

Journalists, Job Satisfaction and Performance: the Perspectives of Journalists in Tamale Metropolis of Ghana

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Abstract:-This study investigated the job performances and satisfaction of journalists working in the Tamale metropolis of the Northern region of Ghana. The study adopted the quantitative survey design to sample views of journalists and media practitioners on key issues affecting the execution of their functions. It was discovered that 65 percent of the population studied, belong to the productive age bracket of 29-39 years with a male-dominant workforce. Most of the journalists in the region play dual roles as reporters and news anchors at the same time but well experienced in the profession. The human resource base of journalists in the region range from diploma holders to master degree holders with 80 percent indicating satisfaction of their jobs but dissatisfied because of low salaries and insecurity. The study concludes that there is very weak correlation between motivation and performance.

Key words: Journalists, performance, satisfaction, motivation and dissatisfaction.

I. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

There is paucity of academic research in the human resource areas of journalism particularly in the print-media industry in Ghana. This is despite the fact that the industry is playing crucial roles in the economic, social and political development of the nation and have since become a pivotal vehicle of democratic development. Nonetheless, scholars believe the human resource needs of the media in the country is unsatisfactory. “Recently, firms in the public print-media industry have been criticized for various employee training quagmires in Ghana. For example, some public print-media firms see employee training as an avenue for socialization, stress therapy, and money making for unknown reasons. Due to inherent benefits of attending training programmes, these training programmes are characterised by discrimination”, (Quartey, 2012:78).

Journalists play a critical role in the structure of modern societies and therefore the need to understand the environment in which they work must be given priority for the betterment of society. “In fact, this is exactly why governments, global institutions, transnational and continental corporations, invest

immensely and attempt to monopolize the media. In other words, an informed management of journalism and journalists leads towards channeling informed influence on a society. However, this requires, primarily a thorough understanding of the environment in which journalism is practiced and journalists work or the factors that determine the output of journalists. One of which is job-satisfaction” (Bezabeh, 2015:6).

Bezabeh (2015), enumerated some functional and operational factors that affect the quality and job satisfaction of journalists. These according to the researcher includes but not limited to poor remuneration, opportunities of getting promotion, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, good working relationship with supervisors and security are but factors that enhances the readiness of the journalists to produce high quality output. These conditions can best be described as necessary evils that propels efficient human resource base for modern institutions to meet global standards of performance. There is an observation that journalists in Ghana are poorly paid and worrisome is the fact that some of them especially those in private practice are not paid at all. How will they then fit into these functional operational factors enumerated by Bezabeh?

Journalism is one of the prominent professions in the world which plays a critical role in shaping society at all levels. Their role in political, social and economic institutions of every society cannot be overemphasized. It is against this background that some scholars have long acclaimed the profession as the fourth estate of the realm. Realizing the significance of the media, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana spells out the role of the media among others in Article 162 (5) as “All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana”.

This is an enormous responsibility and implies the media and journalists in particular have a critical role to play towards the development and prosperity of the nation. This critical role the Constitution has bestowed on the media is a herculean one which demands not only adequate training of media personnel to be able to accomplish the task but good working environment and motivation that would ensure satisfactory performances and execution of duty by journalists in Ghana.

Potter (2006) is of the conviction that journalism is both a profession and a craft since journalists draw on specialised skills and adhere to common standards of practice thus distinguishing journalism as playing a greater and special role in a free and democratic societies. Some scholars have also expressed the view that for a modern society to function well towards the achievements of an ideal society, there must be a free and responsible media guided by well trained, motivated and performance oriented practitioners who are fully independent in execution of their duties.

Journalism as one of the oldest professions, can be defined as the activity of gathering, assessing, processing, and disseminating or presenting of news and/or information useful to an audience. The word ‘journalism’ applies to both the method of inquiring and systematization of information and the literary style used to disseminate the information (Deprez & Raeymaecker, 2012 as cited in Bezabeh, 2015). The profession plays a very critical role in transformation of society especially in developing countries such as that of Ghana where many are advocating for the need for the media to be integral institution in propelling national cohesion, advocates for the voiceless and vulnerable as well as championing development.

