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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSaR)

**REPRESENTATION OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION IN GHANA'S ONLINE
MEDIA: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GRAPHICONLINE.COM &
MYJOYONLINE.COM**

BY:

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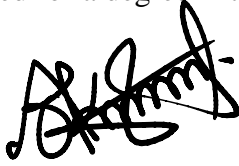
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**THIS LONG ESSAY IS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION

I, Edem Seshie hereby declare that this long essay is my original research and no part has been presented for a degree in this state or any other.



1ST OCTOBER, 2020

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DATE

MADC19027

SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this long essay supervised by me is in accordance with the guidelines on the supervision of dissertation laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

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DR. LAWRENCIA AGYEPONG

DATE

SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

This dissertation proposal is dedicated to the Almighty God for the wisdom and guidance to put this work together. This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my mother, Victoria Gafah who has been my source of inspiration and strength. It is also dedicated to my family, friends, and classmates who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study.

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ABSTRACT

Mental health continues to be an issue of global concern. The issue has been compounded by the fact that it remains a neglected area especially within the continent of Africa. In Ghana, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 650,000 people are suffering from a form of severe mental disorder. One form of mental disorder that continues to affect women is postpartum depression and WHO has identified a high prevalence of postpartum depression in mothers of sick children in Ghana. The situation has serious implications for both mothers and their children. What remains imperative in an attempt to address the issue is promoting health knowledge about the disease, in addition to educating and changing health behaviors. This requires the need for a proactive media to help address the issue. The media is an important agency with great influence in providing mental health information and shaping public perception. It is for this reason that this study seeks to identify and examine how the Ghanaian media has represented postpartum depression via the online news media platform. The study will

employ the use of a qualitative research approach by way of discourse analysis to help examine how postpartum depression stories are represented. This will involve purposively sampling news stories and articles from myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com from January 2015 to December 2020 to ascertain how information regarding the disease was framed. The study when completed will provide empirical data on online media representation of postpartum depression among women in Ghana. This will help the various stakeholders within the mental health ecosystem to design programs and initiatives aimed at raising awareness on the disease

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The World Health Organization (WHO) has over the years recognized mental disorders as an issue of global concern. However, mental disorders remain one of the most neglected diseases globally. It is estimated that more than 350 million people of all ages are affected with depression which is a leading cause of mental disorder worldwide (Prince et al., 2007).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is more prevalent among women than men. It is considered second after HIV/AIDS in total disability especially for women of childbearing age (WHO, 2012). Kessler (2003) also identifies depression as a leading cause of disease-related illness among women. One common form of depression that affects women mostly after childbirth is postpartum depression.

Beck et al. (2006), describes postpartum depression (PPD) as a mood disorder that affects approximately 10–15% of adult mothers yearly with depressive symptoms lasting more than 6 months among 25–50% of those affected. Though it is observed that postpartum depression often occurs within a few months to a year after birth, Mauthners (1998) reported the occurrence of postpartum depression 4 years after birth. PPD is often defined as an episode of major depressive disorder (but sometimes including minor depression) that occurs in the postpartum period. It is a serious mental health problem that is related to maternal suffering with numerous negative consequences for offspring (O'Hara & McCabe, 2013).

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) defines postpartum or postnatal depression (PPD or PND) as occurrence of a major depressive episode (MDE) within 4 weeks after delivery. The APA Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) explains Major Depressive Episode (MDE) as presence of at least five of the following symptoms most of the day, nearly every day for 2 week period with impairment or decline of the previous level of functioning. These symptoms includes a depressed mood, often accompanied with anxiety; evidently diminished pleasure in activities; loss of appetite and weight; sleep disturbances, often insomnia; physical agitation or psychomotor slowing; fatigue and low energy; feeling worthlessness or inappropriate guilt; decreased concentration and decision making ability; Recurrent suicidal ideation or thoughts of death. According to Wisner et al. (2002), the presence of depressed mood or loss of interest is a must for diagnosis of MDE.

Stewart et al. (2003) identified the development of serious mood disorders during the postnatal/postpartum period which is considered as an increased risk period. PPD is mostly associated with three forms of affective illness which includes the blues (baby blues, maternity blues), postpartum (or postnatal) depression and puerperal (postpartum or postnatal) psychosis each of which differs in its prevalence, clinical presentation, and management. According to Warner et al (1996), one of the most common difficulty of childbearing affecting almost 10-15% of women and as such represents a considerable public health problem is postpartum non-psychotic depression. Robinson & Stewart (2001) states that the effects of PPD on the mother, her marital relationship, and her child make it imperative to diagnose, treat and prevent.

A study conducted by Jacobsen (1999) indicated the adverse long-term effects of untreated postpartum depression. According to the study, the episode can result in chronic recurrent depression that affects the mother while a mother's ongoing depression can contribute to

emotional, behavioral, cognitive and interpersonal problems in the lives of the children. This is consistent with the studies conducted by Myers & Johns (2018) that stated that postpartum depression can cause social and physical impairment on a mother and her infant. In other words, mothers with postpartum depression have relationship challenges with their children, which have negative impact on child development from infancy to adolescence.

It is difficult to identify the exact cause of postpartum depression (Davis et al., 2008). However, Brody (2011) attributes some social, biological and psychosocial factors as contributing to the occurrence of postpartum depression. According to Guo et al. (2013), postpartum depression among women in Ghana is mostly as a result of still birth, spontaneous abortion, low social support and financial constraints. Beck (2008) also indicated that mothers with high stress levels suffer high prevalent rates of depressive symptoms associated with postpartum depression.

However, Sam (2018) in her study indicated that women are less likely to develop postpartum depression if they receive strong social support. This support according to the study can be provided in a form of information, finance, empathy, care and love.

