



**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**How fatal is fatal? How serious is serious?  
A content analysis of newspaper  
reportage on road crashes in Ghana**

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# Presentation outline

- Background
- Literature review
- The study aims
- Official road crash data collection and reporting in Ghana
- Methods
- Results and discussion
- Study limitation
- Conclusion



# Background

- Road traffic injuries: A global and African concern

## Global situation

- 1.19 million road traffic deaths annually
- 15 deaths per 100,000 population
- Leading cause of preventable deaths

## Africa

- 225,482 deaths in 2021
- Highest fatality rate globally @19.4 deaths per 100,000 population



# Background cont'd

## Ghana

- Over 313,000 crashes recorded (1991-2021)
- Approximately 1,800 deaths and 14,500 injuries annually
- Economic cost: 1.6% of GDP



# Why road safety data and media reporting matters

- RTC statistics and reports highlight a country's road safety problems and inform road safety policy and evaluation
- Thus, it is vital that the statistics/reports accurately capture, record and report
- Media reports:
  - Shape public perception
  - Influence risk awareness
  - Inform policy discussions
  - Support safety education
  - Provide timely crash information

**But.....**

**Inaccurate reporting may lead to systematic estimation of the magnitude of the country's safety problems**



# The research Gap

- **Existing studies show**
  - Media often underreports injuries
  - Fatal crashes receive more attention
  - Reporting can influence blame attribution
  - Media framing affects public attitudes

## **What we still do not know:**

- How accurate are Ghanaian newspaper crash reports?
- Do newspaper reports match official police records?



# Study objectives

## Objective 1

- Assess the accuracy of newspaper-reported crash details

## Objective 2

- Determine the factuality of newspaper reports using official police records as the benchmark

Key variables examined: crash date and time, location, number of vehicles involved, number killed, number injured and probable cause



# Methods

## Data sources

- Newspapers examined
  - Daily Graphic
  - Ghanaian Times
- Period: 2005-2016 (98 and 146 published by Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times, respectively)

## Reference dataset

Official police crash records from:

Building and Road Research Institute (BRRI)



# Methods cont'd

## Quantitative Content Analysis

### ***Stage 1***

- Compare common crash reports appearing in both newspapers
  - 25 common crash reports identified

### ***Stage 2***

- Compare newspaper reports with official police records
  - 16 matched crashes retrieved from BRRRI

# Methods cont'd

The Ghanaian Times Tuesday, November 29, 2016

Website: [www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh](http://www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh)

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## News

# 6 perish as 2 vehicles crash at Akuse Junction

From Ama Tekyiwaa  
Ampadu-Nyarko, Koforidua

**S**IX people died on the spot, and two others were injured when a Toyota Lexus 4x4 vehicle ran into a Toyota Corolla saloon car at Tei Kwame, near Akuse Junction in the Eastern Region on Saturday evening.

The bodies of the four males and two females have been deposited at the Akuse Government Hospital Mortuary awaiting autopsy, while the injured are responding to treatment at the same facility.

The Akuse District Police Commander, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Francis Ackah who confirmed the incident to *The Ghanaian Times*, said it occurred at about 6.45 p.m. on Saturday.

He explained that the Lexus 4x4 vehicle was from Tema heading towards Akuse Junction while the Toyota Corolla, which was carrying a family of eight, was also heading towards Tema, from Ho.

Upon reaching the spot at about 6:45 p.m., the driver of the Lexus 4x4 tried to overtake another vehicle but in the process, he collided head on with the Toyota Corolla.

ASP Ackah said six of the eight passengers on board the Toyota Corolla saloon car died on the spot and two others sustained injuries.

ASP Ackah said the driver of the Lexus after the accident fled the scene, leaving his car behind, and had since gone into hiding.

He said the police had intercepted the vehicle and were waiting for the driver to report to the police, to assist in investigations.



One of the accident vehicles

## Ashanti Police search for illegal guns

From Kingsley E. Hope,  
Kumasi

**T**HE Ashanti Regional Police Command is to conduct thorough search on vehicles to arrest and prosecute people found with guns and other offensive weapons, ahead of the election.

According to the Regional Commander, Commissioner of Police (COP) Nathan Kofi Boakye, anyone who would be found with any weapon would be dealt with severely.

"The Police are going to conduct a search of vehicles before, during and after the election and any weapon found would be confiscated," COP Boakye declared.