The type of mass media that journalism uses vary widely to include, print journalism or content published via newspapers and magazines; electronic and/or digital which includes television, radio, and the worldwide web broadcast and applications. Media practitioners otherwise journalists are professionals who work on mass media organizations as either news reporter, editor, photojournalist or columnist. Many joined the field from journalism institutions or related fields of study such as communication, and language studies (Reichart, 2011, Bezabeh, 2015).

Owusu (2012) is of the view that the media landscape in Ghana evolved when the 1992 Republican Constitution was promulgated thus guaranteeing multi-party democracy. “The private media grew gradually but started to make their presence felt in the face of the established state-owned media. Ghanaians, however, witnessed the full growth of the private media from 2001 after the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law with particular rapid expansion of the electronic media. Currently, in virtually every district of Ghana, there is a local radio station and newspapers with national reach are also available. Access to television stations is not hard to come by either”, (Owusu, 2012:9).

The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) chapter in the Northern region of Ghana puts the figure of media practitioners in the region to be around 70 out of which a handful are members of the association. It explains that many of the practitioners are engaged in private media jobs with many working for private radio stations. Some of the bigger media houses especially those with national reach have correspondents in the region who file stories to their mother stations while all state-owned media in the country have regional offices with journalists working from the region.

In Ghana, there is paucity of academic research in the area of job satisfaction and performances of journalists despite the enormous role journalists play in the socio-economic development of the country. This therefore calls for a comprehensive empirical study to unearth and understand the working environment and conditions under which these group of people so dear to us work. This study would inform policy decisions and national concerns on the best way forward in fulfilling good working environment and welfare schemes for journalists in Ghana.

Using refresher training, remuneration, promotion, good working relationship and job security as criteria, this study is guided by three main objectives which are; 1. To understand the satisfaction journalists derive from the performances of their duties. 2. It investigates factors that motivate journalists in the Tamale metropolis of Ghana and 3. Examines the working conditions of journalists working in the Tamale metropolis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bezabeh (2015) conducted a study in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to examine the level of job satisfaction and its determining factors among journalists working in mass media agencies in that country using a mixed research approach. The study population consisted of journalists and editors drawn from four media agencies using stratified cluster systematic random sampling to sample respondents from these agencies. The data obtained through questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, and, Pearson product moment multiple regression). Bezabeh’s findings on all the three measures of job satisfaction, thus ‘perceived job-satisfaction’, ‘interpolated job-satisfaction’ and ‘aggregate job satisfaction’, respectively, have indicated that the majority (72%), (66.0%), and (66.0%) of the journalists lack job-satisfaction.

Bezabeh’s study concludes that there is generally low or unsatisfactory job-performance among journalists in Ethiopia which results in some of them failing to show up for work while others quite their jobs resulting in waste of valuables. The study therefore recommended among others that there should be improvement in the work determining factors to achieve a high job-satisfaction. It was also suggested that journalists in Ethiopia should be given educational scholarships especially post-graduate programmes since job-

satisfaction was correlated to higher educational attainment. Additionally, enhance salaries, welfare schemes, logistics and other fringe benefits were recommended to ensure that journalists work in decent conditions so they could give off their best.

Quartey (2012) studied the effect of training on perceived organisational performance of the print media industry in Ghana using the Graphic Communication Group Limited as the case study. A total of 200 staff of various categories were randomly sampled to partake in a quantitative questionnaire survey and results analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS,Version 16).

The results showed that 82 percent of the employees reported being aware of training activities provided by the organisation and that nearly 80 percent had received some form of training since they joined the company. The results also indicated that employees received career-oriented and job-oriented training programmes which according to the researcher is consistent with other findings that there is need for organisations to provide career-oriented and job-oriented training programmes for employees as these forms of training build employees competencies and eventually enhance performance.

