



DISINFORMATION STATUS REPORT OF GHANA

Pre-Election 2024 Special Edition

Executive Summary

The African Center for Quality Journalism and Research is a non-profit, non-partisan think-tank that leverages data and digital tools to promote quality journalism and public accountability in Africa. The Center conducted this survey between October and November 2024, and 2,000 people nationwide participated.

The study aimed to understand the threat posed by disinformation campaigns to Ghana's 2024 General Election. It also focused on assessing the Ghanaian electorate's knowledge of disinformation campaigns, their ability to detect fake news in the media, and ways to combat the spread of false information.

Of the respondents, about 71.2% are males, 28% are females, and 0.8% prefer not to disclose their gender. Out of the total number of respondents who participated in the survey, about 94.6% are registered voters (with 11.4% being first-time voters), and 5.4% are not.

The findings showed that out of the 94.6 registered voters who participated in the survey, about 56.1 of respondents are "certain to vote," with 23.5% "most likely to vote" on December 7, 2024. However, about 7.4% of respondents say they "won't vote," 4.5% "probably won't vote," and 8.4% are uncertain.

Summary of Key Findings:

1. The research showed that about 94.7% of respondents say they know what "fake news" is, 3% say they do not know, and 2.3% answered "Maybe" to the question, "Do you know what fake news is?"
2. The findings disclosed that about 89.2% of respondents said they have encountered fake news in the media, 6.2% said they have not, and 4.6% answered "Maybe" to the question, "Have you encountered fake news in the media?"
3. When asked what actions they take when they encounter fake news in the media, about 64.4% of respondents say they ignore such news, 35.6% say they "comment on it," 19.7% say they "report it," and 7.6% say they "send it to a friend."
4. Also, about 94.7% of respondents said they know what fake news is, 3% said they do not, and 2.3% were uncertain. Of the number, about 89.2% said they had encountered it in the media, 6.2% said they had not, and 4.6% of respondents were uncertain.
5. Similarly, about 84.7 of respondents say they can detect fake news in the media, 5.3% said they cannot, and 9.9% answered "maybe" to the question.
6. When asked how they could identify fake news in the media, about 68.2% of respondents said they visit "credible websites." Also, about 19.7% said they conducted a "Google search," 6.8% said they "asked a friend," and 5.3% said they did nothing.

7. The study revealed that about 34.1% of respondents said they had shared news stories that they later found out were fake, 46.2% said they had not, and 19.7% were not certain.
8. Asked if they believe fake news or false information can affect their choice of candidate in Ghana's 2024 General Election, about 55.3% of respondents answered in the affirmative. About 39.4% said it would not, and 5.3% answered "maybe" to the question.
9. The study disclosed that about 39.4% of respondents said they "always" verify news reports before sharing them with friends, 25% said they "often" do that, and another 25% said they "sometimes" verify them. Also, about 6.8% said they "rarely" verify news stories before sharing, and 3.8% said they "never" verify them.
10. About 39.4% of respondents say they feel "angry" when they encounter fake news in the media, 34.1% say they feel "frustrated," and 26.5% are "indifferent."
11. The research further revealed that about 45% of respondents say the most effective way to combat fake news is through "Education and public awareness." Also, about 32.8% recommended the use of "fact-checking services," 8.4% suggested "stricter state regulations," and 12.2% urged the use of "social media platform policies" to curtail the spread of fake news or false information.
12. Of the trusted sources for news or information, about 37.4% of respondents chose television, 26.7% said "online news websites," 26% said social media, 6.1% said the newspaper, and 3.1% said "family and friends." The study showed that radio is the least trusted source of information for the respondents, with 0.8% selecting it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Government should partner with telecommunication companies, social media platform operators, and civil society organisations to carry out public education campaigns on television, radio, and social media about disinformation, its identification, and dangers to encourage shared responsibility off-and-online.
2. The media must work to earn back the public's trust as a trusted source of information. This is particularly important because some media outlets have been used to communicate false information to the public.
3. The Government should collaborate with social media platform operators to pull down disinformation posts on their platforms and apply other sanctions without stifling free speech and expression.
4. Independent fact-checking organisations in the country must make their reports visible in the media and easily accessible to the public.

5. Also, media organisations should partner with independent fact-check organisations in the country to probe and verify claims made on their platforms.
6. Media outlets must not allow bad actors and merchant “disinformants” to use their platforms to disinform the Ghanaian electorate on December 7, 2024. They must resist the temptation to broadcast field reports without verifying them, however, the source.