultimately contributes to a more inclusive and informed society, using three radio morning shows as a case. The specific objectives are two-fold: (a) to analyse the frequency and prominence of women's participation, including hosts, guests, and contributors in prime morning radio shows; (b) to analyse the topics and issues related to women as discussed on these shows. Our research was guided by the question: how are females represented and engaged in the top-three morning shows in Accra, Ghana?

Literature Review

Radio and Empowerment

The African Union uses 'women's empowerment' to describe strategies to increase women's agency in Africa by, among other efforts, maximising possibilities, acknowledging the rights of women and girls to security, dignity, and physical and mental integrity, and providing women a voice and visibility (African Union, 2024). This, as is well argued in Asuman and Diedong (2019), is not something that can be conferred on women but requires active engagement. This study examines radio as a medium that can strategically unite women through the two-way exchange of ideas and through participatory programming that enables them to form partnerships that facilitate changes within their lives and environment. Through educational programmes, for example, radio motivates women to understand and transform new knowledge into action and support community development outcomes (Cornwall, 2016).

Peak-time radio programmes present women with the opportunity to discuss issues salient to women's livelihoods with change agents and elected officials (Asuman & Moodley, 2023). 'Peak-' or 'prime-' time radio programming refers to the period that broadcast channels' content is consumed by the greatest number of viewers or listeners (newsclip, 2024), and it can contribute significantly to women's empowerment in Ghana and generally in sub-Saharan Africa. Peak-time radio programmes are sources of knowledge for empowerment efforts because they provide information and education on sensitive community development issues (Asuman & Moodley, 2023). Prime-time broadcasts are when such participatory channels as phone-ins and text messages are utilised, and they provide an appropriate channel for women to discuss and freely share their thoughts on matters with which they cannot publicly participate in traditional settings (Heywood, 2020). In other words, commercial radio presents a new form of media – different from traditional state-controlled broadcast media – that offers an unadulterated public sphere for the advancement of women's voices and the improvement of gender relations in patriarchal and traditional societies (JOR, 2014). What is more, commercial radio broadcasts have the power to raise the political consciousness of women in such orally based cultures and traditions as Ghana, where the average woman is less educated than the average man (Anyamesem, 2017). Chingwell

(2009) argues that radio empowers women through women-focused programmes and women-related initiatives, as well as through talk shows, political debates, and phone-in contributions. Through engagement with radio media, women contribute to building a strong public sphere, hence improving the democratisation process.

Women's empowerment helps women to maximise agency by reflecting on the knowledge and choices available to them (Rifkin, 2009). Here, agency is a critical step in helping women to free themselves from the grips of patriarchy in traditional societies, where patriarchy perpetuates poverty, lack of mobility, and the overall powerlessness of women (Morgan, 2001). Asuman and Moodley (2023) argue that barriers to women empowerment can be reduced through women's representation in the media and more prominence of issues that affect the lives of women.

Importance of Women's Representation and Participation in Radio

The inclusion and involvement of women and girls in discussions about meeting the SDGs optimise the effects of behavioural change and developmental initiatives (Asuman, 2022). Women's representation, participation, and access to the media have remained low in such sub-Saharan African countries as Ghana for varied reasons: poor conditions of services, institutional barriers, poverty, and other workplace conditions unfavourable to women (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2023; Yeboah-Banin et al., 2020). Participatory development communication has been recognised as a means of including and improving the representation of women in the media (Asuman & Moodley, 2023). The integration of participatory development communication approaches into media practices has enabled the acquisition of audience feedback by centralising the participation and representation of marginalised groups like women and girls. Participatory methods have been applied in a variety of contexts and sectors in independent commercial broadcasting and shown to improve the diffusion of agricultural innovations, public health promotion, water and sanitation, and gender awareness and relations (Ross & Byerly, 2014).

The theoretical support for the participation and representation of women and girls in radio broadcasting is that it enhances access to media and access to information, which promotes the welfare of women and girls by safeguarding their human rights (Sharma & Kumar, 2010). Even with the new opportunities for women and girls' representation in the media at the turn of the 21st century, Opoku-Mensah (2001) contended that professional journalism has never welcomed women and that they face structural problems that stifle their employability in mostly male-dominated newsrooms. Little has changed in the past 20 years: Asuman and Moodley (2023) reported that of the five radio stations they studied in northern Ghana, not only did none have women as on-air hosts of prime-time programmes but also did few have women employees at all, and, where there was a woman employed at the radio station, she was in administration (Asuman & Moodley, 2023). Adjin-Tettey et al. (2023, p. 141) confirm that structural and traditional challenges make it impossible for women to have successful journalism careers in Ghana and contend that despite private media in certain communities, various traditions, cultural norms, and perceptions that view women journalists

as ‘promiscuous and unfaithful in their personal relationships’ make it difficult for women to enter journalism and have successful careers as on-air personalities.