The study recommended among others that there should be frequent employee training in the print media focusing on careers and jobs to impact positively on organisational performance. “The recent attention to employee training in the print-media industry in Ghana is strategic, as it impacts on the industry’s performance. That is, a direct correlation was reported between increase training programmes and improvement in organisational performance indicators such as sales, profit, market share, quality of products, customer satisfaction, employee retention, job satisfaction, employee morale, waste reduction and the volume of production. Hence, it is possible to conclude that, employee training plays a critical role in organisational performance” (Quartey,2012).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was largely quantitative in nature. Quantitative research method is used in conducting this empirical study aimed at quantifying certain social attributes of journalists working in the Tamale metropolis of the Northern region of Ghana. According to Punch (2005), quantitative method deals with information about the world which are analysed in numbers with the key being measurement to assign numerical values to people, things, events, attitude and beliefs such that calculations and predictions can be made about the social world.

Questionnaire for the survey were self-administered with both closed-ended and opened-ended questions to a probability sample population of journalists in the Tamale metropolis of Ghana. The use of probability sample size of 20 was used because the researcher is researching on a profession of persons who are fewer in the research location.

The questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 20. Results were further analysed and interpreted manually in a qualitative approach where ideas were synergized with relevant theories and available literature.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The results for the demographic characteristics (which include sex, age and marital status) are presented in Tables 1-3. It was observed that majority of the participants (mainly journalists from different organisation) were in the age group of 29-39, representing a valid percentage of approximately 65 of the target population as illustrated in Table 1. This shows that majority of the journalists under study belongs to the working class in the society and this is very crucial to national development.

Table 1: Age of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18-28	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
	29-39	13	65.0	65.0	95.0
	40-50	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

It was also observed that more than half of the participants were males, representing approximately 60 % of the target population as shown in Table 2. Again, this is crucial to journalism as a profession, since males are usually the dominant force and are ready to undergo all forms of hardship in other to obtain useful and accurate information. Nevertheless, females are still encouraged to join journalism as a profession.

Table 2: Sex of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	12	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Female	8	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

More so, with regard to the marital status, as illustrated in Table 3, approximately 50% of the participants were single while 50% were married. There was no gap between the single and married participant under the study, suggesting a balanced marital status in the profession.

Table 3: Marital Status of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
Unmarried	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The organizational roles for journalists in different institutions are shown in Figure 1. Approximately 70 % of the journalists are News Anchor/Reporter, while, 15 %, 10 % and 5 % are respectively, editors and reporters, presenter/newscaster and head of news.

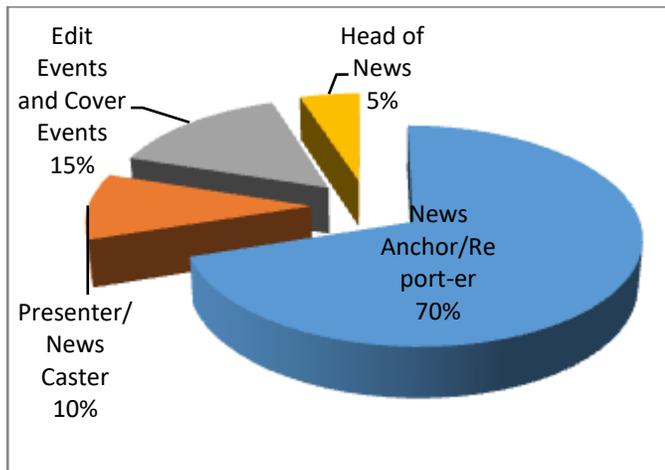


Figure 1: Organization Roles of Journalists

The number of years of working experience of journalists in the media industry is illustrated in Figure 2. It is clearly seen that approximately 60 % of the journalists had working experience of four (4) years and above, while only 25 % had between two (2) to three (3) years of working experience in the media industry. Approximately 15 % had working experience less than one year and this is encouraging. More number of years of working experience implies better understanding of the job and this leads to reliable and professional news production.