The role of the media remains imperative in providing requisite information and reportage on issues regarding mental health in Ghana. According to Gblende (2018), a proactive media advocacy and campaign is needed to ensure an effective implementation of mental health regulations. Stout et al. (2004) in a study stated the importance of media involvement in reducing stigmatization of mental health illnesses. This is consistent with a study by Dzokoto et al. (2018) which stated that the media serves as a tool to educate, inform, and shape the opinions of people with regards to mental disorder. However, issues of increased stigma and misinformation of the public on mental health issues has been linked to the media. This is supported by Magliano et al.

(2011) who opined that the media's portrayal of mental disorders feeds into the consumers' prejudices about those with mental illness. In addition, Miller (2007) indicated that the media has sometimes contributed to negative information and stereotyping of mental health conditions.

According to Zamawe et al. (2016), the mass media remains vital in disseminating public health information, improving health knowledge and changing health behaviors. This supports Synder's (2014) study that stated a growing body of evidence that highlights the impact mass media has on public health in terms of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. It is important to note that access to reliable health information is imperative to improved and sustainable health outcomes. In spite of studies conducted in the area of mental health, Read & Doku (2013) maintain that mental health remains a neglected area in health care in Ghana. With few clinicians and trained researchers in the field, research has been limited both in quantity and quality.

Maternal mental health is an abandoned area, in low and middle income countries. Priorities are on decreasing infant and maternal mortality, and promoting infant physical health (Sam, 2018). In Ghana, postpartum depression is becoming one of the conditions that women mostly suffer after delivery. It is therefore important for the media to serve a representational function, capturing "newsworthy" local depictions of postpartum depression, thus providing insight into problems and events relevant to the experience and management of the condition.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study

- To analyze how stories on postpartum depression are covered in the Ghanaian online media.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the discourses that are used to report postpartum depression stories on myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com.
2. To identify the frames used by myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com in reporting on postpartum.
3. To explore the implications of media discourses on audience and public.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the discourses of postpartum depression stories reported on myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com?
2. What are some of the frames used by myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com in reporting on postpartum depression in Ghana?
3. What are the implications of media discourses on the audience and public?

1.4 Justification of the Study

This study seeks to explore the representation of postpartum depression in Ghana's online media. It is imperative for the media to contribute effectively to informing and educating the public on mental health issues and conditions which continue to affect women such as postpartum depression. Discourse analysis is a relevant approach in documenting news media reportage regarding mental health issues because it helps to build social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge or belief relevant to a phenomenon.

This study will inform policy on training programs for reporters and media agencies to shape their perception and reportage of postpartum depression in the media in a pragmatic manner.

This study will further assess the impact and the contribution of the media towards issues regarding postpartum depression. It will also help health professional collaborate with the media to raise awareness regarding issues relating to postpartum depression. This study will further add to knowledge on the topic.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will provide empirical data on online media representation of postpartum depression among women in Ghana. This will serve as an important measure and provide focus for various Health Organizations, NGOs, Media Houses, Private and Government Institutions interested in designing suitable programs aimed at raising awareness on postpartum depression among women in Ghana. Additionally, researchers can use this document as reference for future studies especially in the area of maternal mental care.

1.6 Summary

In conclusion, it is important to understand the role of the news media in shaping and guiding public discourse regarding issues of public concern. According to Lupton (1994), these public discourses are central to the development of shared cultural understanding of illnesses. Framing plays an important role in presenting how stories are considered newsworthy. Additionally, Entman (1993) states that newsworthy stories apply frames that define the problem, the causes, the solution and provide moral evaluation of events in a given situation. This underlines the submissions of Goffman (1986) which highlights the capacity of the news media to determine what is newsworthy and how it is presented to an audience. It is important to note that although there is literature regarding postpartum depression and how it is constructed by the news media, this research seeks to incorporate framing and language literature, to conceptualize how postpartum depression is constructed by the online news media in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter is dedicated to the review of literature. The review will cover the theoretical framework underpinning the study; a review of previous related studies and will be concluded with focus on how previous literature will influence this study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

According to Reese et al. (2001), the construction of discourse regarding public issues and event within society is dependent on the active involvement of the news media. The perceptions of stories and event in news media outlets are shaped by the process of framing. Goffman (1986) defines framing as a technique that uses language as symbolic codes to emit a particular portrayal of an event. Entman (1993) also states that to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Entman (1993) further suggests that framing mechanisms employed by news media writers helps to unconsciously or intentionally guide their audiences to perceive events through a desired lens. It is important to note that the use of framing by the media in setting the agenda for its audience underlines the influence the media has on society. Lull (2000, p.98) further explains, ‘‘the first stage of media audience research reflects ... strong impressions of the ... media as powerful, persuasive forces in society’’.

Conceptualizing how the news media guides public discourse regarding social issues will be used in this study to assess the differences in language used to evaluate postpartum depression.

According to Scheufele (1999), framing could have a wide range of appearances and the result could influence the society. This supports Entman (1993) claims that if framing media is done successfully, it could affect and change people's and even society's values and beliefs. However, there is a risk of audience rejection of the frame if it is considered as low relevance and this could damage media's credibility (Yioutas & Segvic, 2003).

Scheufele (1999) posits that media framing can be seen as a dependent or independent variable. According to Stromback (2004), framing is described as a dependent variable if external actors both affect and influence media. This happens when current trends, attitudes and norms impact on how events are framed. Scheufele (1999) further describes how media would be affected by the way people perceive the world as a process known as frame building. The frames could also be seen as an independent variable explaining why the readers perceive the reality in a certain way, i.e. frame setting (Scheufele, 1999). Frame setting underscores the media's role and accords them with great power and responsibility.