Method

The study used qualitative content analysis to explore gender representation on the three most popular radio morning shows in Accra. Qualitative content analysis is ‘an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification’ (Mayring, 2000, para 4). The initial coding was informed by theory and pertinent research findings, and we immersed ourselves in the data to let themes emerge throughout data analysis.

We monitored and analysed three prominent morning radio shows (Kokrokoo, Citi Breakfast Show (CBS), Super Morning Show) on three different radio stations (Peace FM, Citi FM, Joy FM) in Accra for a four-week span between 16 October and 17 November 2023. The first stage of data collection was monitoring and tracking the output of the three morning shows using a monitoring guide that enabled the documentation of information on the host(s)’ gender, the primary topics discussed each day, the frequency of a female host’s contribution to the discussions, the segments that females handled, topics that female host(s) addressed in comparison to male hosts, topics discussed that were related to women, the women resource persons participating in the shows, the issues those women covered, and whether the listener was given the impression that women were well-represented in the content. A total of 60 shows were monitored over the four weeks, 95% of which were monitored live.

The thematic data analysis was guided by the research objectives and the literature and focussed on three main themes: gender parity of resource persons chosen to discuss issues; representation of gender in programme hosting/journalistic roles; and the gender parity of issues chosen for discussion.

Rationale for the Selection of Radio Stations and Programmes

Radio was selected because it is the most reliable and trusted source of information on such developmental issues as agriculture, education, health, and the environment – especially among people living in rural areas (Antwi-Boateng et al., 2023). In Ghana, morning radio shows typically address pertinent political, social, economic, and environmental issues facing the country.

A survey conducted by Safiyo (2022) established that most radio listeners in Accra listen to radio in the early hours of the day, and it is thus presumed that gender-sensitive radio programming can impact many areas of society. The three most popular radio stations in Accra, according to the same audience survey, were Peace FM, Citi FM, and Joy FM (Safiyo, 2022). Although Peace FM’s Kokrokoo was the most popular, the Super Morning Show on Joy FM (Joy SMS) was the Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana’s radio programme of the year in 2022. The three selected morning shows were deemed appropriate units of analysis for the study because they are the flagship shows of these networks.

Results

Content of Issues Covered in the Morning Shows

In the presentation of results, 'female' and 'woman' are used synonymously. The content on all three morning shows within the four weeks of monitoring ranged from politics, disaster management, media freedom, health, and social issues such as family life, education, effects of small-scale mining, entrepreneurship, leadership, the energy sector, the Akosombo Dam spillage, and the economy. Much of the political conversations across the three morning shows focussed on the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) impending presidential candidate primary poll.¹

Representation Parity in Programme Hosting

Joy SMS was consistently co-hosted by a female journalist, Mamavi Owusu Aboagye, and three male journalists. Citi FM's CBS was usually hosted by four male journalists and sometimes the managing director of the station. The show did not have a regular female host, and in the absence of the main host, another male journalist served as a replacement. Similarly, the morning show on Peace FM was also regularly hosted by a male who, in his absence, would also be replaced by a male journalist and news anchor. Even though presenters of certain segments of the show were occasionally pulled into the day's big discussions, female presenters of business news on Citi FM were not engaged in any of the topical discussions on the shows.

Female journalists never filled in as programme hosts in the absence of regular hosts. Peace FM's morning show had female representation as news readers, particularly of the newspaper review segment and the reading of live presenter mentions (LPMs), but women journalists neither engaged in any of the topical discussions on the show nor moderated discussions. The few female hosts of the various segments of morning shows showed a mastery of the typical duties they performed, like reading the news articles and tidbits featured in the broadcasts, and they hence projected a strong sense of confidence. The female host for Joy SMS was able to demonstrate her intelligence and competency as well as strong viewpoints in a way that encouraged personal growth and knowledge acquisition on topical issues. The data generally demonstrate that women can perform exceptionally well when given the chance to host morning shows. As it stands now, women are unable to demonstrate their competence due to exclusion.