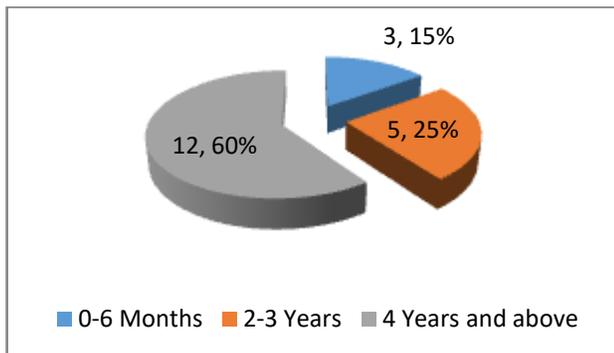


Figure 2: Number of Years of Working Experience

The educational status of the participants is shown in Figure 3. It is shown that majority of the participants had Diploma/HND or Degree as their highest qualification, with Diploma/HND and Degree, respectively, having approximately 8 and 9 participants, accounting for 85 % of the total population of participants. Only two (2) participants had Master's Degree as their highest qualification.

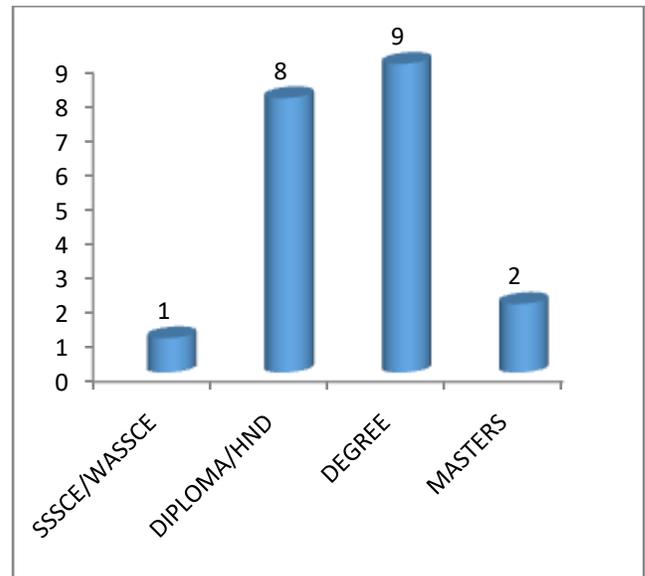


Figure 3: Educational Status

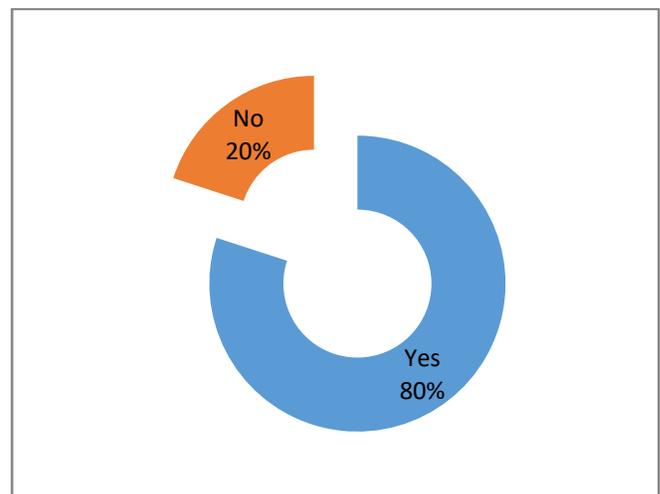


Figure 4: Level of Satisfaction of Journalists

The level of satisfaction of journalists is presented in Figure 4. Approximately 80 % of journalists were satisfied with their work, while 20 % were dissatisfied. The reasons for journalists satisfaction and dissatisfaction is respectively, shown in Figures 5 and 6. It was observed that most journalists had passion for the job, representing 44 % of the participants, while others were satisfied due to the change it brings to communities, also accounting for 31 % of the total participants. Approximately 12 % of the journalists were satisfied because they felt their news stories usually gets to the

right people, while almost 13 % were delighted in solving problems in society due to their work. However, it was seen that approximately 67 % of journalists were dissatisfied because; freedom of speech and expressions are sometimes misunderstood and this usually endanger their lives and that of their family and love ones. Approximately 33 % of them were dissatisfied due to limited/scarce tools to work with and this affects the overall job performance. This contradicts Bezabeh’s study conducted in Ethiopia where there is generally low or unsatisfactory job-performance among journalists in Ethiopia which results in some of them failing to show up for work while others quite their jobs resulting in waste of valuables.