2.2 Frame-Building

According to De Vrese (2005), internal and external factors are responsible for how a frame emerges and this influences the structural qualities of news frames. Scheufele (1999) further identifies how journalists perceive the information, the political orientation of the medium or the way of working for the media organization as examples of internal factors that are responsible for how issues and news will be framed. External factors include the interactions between journalists, managers, politicians and social movements (De Vrese, 2005). Scheufele (1999) suggests that the frame-building process takes a mirror-perspective where the journalists reflect their images. According to Stromback (2004), frames are inevitable because the journalist has a strong position in frame building. Additionally, journalists have to select between attributes,

perspective, and sources. However, Scheufele (1999) posits that journalists have a limited perception and could therefore be influenced by their own frames. It is important to note that journalistic standards could impact on how frames are constructed. There is a risk for the reproduction of frames once they are introduced hence it is important to consider to what extent journalists are influenced by their external surroundings i.e. elites, other interest groups and frames from other news sources. Frame building will be very important in this study to examine how the media frames stories regarding postpartum depression. De Vreese (2005) notes that frame-building interrelates with frame-setting.

2.3 Frame-setting

Khalstrom & Norin (2012) in their study described frame-setting as the importance of how issues are categorized and the influences they have over the cognitive aspects of an attribute. Frame-setting is concerned with emphasizing specific facts of an issue and giving them relevance, to make them appear more important than other information. Scheufele (1999) supports this claim by stating that attributing higher prominence to an event will in turn influence and create ideas of how people should interpret the event. Frame-setting is very important in understanding the media representation of issues such as postpartum depression.

It is important to note that some framing scholars have called for a constricted definition of framing as a theory of media effects (Scheufele, 1999; Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017), focusing on the relationship between media frames and individual cognition, attitudes and emotions. This is consistent with Scheufele & Iyengar (2014) which states that framing effects has to do with behavioral outcomes and attitudes that are not only consistent with differences in what is being communicated but rather concerned with differences in how information in public discourse is being framed or presented. In spite of the calls from

some framing scholars for a narrow definition of framing as a theory of media effects, recent communications research on framing has neglected the psychologically centered definition focused on frames as informational labels – and rather fixated their attention on the sociologically inclined definition that distorts the differences associated between frames and messages with either informational or persuasive features. According to Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007), the outcome of this approach results in a confusion regarding the conceptual approach to employ in dealing with the subject of frames. Additionally, this results in the inability to differentiate between framing from other forms of media or social influence such as agenda setting or persuasion because any feature of information is regarded as a frame with the associated responses from the audience also considered as framing effects. It is important to note that audiences interpret information differently. Most of these interpretations stem from how the information available for interpretation is framed or contextualized.

In other words, available information is open to varying interpretation. This is in support of Kahneman (2003) who states that “perception is reference dependent” (p.459). Assaf (2020) posits that dominant media outlets over the decades have succeeded in creating frames which allows for them to determine the stories and frames used in them which are then circulated to the public. This is also supported by Douai’s 2014 study which notes that because most media houses are owned by large organizations, these large organizations influence the ability of the media to present their reportage in an objective manner. In other words, information and reports presented by these media houses serve the interest of these large organizations.

According to Berti (2018), the cognitive paradigm, experimental setting and cultural perspective on framing suggests that Iyengar’s (1987) study which sought to explain people’s interpretation of unemployment as a social issue was influenced by a pre-existing dominant and widespread

frame. It is important to note that Iyengar's study did not necessarily disprove framing effects on the issue of unemployment, but rather proposed that a contingent presentation of a particular frame is not always to influence or exert more power than a pre-existing salient frame. According to Van Gorp (2007), though frames constitute an important part of communication, what remains a challenge in the study of frames is the vagueness that persists and the absence of an unequivocal conceptualization which makes frames become distinctive in all shapes and sizes. This is largely attributed to the multiple meanings of the words frame and frame. Scheufele & Scheufele (2010) also highlight the disregard for the social and cultural aspects of frames and all potential influences at the societal level as one of the major problems associated with the study of frames. However, Entman (2010) posits that because people are more inclined to framing effects in real life situations, what remains imperative is the need to consider the fact that the continuous exposure to words and images is likely to resolve the inability of people exposure to message variation.

It is important to note that the study of framing effects and activation models underlines an important aspect of the framing theory and framing analysis (Cacciatore et al., 2016). However, it might be useful approach framing more broadly, by integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, experimental and non-experimental designs, research on media effects, as well as the role of "individual critical thought and social interaction [...]in shaping the connection between media frames and public opinion" (Brewer & Gross, 2010, p. 173).

According to Goffman (1986), there are two types of primary frameworks responsible for the construction of events. These include natural framing and social framing. A primary framework is also referred to as "schemata of interpretation" or a perspective that is given to individuals. McDonald (2018) holds that natural frameworks offer a contextual perspective of events for the

audience that resulted from natural causes. It is important to note that natural frameworks do not require any human actors in the events because the factors responsible for the events taking place are purely natural or physical. For example, natural disasters like earthquakes and tremors generally are not caused by any person, the cause of the events are observed to be purely physical and natural. Natural framing holds that news media reports are then not intended to present an influenced perspective of the events.

Social framing on the other hand is concerned with the news media ability to provide a background of events while discussing the people involved. This involves the news media subjecting the individuals being discussed in the news to judgments or expectations, setting the basis for how the audience should construe the subject's behavior. The culture and year in which events take place are associated with individuals' expectations. For example, news media articles started centering their reportage more postpartum depression as research on the illness evolved and began including men.

According to McDonald (2018), the news media encapsulates a collection of both news articles and audience's responses to the news, such as, letters to the editor and advice columns. An understanding of how society constructs social issues/events is dependent on the merging of both publishers and public in the news media and how this is presented. These events are observed to involve people but not to be caused by natural or purely physical determinants; as such, the cause of the event is discussed in the public arena. Goffman (1986) further explains that social frameworks possess what he calls, a live agency. A live agency suggests that the news media staffs are human which means they can be influenced when presenting their subjective views on this issue to the audience.