Gender Representation of Issues on Morning Shows and the Female (Woman) Factor

All the representatives of the NPP flagbearers who spoke on the issues of their presidential candidacy race as well as the experts who participated in conversations about the NPP primaries were men. Throughout most of the monitoring and analysis, the only female host (on Joy SMS) mainly participated in the

¹New Patriotic Party (NPP) was the ruling party at the time of writing.

newspaper reviews, read adverts, and presented the LPMs, while the male hosts took charge of the topical issues. The situation changed when the topic of discussion was the Akosombo Hydroelectric Dam (or Volta Dam) spillage, when the Volta River Authority raised water levels that led to floods in low-lying areas. During this event, discussions centred around the socio-economic effects of the Akosombo Dam spill, and the female host on Joy SMS effectively drove the conversations and efficiently analysed the situation. This ultimately brought a different dynamic to the show. For instance, on 19 October 2023, the newspaper review segment on Joy SMS included a debate about how the Akosombo Dam affects people's livelihoods. Voices from men and women whose businesses were impacted by the dam spill were included in the discussion. The female fishmongers were heard complaining that their fish products were being ignored by customers who thought the water was contaminated. The female co-host contributed to the conversation and recommended that these women and other traders needed financial support and advocacy to help recover their businesses and sustain employees.

The issue of dam spillage remained at the centre of attention in subsequent broadcasts of Joy SMS. In the few other instances when women's voices were heard, they spoke as representatives of organisations donating relief items to the victims of the Akosombo dam spillage disaster. The female guests showed empathy and sensitivity for the suffering of the victims, and by doing so, they garnered support for a course of action and the development of long-lasting solutions. Female guests offered an out-of-the-norm viewpoint when they expressed worries about how the flood would affect women and children and the need for more corporate intervention. Male resource persons from the National Disaster Management Organisation, the member of parliament (MP) for the affected areas, the Volta regional minister, and journalists working for affiliate radio stations in the affected areas participated in the discussion of dam spillage on 26 October 2023.

Another discussion on the dam spillage was moderated by the host of the Kokrokoo morning show on Peace FM, Kwame Sefa Kayi on 19 October 2023. He hosted the Deputy CEO, Engineering and Operations, of the Volta River Authority for an extensive historical and technical discussion about why water is spilled from the Akosombo Dam, in a bid to provide context for the spillage. The conversation was expanded to such other dams as Bagre and Weija and how they are connected to the spillage. The engineer also discussed how the water can be used for other purposes and how future engineering endeavours can assist in eliminating the need to spill water when dams reach their limits. The next section of the programme was a panel discussion about how the general public might assist those affected by the dam disaster and the kinds of institutional and structural support that can be provided in such cases and to avert it totally. The panel consisted entirely of men and included an MP, a professor, and a lecturer from two Ghanaian universities who are frequent panellists on the programme. During the show, listener messages were read. However, the majority of the messages came from male listeners, indicating either the minimal active engagement of women in terms of sending messages or a bias (unconscious or conscious) towards the selection of messages by men. This absence of female representation also occurred on 14 November 2023, when

Joy SMS took phone call-ins during the energy crisis talks, and only male voices were heard, including the four hosted experts.

The CBS broadcast on 17 October 2023 included a discussion of the utilisation of filtration bottles as a potential health-promotion intervention during pregnancy. Although the issue was especially pertinent to women, the resource person was male. This is not to say that the issue was not adequately dealt with, but we argue the incorporation of a female voice, whether as a host or resource person, would have made a significant difference. It should also be noted that this conversation on the CBS was a rare instance of airtime allocated to a problem that affects women.

The female co-host's unique perspective on the Joy SMS discussions was particularly evident when 'Poisoned for Gold', a documentary produced by Erastus Asare Donkor, aired on October 16 and 30 October 2023. This documentary highlights the devastating effects of illegal mining and its particular effects on pregnant women and their unborn babies. The resource person in the documentary was a male medical expert, and he cited the birth of a baby with one limb and without genitalia. The female co-host, Mamavi Owusu Aboagye, reinforced strong arguments against illegal mining by pointing out the dangers of cyanide and its effects on pregnant women and their unborn babies. Her voice and experiences not only brought clarity and deeper insights into the discussion, but also provided a perspective and energy to the show that would not have been achieved with an all-male panel. Additionally, that day saw an improvement in the program's participation that was fuelled by discussions in which the female co-host took a prominent role.

Joy SMS's regular female co-host often drew attention to topics that raised socially relevant issues the male hosts might have easily overlooked. For example, on 9 November 2023, while addressing what Ghanaians desire in a leader, she hosted a discussion on the good and bad qualities of a leader. She also contributed to discussions on the Drive Safe Campaign, infrastructure to support tourism sites, inappropriate TV content, and marital property ownership and its division in the event of divorce. In contrast, the male co-hosts focussed on newspaper reviews.