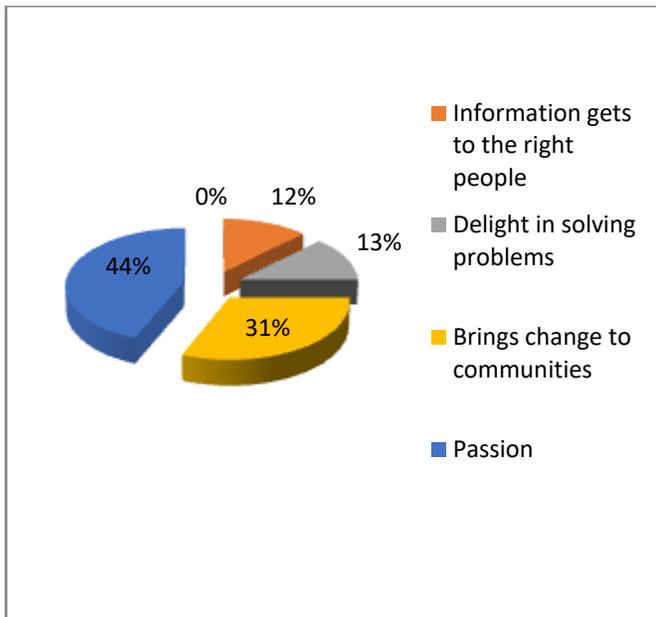


Figure 5: Reasons for Satisfaction of Journalists

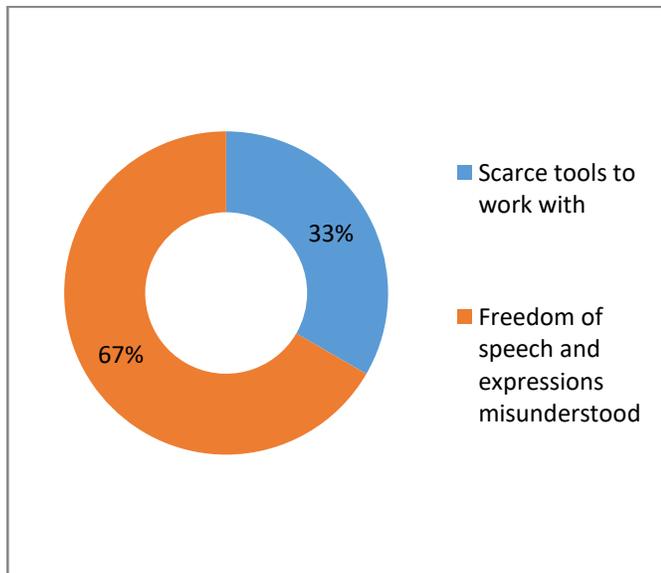


Figure 6: Reasons for Dissatisfaction of Journalists

The performance of journalists is shown in Table 4. It is seen that almost all the participants in the media industry performance reasonably well in their various roles. Journalists whose performances is very good and satisfactory constituted approximately 60 % of the total participants.

Table 4: Performance of Journalist

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Satisfactory	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
Good	5	25.0	25.0	55.0
Very good	6	30.0	30.0	85.0
Excellent	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The motivation of journalists in their various roles is illustrated in Table 5. Approximately 75 % of them are motivated due to the working environment, while those motivated due to passion, allowance and working conditions constitute approximately 25 % of the total population.

Table 5: Motivation of Journalists

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Working environment	15	75.0	75.0	75.0
Passion	2	10.0	10.0	85.0
All of them	2	10.0	10.0	95.0
Allowance and working environment	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 presents the monthly salary of journalist in the Tamale Metropolis. It is shown that, majority of them earn between Ghc 1000 and above, representing approximately 40 % of the total participants. Approximately 35 % of the participants earn between Ghc 200 to 500. The lower salary of these journalists is linearly associated to their lower level of education.