Goffman's (1986) work on social frameworks is directly related to postpartum depression portrayal in the news media. According to Goffman, society perceives and interprets social issues and events involving people through the lenses of social frameworks. Goffman further explains that events can be influenced deliberately to present a subjective perspective because social frameworks involve people. In other words, in social framing, because events that unfold are not considered natural, the people in the events are subject to blame and their actions are discussed and evaluated in the public arena. Lupton (1994) in her study on the coverage of AIDS suggested that the news media determine which articles are newsworthy and desirable to their readers and, implicitly, which are not. This perception creates a space for society to judge and discuss these public issues in a very particular way (Lupton 1994; Pan and Kosicki 1993). Lupton further explains that the new media yields the authority to give credit or discredit people in the news media events because of the societal standards social frameworks sets. Goffman (1986) refers to live agents as writers of news media. He further explains that because makers of news have the capacity to present news media from a biased perspective, they operate on "guided doings".

Goffman explains;

Such an agency is anything but implacable; it can be coaxed, flattered, affronted, and threatened. What it does can be described as "guided doings." These doings subject the doer to "standards," to social appraisal of his action based on its honesty, efficiency, economy, safety, elegance, tactfulness, good taste, and so forth. (p. 22)

Janssen (2010) also highlights the important role framing plays in the field of media research. According to her study, social interconnections, dynamics, and cultural behavior can be understood by framing analysis. This is in support of a study by Reese (2007) which stated that framing analysis is more culturally inclined as compared to content analysis because it helps in finding out how people perceive certain messages. According to Neunendorf (2002), framing analysis usually employs the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in its approach. This affords the researcher an opportunity to develop an understanding of a problem and comprehend the uncertainties and challenges of a community or a nation by finding out how people perceive certain messages. It is important to note that problem identification associated with framing differs from cultural expectations and provides a better understanding of the background of the problem.

According to Entman (1993), discourse is constructed through a collaboration of agents within society. Entman further explained that interactions between agents at four different locations which help guide discourse regarding social issues are responsible for constructing for discourse. These locations include the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Additionally, Entman (1993) explains that the ability to decide what content is newsworthy which is likely to unconsciously or consciously align with the communicator's belief systems is dependent on the communicator. The ability to pass judgments to systematically reinforce subjective facts and to distribute stereotype is associated with the text or language utilized. The framing observations most often possess the capacity to influence the audience or receiver. Entman further suggests that the culture in which the events take place influence the discourse and perceptions of people within that culture due to the norms and dominant belief systems that exist. These explain the

fact that the four locations work collaboratively to construct a framework of social issues and events.

Janssen (2010) also supports Entman's claims by stating that framing judgment is left in the hands of the authors of texts (communicators). This also involves the communicator's ability to apply frames according to their own belief systems. Janssen further stated that the second location which has to do with the text contains the actual frames. Additionally, the ability to perceive or not to perceive the applied frame is linked to the receiver. The last location which has to do with culture is described as common frames familiar with a group of people because the beliefs and norms that exist among the group.

It is important to understand that news media is responsible for constructing a collective narrative regarding social issues through publishing responses from the audience as well as their own news stories, which are all mostly influenced by the culture in which they exist. Furthermore, the dominant framing tools used in the construction of discourse by empathizing key components of the events, to identify the problem, present causes, and propose treatments or solutions are the language and the text.

Janssen (2010) further explains the role culture plays in framing analysis. According to Janssen, culture provides the basis for media researchers to inquire and understand its connection with framing analysis in order to create shared understanding between different members of the same culture. In other words, framing analysis takes place within a cultural setting.

Entman (1993) opines that;

Framing in all four locations includes similar functions: selecting and highlighting, and use of the highlighted elements to construct

an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution. (p. 55)

Frames remain an important element of communication as such it is imperative to consider the different levels that afford the different locations needed to initiate a framing analysis. This is consistent with Van Gorp (2007) who highlighted the different levels associated with framing analysis. Van Gorp pointed out the fact that framing centers on the relationship between frames applied in the media which mostly occurs at the textual level; the representation among the audience and media players which mostly associated with the cognitive level; the discourse of frame with occurs at the extra media level; and lastly typical frames which that is accessible within a cultural setting.

Janssen (2010) makes a distinction between what is to means to frame through the media and to frame by the media. This is in support by an earlier claim by Van Gorp (2007), which stated the need to differentiate framing by the media and the framing through the media. According to Janssen, it is important to take into account the fact that differentiating between this two media framing is mostly dependent on the expectations of frame sponsors. Janssen supported her case by stating that in dealing with framing by the media, factors external to journalist or media personnel are not considered though journalists and media personnel are subject to cultural influences as human beings. In other words, it is become a challenge to separate external influences because of the role culture plays in an individual's life. Conversely, framing through the media highlights the influence of frame sponsors. According to Janssen (2010), framing through the media allows that journalists are used as a means to apply the desired frame.

Additionally, Entman (2009) adds that frame sponsors who exert influence can be identified as interest groups, spin doctors, or advertisers. These frame sponsors who are concerned with promoting their interest mostly do so through directing the perception and the frame selection of journalists.

2.4 The Use of Language in Public Health Domain

According to Lupton (1994), language creates the basis for shared cultural meaning for diseases. Language is a medium through which social issues being discussed in the public domain are attributed meaning through events. Dominant norms shared by the public and the media within the cultural setting are mostly used by the news media in framing. Hollander & Abelson (2014) opine that language is used in the reinforcement of dominant norms. In other words, language is used as a medium to exhibit authority and status through speech. Lupton (1994) supports this claim by stating that the vocabulary selected within these discussions shows the exercise of authority and the type of dialogue that will take place.