Some other instances when women's voices and perspectives were heard on Joy SMS include a broadcast aired on 16 October 2023, during which Joy SMS hosted a female and a male resource person from the Ghana Education Service for a discussion of the Senior High School Renewable Energy Challenge² moderated by Mamavi Owusu Aboagye. The female resource person competently presented arguments for students' creativity and in support of the efforts of the Ministry of Education to enhance the students' creativity. The next day, on 17 October 2023, the Joy SMS broadcast included a discussion of real estate with a female resource person who was serving as the deputy country head of Apolonia

²Launched in 2019, the Senior High Schools Renewable Energy Challenge (Schools Challenge) is a joint project of the Ghana Education Service and the Energy Commission of Ghana. The effort intends to create interest in renewable energy and energy efficiency among students in Ghana's second-cycle institutions as well as to educate and raise awareness of these topics in senior high schools and technical institutions around the nation.

City, an urban housing developer, and her male colleague. She shared insights about how girls can take advantage of and benefit from real estate development, a predominantly male-dominated space. Her contributions sharply contrasted with the male resource person's more general approach.

On all three morning shows, the resource persons on political issues were usually male, including the hosted representatives of presidential candidates. Political figures and leaders interviewed on non-political issues like the Akosombo Dam spillage were also mostly male and included assembly members whose communities had been affected by the floods, MPs, a regional minister, community leaders, and heads of public and private agencies and organisations. A discussion about Ghana's democracy and the duration of office for lawmakers on CBS on 16 November 2023 hosted two men, including an MP and the chairperson of a political party, the National Democratic Congress. A discussion about the activities of the constitution review committee was steered by Joy SMS's female host on 13 November 2023, and voices from another programme that addressed the subject – including a female academic and lawyer – were replayed. Two male resource persons, however, were called in live when more explanation on some of the issues raised was required.

On 16 November, the female co-host of Joy SMS engaged in an 'informal' conversation with the hosting panel over the finance minister's presentation of the budget to Parliament, but when it came to interviewing experts, a male co-host took charge. Nonetheless, the female host's contributions demonstrated her understanding of the budget's economic consequences as she made clear connections between some of the budget's input and its effects on the economy. Another woman, a senior lecturer and economist, was also hosted on the show on 16 November, and she too spoke about the economic implications of the budget with competence and confidence.

Other female resource persons heard on Joy SMS included the director of an education unit, who spoke about the Senior High School Renewable Energy Challenge 2023 on 13 November 2023, and a strategy, digital, and data executive with Old Mutual Group, who was on the show on 10 November to discuss Old Mutual's 10th anniversary. The deputy country head of Apolonia City was on the Joy SMS to discuss real estate development in Ghana on 17 October. Some women affected by the dam spillage were featured on the show on 19 October, while on 13 November, the project lead of the National Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Project competition was part of the team hosted. She exhibited mastery of the topics and complemented her male colleague when he had left out some important details. On 15 November, a discussion on the closure of the road tolls in Ghana included a physically disabled woman, who shared the challenges she was facing due to the closure of road tolls across the country. On 14 November 2023, brand ambassador and media personality 'Nana Ama' also came on the show to talk about MiWay Insurance's offerings. She was accompanied by two male MiWay Insurance executives who also spoke on the same subject.

Apart from the female journalist who read the business news on CBS, the other female voices included a representative of organisation donating money to those who had been affected by the Akosombo Dam spillage and former students

of the Aburi Girls Senior High School who discussed the various programmes concerning an event at their alma mater. During the four weeks of monitoring, the only occasion on which CBS hosted a female politician was 17 November 2023, when Betty Krosbi Mensah, then-MP for Afram Plains North, spoke about people in her constituency who had been impacted by the dam spillage with three male journalists who formed the hosting panel. Thus, it is impossible to ignore the male predominance on CBS.

On Peace FM, the only female resource persons hosted included the head of corporate affairs of the National Lotteries Authority, whose contribution was via a telephone interview; two women (in addition to two men) from a credit union, former students from Aburi Girls Senior High School; and Afia Foriwa Boafo, who was promoting a food (*Angwamo*) festival. A deputy minister of information was on the show on 17 November 2023 to talk about the media fund to support mainstream media. It should be mentioned that on 16 November 2023, the Peace FM host revealed that a female deputy finance minister was scheduled to appear on the programme to engage in post-budget discussions, but she later declined owing to other personal engagements, an action that upset some of the show's regular panellists. The female deputy minister and expert, unfortunately, passed up the chance to guarantee female representation on a crucial national issue. Peace FM appeared to provide more room for female politicians to make appearances than other Joy FM or Citi.