Table 6: Monthly Salary of Journalist

Salary	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Ghc0- Ghc200	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
Ghc200- Ghc500	7	35.0	35.0	40.0
Ghc500- Ghc1000	4	20.0	20.0	60.0
Ghc1000 and above	8	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

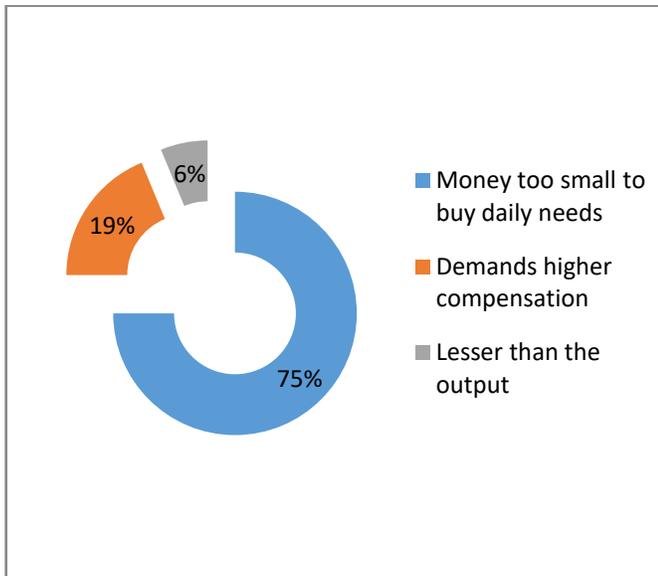


Figure 7: Dissatisfaction of Journalists Salary

The reasons for dissatisfaction of journalists salary is illustrated in Figure 7. Most of the journalists felt their salaries were too small, representing approximately 75 % of the participants. Approximately 19 % of the journalists demanded higher compensation. These findings are consistent with Herzberg two-factor theory which proposes that some set of factors cause job satisfaction while a another set of factors cause dissatisfaction. Applying this theory to this study, journalists in Tamale are satisfied of their profession because of the recognition it brings to them but dissatisfied with the salary that goes with the performances of their job.

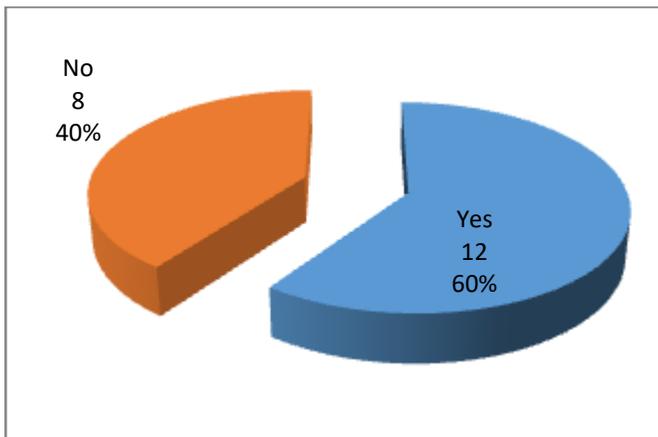


Figure 8: Work Security of Journalists

The job security of journalists is shown in Figure 8. It is observed that approximately 60 % of the participants had a secured job, while 40 % of the participants' jobs were not secured. Some of the participants attributed poor security, lack of knowledge and welfare as the main reasons why their jobs are not secured.

Table 7: Stressfulness of Journalism

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Leave your home and work under pressure with limited resources	10	50.0	66.7	66.7
	Lack of logistics	2	10.0	13.3	80.0
	Fatigue	1	5.0	6.7	86.7
	Difficult to get accurate information	1	5.0	6.7	93.3
	Combining other works with management responsibility	1	5.0	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	75.0	100.0	
Missing	System	5	25.0		
Total		20	100.0		

The result for the stressfulness of journalism is presented in Table 7. It shows that approximately 67 % of journalists believe that journalism is stressful because one will have to leave his home and work under pressure with limited resources, while 13 % believe journalism is stressful due to lack of logistics. Approximately 20 % believe that journalism is stressful due to the following: fatigue, difficult to get accurate information as well as combining other work with management responsibilities.