According to Pan & Kosicki (1993), the media functions through the use of words, expressions and images that creates basis on which the public will conceptualize and deliberate the public issue. According to Lupton (1994), language is responsible for the construction of issues related to health in the news media and this offers an opportunity for individuals to learn about and conceptualize diseases, the symptoms that individuals will experience, the causes, and the moral judgments of these diseases. Additionally, the relationship between audiences and news media discourse forms the basis of how diseases are socially constructed in the news media.

As Lupton (1994) explains;

The process by which biology and culture interact in the social construction of disease, and the ways in which western culture uses disease to define social boundaries. (p. 5)

This explains the fact that language and framing tools utilized in the discourse will impact the meaning of the disease itself. Moreover, public domain helps with the construction and judgment of health and illness issues of individual experience. Lupton opines that;

Illness is not physically experienced, but is spoken: words are used in an attempt to convey the pain and discomfort an ill person feels; words direct the relationship between doctor or nurse and patient; words nominate which kinds of people are considered to be 'at risk' of developing an illness and how they should be treated. (1994, p.5)

In conceptualizing the impact that language possesses on developing meaning in the public arena, it is important to critique news media discourse. News media discourse can contain articles in which medical professionals reach out, diagnose the problem and identify causes and symptoms to individuals experiencing disease.

In summary, Lupton (1994) suggests that news media serve a role in controlling public discourse regarding public issues, which is central to the development of shared cultural understanding of diseases. Additionally, Goffman (1986) adds that news media has the ability to determine what is

newsworthy and how it will be portrayed to the audience. On the contrary, Lupton (1994) opines that newsworthy stories are sensational and uncommon to attract more readers. Entman (1993) further adds that newsworthy stories use frames that define the problem, the causes, the solutions, and provide moral evaluations of the events. The language used in these frames is central to the development of how individuals will learn and conceptualize postpartum depression.

Recent study by Gblende (2018) centered on a content analysis of mental health issues and cases reported in the Ghanaian media. The population for the study focused on newspaper publication in the Ghanaian media from 2015 to 2017. The outcome of the research pointed out the fact that mental health stories have not been given adequate importance in the Ghanaian media hence low coverage and reportage of mental health illness and issues with no significant change overtime. In Ghana postpartum depression is becoming one of the conditions that women mostly suffer after delivery. In spite of its prevalence not much research has been conducted into how it is represented in the media; specifically the online media which is gradually becoming predominant because of the advancement of technology. Gblende (2018) study focused generally on depression and how it is specifically represented in the print media thereby creating a gap in research in how postpartum research is represented in the online media in Ghana. It has therefore important for the online media in Ghana which serves a representational function, to capture “newsworthy” local depictions of postpartum depression, thus providing insight into problems and events relevant to the experience and management of the condition.

Although there is literature regarding postpartum depression, how it is prevalent among women and how the news media constructs it, this study specifically goes further to conceptualize how the news media define, construct and represent postpartum depression among women by

regarding framing and language. It seeks to assess how the discussion and media representation regarding postpartum depression is captured on online media platforms in Ghana. The study among other things seeks to conceptualize how news media frame issues through identifying problems, causes, making moral judgments, and asserting remedies associated with postpartum depression as it is presented online.

2.5 Summary

It is important to note that the concept of media framing is critical to understanding mass communication effects. In other words, media framing equips media and communication practitioners with ideas needed to understudy mass communication effects. Tankard et al (1991) further posits that “the concept of media framing is important because it offers an alternative to the old „objectivity and bias“ paradigm for communication practitioners.” According to Janssen (2010), despite studies conducted in the past regarding the different approaches employed in framing, what remains imperative to the body of research by way of expanding knowledge on existing literature, leading to a broader understanding of framing and its interrelations with communication and culture is framing analysis. Framing analysis is concerned with the study of the concept of framing which highlights the use of language which is fundamental to the development of how individuals will learn and conceptualize postpartum depression.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the proposed research methodology to be employed for this study. This will highlight the research design, method of analysis, population, criteria for sampling and selection, the proposed analytical techniques and ethical consideration for the research.

3.1 Research Design

According to Jicha (2019), an appropriate framework for a research study is dependent on the research design employed for the study. It is also concerned with the choice to be made regarding research approach since it determines how relevant information for a study will be obtained. Burns & Grove (2001) further describe research design as the plan employed for conducting a study. It also seeks to maximize control over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research findings. This study will employ the use of a qualitative research approach. Jackson et al (2007) define qualitative research as a social science research that involves the use of non-numeric data in the form of words, texts, and other discourse and narrative analyses used to interpret meaning to help understand a social phenomenon.

3.2 Discourse Analysis Method

The discourse analysis methodology approach will be employed for this study. This will involve the collection and the analysis of a set of selected media texts to help achieve the objectives outlined by this research. Discourse analysis is concerned with the rudimentary understanding of semiotics which focuses on the role relationship plays on all aspects of language. Fairclough (1989) defines discourse analysis as “the way in which discourse builds social identities, social

relations and systems of knowledge or belief and how these discourses maintain power through their ideological properties''. The justification for the adoption of this approach is dependent on the fact that this study seeks to ascertain online media representations of postpartum depression and the context in which such representations are ascribed meaning. Discourse Analysis approach will be adopted for this study to help examine a set of selected online news media texts to highlight media representation of postpartum depression in Ghana.

According to Potter & Wetherell (1987), discourse analysis is concerned with an extensive range of research approaches which spans across psychology, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, literary studies, media and communication studies and philosophy. It is centered on the study of 'discourse' in a variety of forms. This is consistent with Bardici (2012) who states that discourse analysis has been adopted as a research methodology in a variety of disciplines including, media and communication studies and culture studies. In other words, discourse analysis is concerned with the study of different bodies of knowledge which is aimed at analyzing the written or spoken language attached to a given type of social practice.