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with other findings that demonstrated the poor representation and limited engagement pertaining to women in the media. A study conducted across the Ghanaian news media between February and June 2021, for example, found that men dominated radio and television shows in terms of presenters, journalists, interviewees, and invited experts (Franks, 2021). This study has shown that this trend has not changed for morning shows, but it was generally observed that whenever the perspectives of women surfaced, either in the form of resource persons or a female host (particularly on Joy FM) contributing to the discussion or asking questions, their engagements influenced the focus and the direction of discourse. This is clear from the differences in the topics and directions of conversations chosen by Joy FM's female host, Mamavi Owusu Aboagye. As a member of the hosting panel and, by extension, the production team, her role in the selection of resource persons likely accounts for the relatively more female resource persons on Joy SMS as compared to CBS and Kokrokoo.

Although some have argued that female journalists and presenters are typically pigeon-holed to cover the bulk of the soft news areas of features, the arts, education, and health (North, 2016), Yeboah-Banin et al. (2020) found that women were covering more beats, including those traditionally preserved for men, like politics and business. This study's data included a female journalist who read the business news on Citi FM's CBS, a domain formerly exclusively for men. However, because she only read the news and was not included discussions about current business and economic topics, she did not address the underrepresentation

of female voices (as a host or as part of the panel) on the prominent morning programme. The other female journalists on Kokrokoo also fell short because they only read the news and newspaper reviews.

Recent reports indicate that female resource persons shy away from appearing in the media (ACME, 2019), and this could have been a factor in their exclusion as much as selection bias. By including gender-sensitive and gender-transformative content, the media can play a significant role in establishing gender equality (Adjin-Tettey, 2020), so when women's interests are piqued to contribute to gender-sensitive and transformative issues, they are more likely to join in more general conversations pertaining to other socially, politically, and economically significant issues.

In addition to structural challenges (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2023; Asuman & Moodley, 2023), and technological barriers (Gadzekpo, 2009; Opoku-Mensah, 2001), editorial decisions also contribute to the minimal participation of women in the media. Some producers and journalists are more comfortable with resource persons with whom they have established relationships and rapport than unfamiliar sources who are riskier and less reliable (Barnoy & Reich, 2023). This, we argue, may disproportionately impact newer entrants who are women when familiar sources have historically been men. What is more, studies indicate that although professional women gained their position on merit, many are fearful of coming across as unqualified imposters when they are not given adequate time to prepare for media engagements (Howell & Singer, 2017).

Factors like lack of confidence and trust in the media – by not recognising the impact women make when they consent to interviews – account for women's reluctance to engage in public discourse in the media (ACME, 2019). The dam spill and its effects on communities downstream, for example, was a good opportunity to flag the challenges women and children face. The vulnerability of these demographic categories makes it important to shed light on these issues and find ways to address them. There were reports of women and girls exposed to rape and other forms of sexual assault and abuse when communities were displaced by the Akosombo Dam spillage. These incidents, however, did not feature prominently on the morning radio shows monitored – even though they should have been a springboard for women resource persons and other advocacy groups to champion the cause of the victims.

Conclusion

Studying women's participation in primetime radio is crucial not only to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment but also for the improvement of media discourse. This study has yielded significant empirical data and nuanced insights regarding the representation of women in prime-time media and the potential benefits of positive representation for women's advancement and media diversity. Further research can contribute to a more inclusive media environment and society at large by pointing out areas for improvement and modelling similar studies in other areas. Gender representation requires awareness and deliberate effort, so gender-sensitive and gender-transformative content and representation, as well as the dismantling of gender stereotypes, are crucial to the establishment

of a newsroom culture that prioritises gender. Media organisations should also be constantly evaluating their decisions' and actions' alignment with the ideals of positive gender portrayal and engage in regular roll out staff education and training programmes that consider the perspectives of women media specialists. Allowing women journalists more time to participate in media interactions and highlighting them as primary sources for media content are two cultural attitudes that media organisations can cultivate during the newsgathering process, news output, and programme planning stages. We also recommend the recruitment of more women practitioners in newsrooms and in production. This, we argue, can ensure that topics that significantly impact women are brought up for editorial consideration.

This study used data from a relatively small timeframe and examined only three current affairs morning shows. Literature could benefit from other studies that employ larger, more diverse samples and relevant conceptual frameworks to enable more sophisticated statistical and theoretical analysis and facilitate generalisation. Future researchers may consider broadening their foci to encompass other similar shows, diverse programme formats, and gender representation in radio news sound bites.

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