The result for improving journalism is shown in Table 8. Nearly 47 % of journalists wants good salary and security, while 21 % want employers to protect journalists from abuse and damage of equipment. Also approximately 21 % of journalists wished employers could provide laptops with internet connection, logistics, refresher courses, good salary, allowances and study leave to improve journalism as a profession.

Table 8: Improving Journalism

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Good salary and Security	9	45.0	47.4	47.4
	Good working environment and right to information	1	5.0	5.3	52.6
	Protect Journalists from abuse and damage of equipment	4	20.0	21.1	73.7

	Provide laptop, internet and logistics	2	10.0	10.5	84.2
	Provide laptop, internet and logistics and providing refresher courses	1	5.0	5.3	89.5
	Good salary, allowances and study leave	1	5.0	5.3	94.7
	Good salary and better work conditions	1	5.0	5.3	100.0
	Total	19	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	5.0		
Total		20	100.0		

significance value of 0.975 is greater than 0.05 and for that matter the null hypothesis is not rejected and concludes that there is a very weak negative correlation (almost no association) between motivation and performance of journalists as illustrate in Table 9. The paired differences for motivation and performance are shown in Table 10. The significance level of 0.02 is far less than 0.05 and for that matter the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is no difference in means between motivation and performance of journalists. Motivation and performance of journalists are therefore statistically significant.

Table 9: Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
	Motivation & Performance	20	-.007	.975

The results for the paired samples correlations and paired samples T-test are presented in Tables 9 and 10. The

Table 10: Paired Samples T-Test for Performance and Motivation of Journalists

Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			
1.40000	1.69830	.37975	.60517	2.19483	3.687	19	.002

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated the job performances and satisfaction of journalists working in the Tamale metropolis of the Northern region of Ghana. It was discovered that 65 percent of the population studied belong to the productive age bracket of 29-39 years. It revealed that more than half of the journalists working in the region are males confirming earlier studies that journalism is a male-dominated profession (Kwode. 2019). It is a male-predominant because of the stress and herculean task of investigating and producing news under pressure to meet deadlines.

Most of the journalists in the region play dual roles as reporters and news anchors at the same time. This is so because some of the journalists working in the region are correspondence to national media outlets based in Accra, the national capital of Ghana hence regional correspondence have to engage in reporting and editing at the same time. It is also instructive to know that 60 percent of the participants have a working experience of four years and above implying that they have a better understanding of their job leading to a high sense of professionalism. Experience is very significant in journalism due to the technical and legal issues involved. A more experienced journalist is more likely to adhere to ethics of the profession and therefore commendable that most of the participants had good experience on the job.

The human resource base of journalists in the region range from diploma holders to master degree persons, an implication that the journalists are well educated to execute their duties. Additionally, the study revealed that as many as 80 percent of the journalists indicated that they were satisfied with their job because they had passion for it which goes to buttress the point that these journalists are intrinsically motivated to deliver. More than half of the participants also rated their work as very good and satisfactory. They also indicated that their working environment constituted the highest form of motivation for them.

A significant number of the journalists in the study complained of poor remuneration while 67 percent indicated that journalism is a stressful job because they always work under pressure to produce timely news with limited logistics. The study concludes that there is very weak correlation between motivation and performance. This confirms the validity of the Herzberg two factor theory of motivation which states that there are factors of satisfaction and factors of dissatisfaction at work place. In the case of this study, the journalists are satisfied by their job because it gives them social capital such as reputation in society hence they like the working environment but dissatisfied of low remuneration and insecurity of the profession.

It is recommended among others that the salaries of journalists is improved to meet their daily needs since a larger percentage

complained their salaries cannot send them home. Also, employers should provide logistics such as laptops, cameras and internet facilities to aid them in their work. Aside these, refresher courses should be organised periodically to improve the skills of the professionals. Study leave with pay should equally be granted to those who deserve it to serve as a motivation for others to give out their best.

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