Van Dijk (2006) also maintains that discourse analysis involves true multidisciplinary explanation of elaborate relationships between text, talk, social opinion, power, society and cultures which is necessary for describing, interpreting, analyzing, and critiquing social life reflected in text. It is important to understand the theory underpinning the study of discourse analysis. According Torfing (2005), discourse theory takes into account insights from linguistics and hermeneutics with those from social and political science in an understanding of language as both being influenced by and influencing political action. In other words, understanding the concept of discourse theory is dependent on the context of particular definitions and understandings of discourse. Kress (1989) defines discourse as "systemically organized modes of

talking' where a particular discourse has its own linguistic organization involving specific lexical sets and syntactic structures that give rise to specific meanings.

Furthermore, Phillips and Jørgensen (2002, p.1) hold that discourse analysis involves the examination of the forms "people's expressions follow when they partake in different domains of social life". This is consistent with Fairclough and Wodak (2000) who also posit that discourse analysis is concerned with the examination of the link between the discourse itself and the surrounding social practices. Additionally, Philips & Hardy (2002) state that "...social reality is produced and made real through discourses. ... As discourse analysts, then, our task is to explore the relationship between discourse and reality" (p.3). Bradici (2012) supports this claim by stating that discourse analysis is expected disclose the way social action (e.g. media discourse) is presented through a discourse. In other words, the recipients' actions and perceptions in a given situation may be influenced by media texts, and what they construct as discursive truths.

According to Schroder (2005), there are ideological implications that express and create social power in practice. This is as a result of the ideological implication borne out of the lexical and syntactic choices. This is supported by Terre Blache and Durrheim (1999), who claim that the authors of texts often seek, either openly or discreetly to motivate the reader to act in a particular way or advance a particular ideology. According to Locke (2004), language plays an integral role in discourse analysis. Language defines reality in the sense that discourse is in an unresponsive relation to reality, with language simply referring to objects which are taken to be given in reality.

It is for this reason that this study seeks to employ the use of discourse analysis to reveal how the language is used by the authors of online news stories to achieve `different intentional effects.

Moreover, this thesis is concerned with analyzing online news publication to reveal the intention and motivation of the author by way of how discourses on postpartum depression are represented. It is important to note that since Fairclough (1989) states that discourse analysis is concerned with the way social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge are created as a result of discourse and how power is maintained through the ideological underpinning this discourses possess, this will allow for the examination of how media texts are constructed as well as the connection between discourse, subjects and ideology.

3.3 Population

According to Polit and Hungler (1999), the population of a research study is an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. It also refers to as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects which possess similar characteristics. It is important to note that all individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait. It is for this reason that this study will use all online news publication/ articles published on myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com from January 2015 to December 2020.

The two online news portals that will be used for the study were purposively sampled and will be used as the source of data for answering the research questions because they are considered credible and objective media news outlets. A recent research conducted in April 2020 by Fatumasvoice; an online research outlet into the top 50 most visited websites in Ghana captured myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com in the list. Although the research focused on user experience and good content (educating and entertaining information), it also factored the website speed as ranking factor among its list of most popular websites in Ghana. It is interesting to note that myjoyonline.com as of September 2020 had 1.1 million followers on its Facebook

portal. On the other hand graphiconline.com during the same period also had 936,000 followers on its Facebook platform. It is line with this study that these two online news portals, will serve the purpose of providing reports on mental health and health stories in general as well as providing a balanced reportage on key issues such as mental health in Ghana.

The internet is considered as a medium that offers and promotes diversity of political and socially relevant information for public inquiry and discussion. Mitchelstein (2010) further adds that the consumption of online news has experienced marginal growth in recent years which has allowed for the expansion of online news audience. The choice of online news portal for this study is because of its growing audience and exposure to information it offers. . Lupia & Philpot (2005) posit that consumers are often exposed to online news as a result of general web use, which can lead to greater reaction on issues of public interest. The period earmarked for the study will help provide current news/articles publication on postpartum depression that will provide answers to the research questions.

3.4 Sampling and Selection Criteria

The proposed sampling technique that will be used for this study is purposive sampling. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling is a sampling technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of relevant cases for the most effective use of limited resources. Creswell et al (2011) further state that purposive sampling also involves the identification and selection of groups of individuals that have adequate knowledge about a phenomenon of interest. The sampling and selection criteria that will be adopted for this study will consist of online news publications/articles on the postpartum depression in Ghana. These online articles/publications earmarked for this study must be published on two of Ghana's

leading online news portal- myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com from January, 2015 to December, 2020.

It is important to note that issues regarding mental health in Ghana have extensively been researched on despite the fact that not much work has been done on the media's representation on postpartum depression. The most recent research found and reviewed by this study (Gblende, 2018) employed a quantitative approach by way of a content analysis which centered on newspaper publication from January 2015 to December 2017. Conversely, this has informed the decision to herald a five year period on the media representation on this topic using a qualitative research approach to help arrive at answers for the research questions outlined in the study.

It is important to note that reporting on postpartum depression can be done from different viewpoints depending, for example, on the journalists' background and ideological belonging and news media organizations and where they are based, as well as in different contexts (e.g. social, cultural, political, religious, historical and a combination of these). For the purposes of this research, the focus will be centered on the sociocultural context in which the media reports on issues regarding postpartum depression. However, though there could be abundance of online media articles/ news publication on postpartum depression to select from, this study seeks to set the limits to the number of online news stories to be examined. It is important to state that while this proposed approach has implication for the results of this study especially resulting in the likelihood of excluding some aspects of importance regarding the topic under study, the empirical focus of this study will be centered on online news articles/publication that contain reliable and undistorted news on postpartum depression.