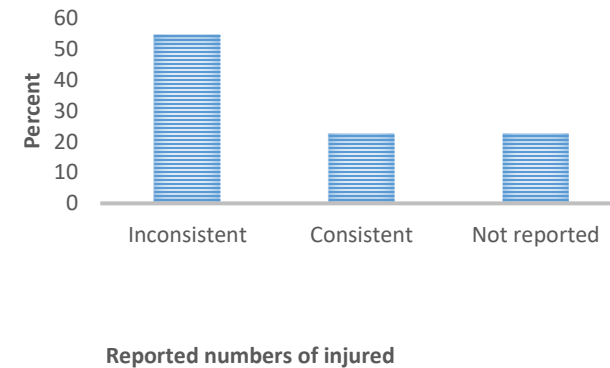
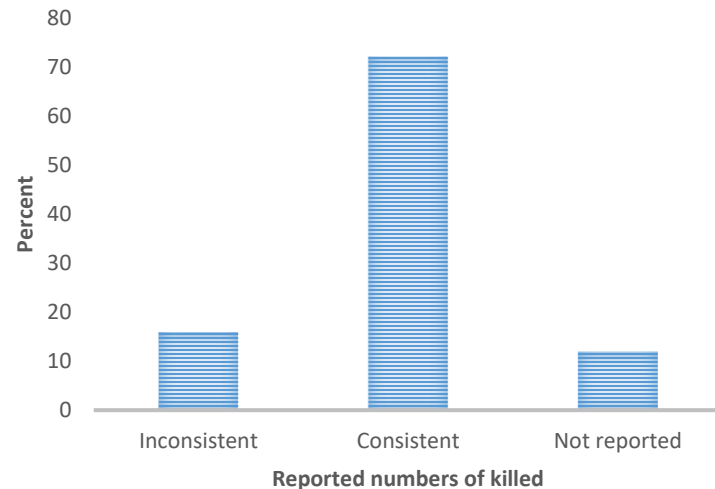
# Results

## Objective 1: Consistency of reported crash details

- Ghanaian Times provided broader crash coverage than the Daily Graphic
- Most consistent
  - Crash dates (94%)
  - Crash locations (73%)
  - Number killed (72%)
  - Number of vehicles involved (72%)
- Least consistent
  - Number injured (54.7%)
  - Crash time (52%)

# Results cont'd

- Fatalities were reported more accurately than injuries



- Implication: less severe injury outcomes are more likely to be omitted, misreported or underreported

# Results cont'd

## Objective 2: How factual were newspaper reports

- Major observation: newspaper reports frequently differed from police records
- Both newspapers tended to overreport fatalities compared to the reference data

| Comparison               | Mean difference |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Ghanaian Times vs Police | +2.14           |
| Daily Graphic vs Police  | +2.57           |

- Injury reporting was considerably less reliable



# Results cont'd

| Source             | Date of crash        | Time of crash | Crash location                       | No. vehicles involved | No. killed | No. injured | Probable cause       |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| The Ghanaian Time  | 9 April 2009         | 8 pm          | Kumasi-Accra highway                 | NR                    | 1          | NR          | NR                   |
| Daily Graphic      |                      | 6:30 pm       | Kumasi-Accra highway                 | 2                     | 3          | NR          | Overtaking           |
| Police report      | <b>10 April 2009</b> | 6 pm          | Akyem Anyinasin                      | 2                     | 3          | 22          | Overtaking, speeding |
| The Ghanaian Times | 3 January 2010       | 7-8 pm        | Kumasi-Accra highway                 | 2                     | 9          | NR          | Overtaking           |
| Daily Graphic      |                      | NR            | Near Konongo                         | 2                     | 9          | 8           | Speeding             |
| Police report      |                      | 7 pm          | Nobewam near Konongo (Ohene Nkwanta) | 2                     | 9          | 16          | Speeding, No signal  |



# Results cont'd

| Source             | Date of crash     | Time of crash | Crash location                     | No. vehicles involved | No. killed | No. injured | Probable cause |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| The Ghanaian Times | 16 September 2011 | Dawn          | Konongo road                       | 2                     | 22         | 15          | Overtaking     |
| Daily Graphic      |                   | 3 am          |                                    | 2                     | 22         | 30          | Overtaking     |
| Police report      |                   | 3 am          | Yaw Kwei near Konongo              | 2                     | 26         | 17          | Inattention    |
| The Ghanaian Times | 23 February 2013  | 6:30 am       | Gomao-Mampong (Accra-Winneba road) | 2                     | 12         | 5           | Overtaking     |
| Daily Graphic      |                   | NR            | Gomoa-Mampong (Accra-Winneba road) | 2                     | 14         | NR          | Overtaking     |
| Police report      |                   | 2:50 pm       | Gomoa-Mampong (Accra-Winneba road) | 4                     | 0          | 4           | Inattentive    |



# Policy implications

Why this matters:

- **Inaccurate reporting may:**
  - Distort risk perception
  - Misguide public understanding
  - Affect policy prioritisation
  - Influence infrastructure investment decisions
  - Undermine road safety planning
- **Evidence-based reporting matters**
  - Reliable crash information/data = Better road safety decisions



# Recommendations

- Strengthen collaboration between relevant road safety agencies: NRSA, GPS, NAS, GNFS, Media houses
- Develop:
  - Media crash-reporting guidelines
  - Journalist training programmes
  - Verification protocols and follow-up reporting systems



# Conclusions

- Newspaper crash reporting in Ghana contains substantial inconsistencies
- Fatalities are reported more accurately than injuries
- Injury outcomes are frequently underreported or misreported
- Media reports do not always align with official police records
- Improving media reporting can enhance road safety education, policy, and intervention planning



# Want to read further?



# THANK YOU

[www.uew.edu.gh](http://www.uew.edu.gh)