According to Bradici (2012), it is important to consider smaller samples of data than the large ones when employing discourse analysis as a qualitative method. It is in light of this that this study seeks to examine only online new articles/publication dealing with postpartum depression in Ghana. The justification for focusing on online news articles/publication is that it is the potential of online /electronic media to reach more because of technological advancement and the proliferation of smart phones in Ghana. Explicitly, this study draws on development communication concepts, namely communication, advanced communication research, participation, health communication, and communication for social change.

3.5 Proposed Analytical Techniques

According to Mogasha (2014), the interpretive and deconstructive nature of discourse analysis reading allows no specific standard to follow. This is consistent with Bardici (2012), which opines that there are different approaches applicable to discourse analysis. Additionally, McGregor (2010) asserts that because discourse analysis is viewed as a concept of shared perspective encompassing a range of approaches, it does not have a defined/unitary methodology hence the aims and conceptual tools of different research endeavors vary with accompanying outcomes for the research. In other words, discourse analysis is a collection of varying approaches. Phillips and Jørgensen (2002) reiterates the aforementioned point by stating that there is no clear consensus as to how to analyze discourses (texts) and 'different perspectives offer their own suggestions'. It is important to note that though McGregor (2010) opines that there are different approaches applicable to discourse analysis, he further argues that critical discourse analysis seeks to determine the connection between three levels of analysis, namely: The actual text; the discursive practices; and the larger social context that bears upon the text and

the discursive practices. According to Van Dijk (2006, p.259), the theory and practice of critical discourse analysis focus on the structures of text and talk.

In view of this, this study seeks to employ an approach that integrates different analytical tools in an attempt to bring new perspectives to help with the analysis. This approach among other things seeks to draw inference from different authors (Bardici, 2012; Carvahlo, 2000; Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1985; 1988; and 2000) that have conducted and contributed to the field of research through the use of discourse analysis. Consequently, the discourse analysis approach that will be employed for this research will include but not limited to a similar approach by Bardici (2012) in her study *A Discourse Analysis of the Media Representation of Social Media for Social Change - The Case of Egyptian Revolution and Political Change*, where she outlined some steps that were used in the analysis of discourse. Similarly, this study will analyze discourse using the following six steps which encompasses: (1) Discourse Structure and Description, (2) Object of Analysis, (3) Social Agent, (4) Language and Rhetoric, (5) Framing as Discursive Strategy, (6) Ideological Standpoints

3.5.1 Discourse Structure and Description

According to Bardici (2012), it is important to consider some surface elements of the text to be analyzed. Since this study seeks to focus on representation of postpartum depression on online media platform in Ghana, it will be important to take into consideration some important features of the text to be analyzed in terms of structure and description.

The structure of the text under consideration plays a significant role in its evaluation. This emphasis is supported by Carvalho (2000) who states that the complete interpretation of a text is dependent on how the text is organized. This study will evaluate the headline of each news

article/publication. This is because headlines are the single most important factor in generating content and serves as an impression that translates into a potential reader. In other words, headlines draw attention of readers to a particular story. Furthermore, attention will be paid to the lead paragraph of the news article/publication. This is because the opening paragraphs affords the audiences the most important information regarding the news story in a concise and clear manner while still maintaining readers interest. It is for this reason that the structure of the text will remain an important aspect of this study by way of analysis.

The descriptive nature of the text takes into account some important features of the text under consideration. Some of this includes the date of publication, the author and the size of the article. The value of the event under consideration is enhanced through the size of the article/publication. According to Carvalho (2000), information regarding the author of the text can help put the text in a certain context though the author of the text should not be pre-judged. Some of this information includes information on the author's standings and ideological commitments.

3.5.2 Object of Analysis

Bardici (2012) describes the object of analysis as how realities are constructed by journalists in relation to the topic under consideration. More specifically; this stage is concerned with the identification with the discursive objects. In relation to this study, the object of analysis will be concerned with how journalists construct realities in relation to the online media representation of postpartum depression. The object of analysis which is also known as discursive objects are not always clear. Carvahlo (2000) puts it in a clearer perspective. According to him, an important step is deconstructing and understanding the role of discursive objects. Additionally, the need to

focus on relevant discursive themes and to connect them to the focus and aim of the research remains imperative.

3.5.3 Social Agents

Identification of key social agents remains an important aspect of the analytical technique. According to Bardici (2012), this stage also involves not only the identification of the key actors but how they are represented in the text. This is consistent with Fairclough (1995), who states that social actors serve as voices for the author. These social actors are identified and represented by the text which affirms the important role the text plays. Most of these actors either dominate with their viewpoint or shape the meaning of the text under the consideration. This is attributed to the fact that social influence forms an important part of social issue which is as a result of framing power.

3.5.4 Language and Rhetoric

According to Mogashsa (2014), language plays a critical role in discourse analysis. In other words, the study of language can be used to measure the success of discourse analysis. Additionally, language can be used to represent speakers' beliefs, positions and ideas in terms of spoken texts like conversations. It is for this reason that language is one analytic technique used in discourse analysis. This section of analysis focuses on specific aspects of language with emphasis at the writing style (i.e. informal, conversational) and the associated terminology used to represent certain reality. It is important to note that written or oral messages convey meanings if we analyze the underlying meaning of the words. This study will highlight the vocabulary in terms of verbs and adjectives used for constructing postpartum depression in the online news media. According to Bardici (2012), the use of language effectively is known as rhetoric. The

rhetoric aspect of the analysis will be concerned with influential moves and how rhetorical figures such as metaphors, hyperbolic enhancements, in addition to quoting credible sources are employed in the text.

3.5.5 Framing as Discursive Strategy

Framing as a discursive strategy is an important technique which plays a role in the understanding of social interconnections and dynamics, and cultural behavior. Carvalho (2000) defines a discursive strategy the ability of journalist to achieve an intentional effect by engaging in the manipulation of reality. Specifically, it is concerned with an agent's method of ensuring an expected result. This study will pay attention to framing as power and process. Framing as a characteristic of discourse is concerned with how Entman (1993) puts it, the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation for the item prescribed.

Carvalho (2000) further posits that framing takes into account organizing discourse according to a certain perspective, which is usually articulated in the author's attempt to choose a particular angle of the complex reality. According to Janssen (2010), one way to initiate framing is how information is put into text. Frames are applied to texts to purposely guide the reader's interpretation of that text. This approach serves as a powerful way to influence an audience. Framing with regards to the production of texts according to Carvalho (2000) involves the arrangement of facts, opinions, and value judgments in order to produce a certain meaning - and selection - an exercise of inclusion and exclusion of these elements.

This section will also pay attention to framing devices such as metaphors, catchphrases and depictions, and the reasoning devices which involve consequences and appeal to moral principle. Identically, Entman (1993) posits that framing is concerned with the selection of some aspects of perceived reality in order to make them more salient in a communicating text thereby resulting in the promotion of a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the item described. More specifically, the framing analysis of this section will take into account how each text defines problems (what is the issue?); diagnosed the causes (who/what is responsible?); and suggests remedies (what is the solution?).

3.5.6 Ideological Standpoints

It is important to note that ideology is an integral part of texts. Fairclough (1995) maintains the fact that discourses maintain power through ideological properties. This is evident in his definition which states that "... ideologies are propositions that generally figure as implicit assumptions in texts, which contribute to producing or reproducing unequal relations of power, relations of domination". (Fairclough, 1995, p.14). Bardici (2012) further posits that an ideological standpoint remains an important aspect of discourse analysis. Ideologies contribute in shaping the selection and representation of objects, actors, the language, and the discursive method employed in a text. It significantly influences the patterns underlying the way in which the text is formulated and its meaning is constructed in most of its dimensions. This section of analysis will pay attention to how an ideological standpoint hugely impacts the patterns highlighting the manner in which a text is formulated in addition to how its meaning is formed.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical Consideration remains an important aspect of research. It is important for a researcher to respect the dignity of research participants by ensuring the requisite consent is sought from participants prior to the commencement of a study. It is for this reason that ethical clearance will be sought from the editorial team of myjoyonline.com and graphiconline.com prior to the study. It is important for issues regarding ethical consideration to be managed well. Therefore, this study will pay adequate attention to ethical considerations such as editorial and privacy policy of the selected media houses. Also, the various reports identified and analyzed in this study will be treated with upmost professionalism to ensure ethical considerations are not violated.

3.7 Summary

In conclusion, one of the challenges associated with discourse analysis is the influence the researcher has on the outcome of the study. Bardici (2012), states that the interpretation and deduction of how meaning is constructed in a particular context, raises the questions about the researcher's role, preconceptions, and subjectivism. According to Zeeman (2000), because the researcher is part of the social and cultural environment within the study is conducted, it becomes difficult for the researcher (discourse analyst) to be neutral. However, in spite of the challenges associated with discourse analysis, Philips & Jorgensen (2002) hold that it is very important to use theoretical perspectives to generate well-founded arguments in order to subject research findings to objective review.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Conclusion

The aim of the study is to identify the representation of postpartum depression in Ghana's online media. This will be achieved by the use of a research design that will employ the use of discourse analysis to address the questions that will arise throughout the study.

The research design employed for this study will among other things help:

- Identify the way postpartum depression is represented in Ghana's online news media platform and also help identify the extent and nature of such representations.
- Identify the discourses used in reporting stories of postpartum depression on online news media platforms in Ghana.
- Identify the frames used by online news media platforms in reporting on postpartum depression in Ghana.
- Explore the implications of media discourses on the audience and public.

The implications that will be drawn from this study will be useful to mental health practitioners, media practitioners and researchers in general. The findings of the study will inform how issues regarding postpartum depression are portrayed in the online news media. It will also identify the influence online media representation has on media audiences and the public. It is important to note that although this study may not be aiming to develop any new knowledge regarding the subject under study; it can be considered to offer more insight into the use of discourse analysis into exploring the online news media representation of postpartum depression since such studies

have not been conducted in Ghana for some time. The most recent study by Gblende (2018) centered on a content analysis of mental health issues and cases reported in the Ghanaian media with focus on the print media. The outcome of the research pointed out the fact that mental health stories have not been given adequate importance in Ghanaian media hence low coverage and reportage of mental health illness and issues with no significant change overtime. To this end, information that will be made available as a result of this study will present additional knowledge about the influence an online news story may have on a reader regarding the subject of postpartum depression since no comparable study at present exists in the literature to the one undertaken. Additionally, this study will come in slight variation to the one conducted by Gblende (2018), since it seeks to employ the use of a qualitative approach by means of the application of discourse analysis.

It is important to note that despite studies conducted in the area of mental health, Read & Doku (2013) maintain that mental health remains a neglected area in health care in Ghana with limited research in terms of quantity and quality. This study when completed will reiterate the continuous need for capacity building and orientation for journalist in reporting mental health issues in order to streamline reportage to promote positive and educative content on postpartum depression.

4.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations should be considered following the outcome of this study:

1. Mental Health Professionals such as psychiatrist, psychologist, and mental health nurses should be considered by the editorial team of media houses in writing stories and creating content on postpartum depression.

2. Major stakeholders in the health sector such as Mental Health Authority and Health NGOs should continue capacity building and orientation workshops for journalists and media practitioners in reporting mental health issues and stories.

3. The Mental Health Authority should guide the media in achieving its role in contributing to raising awareness on postpartum depression by creating informative and educative content.

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