

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**MEDIA COVERAGE ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: A STUDY OF DAILY GRAPHIC
AND GHANAIAIAN TIMES**

BY

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AND GHANAIAN TIMES**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF
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FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS OF ARTS DEGREE IN JOURNALISM**

2020.

DECLARATION

STUDENTS' DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the results of my original research, and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this institute or elsewhere. I am responsible for any shortcoming.

Daniel Kwofie

Date

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this project was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of project laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Dr. Ebo Afful (Supervisor)

Date

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ABSTRACT

Child sexual abuse is a global phenomenon with devastating health effects on victims and survivors. It possess health dangers and risks to children worldwide including those in Ghana but the media is known to be an efficient tool to fight it through news coverage. Content analysis was used to gather relevant information from Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times (2017-2018) which are two most widely read newspapers in Ghana. The study revealed that media coverage on child sexual abuse was inadequate, there were high incidences of intra-familial child sexual abuses and the media also failed to call for policy interventions against child sexual abuse.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my maternal relatives of Apemenyim and Kwesimintsim especially Ante Ama (late) who first held my hand to school after death of my parents, Nana Ackah Chie III (late) who was responsible for my upkeep from primary to secondary schools, Hon. Ernest Acquah (former Assemblyman of Kwesimintsim), Eld. Emmanuel Kwofie (Quiet Hour SDA church), my siblings John Cudjoe and Elizabeth (Kaya) and to my wife Abigail Blay and my son Kwesi Amuzu Kwofie.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

TABLE OF CONTENT	PAGE
DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER ONE –INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1. Background to the study	1 - 4
1.1.1 Child Sexual Abuse in Ghana	4 - 5
1.1.2. Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse	6 - 7
1.1.3. Nature of Child Sexual Abuse	7 - 8

1.1.4 Victims of Child Sexual Abuse	8 - 9
1.1.5 Effect of Child Sexual Abuse	9 - 10
1.1.6. Media Coverage on Child Sexual Abuse	10 - 11
1.2. Problem Statement	12 - 13
1.3. Scope of the study	13 - 14
1.4. Significance of the study	14
1.5. Organisation of the study	14 - 15
1.6. Conclusion	15
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.0. Introduction	16
2.1. Conceptual discussions on Child Sexual Abuse	16 - 19
2.1.1. Child Sexual Abuse and Age of Consent	19 - 22
2.2.1. Child Sexual Abuse as Public Health Concern	23 - 24
2.2.2. Child Sexual Abuse and Criminal Justice	25 - 26
2.2.3. Child Sexual Abuse and Media Coverage	27 - 28
2.3 Theoretical framework	28 - 30
2.4. Review of related studies	30 - 33
2.5. Objectives	33

2.6 Definition of terms	33- 34
2.7. Conclusion	34

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

2.0 Introduction	35
3.1. Research Design	35 - 36
3.2. Data Source	36 - 37
3.3. Technique of Data Collection	37
3.4. Instrument	37
3.5. Technique of Data Analysis	38
3.6. Quantitative	38 - 39
3.7. Conclusion	39

CHAPTER FOUR – DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction	40
4.1 To examine nature of coverage on Child Sexual Abuse	40 - 43
4.2. To explore how stories of Child Sexual Abuse established relationship between victims and perpetrators	43 - 45
4.3. To examine the extent to which media coverage called for policy interventions against Child Sexual Abuse	45 - 47

4.4. Discussion of findings	47 - 57
4.4. Conclusion	57

CHAPTER FIVE – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction	58
5.1. Summary of findings	58 - 60
5.2. Recommendations	60 - 61
5.3. Conclusion	61
References	62 - 70

CHAPTER ONE – Introduction and background to the study

1.0 Introduction

Child sexual abuse is a worldwide phenomenon known to have immediate and long term adverse health effects on victims and survivors. It can be linked to neurological, physiological, psychosocial functioning and other multiple health consequences for victims and survivors. The situation in Ghana is not different from the rest of the world as Ghana is noted to be one of the countries in the world with high rates of child sexual abuses. Despite the woes of Child Sexual Abuse and its negative health effects on victims and survivors, the media is known to be a potential tool to cause policy formulation and implementation through its coverage. It is for this reason this study is designed to analyse media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana from January 2017 to December 2018 using *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* as case a study.

1.1 Background to the study

Children are some of the vulnerable groups of people in the world and by their nature, they are prone to all forms of abuses, including being abused sexually. Child sexual abuse has been described as a global public health issue which needs to be addressed from all fronts and one suitable platform to address it is the media due to its mass dissemination of information. Tetteh, P.M. & Markwei, U. (2018) described the use of media in obtaining data and covering stories of rape and other sexual offences involving women and children as critical. It is instructional to say that the media has the capacity and capability to fight child sexual abuse to bring it to barest minimum if not eradicating it completely through news coverage. It for this reason that this study which intends to examine media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana using *Daily Graphic*

and Ghanaian Times as a case study was designed. *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* are two widely read and distributed newspapers in Ghana so using them as case a study stands the chance of giving a true picture of how far the media cover stories of child sexual abuse as far as coverage is concerned.

Child Sexual Abuse has been variedly defined but for the purpose of this study, World Health Organisation (WHO 2004) definition is suitable because it appears to have broaden the scope of child sexual abuse compared to other known definitions. WHO (2004) define child sexual abuse as *“the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society”*. This definition emphasise the point that a child lacks the capacity to give consent to any sexual related activity and for that matter any sexual related activities involved a child is deemed as an abuse.

In 2015, African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) reported that more than half of the children in the world aged between 2 to 17 years experienced some of sexual abuses and this tells the seriousness and the magnitude of it. Murray, L.K. et al (2014) while studying sexual abuses among children in North America described it as a stark reality worldwide which is perpetrated against children of all kinds and types irrespective of their backgrounds. Robertson, H. A et al (2016) studied family violence and child sexual abuse among Asians in the United States (US) and described it as a significant public health problem which has psychological consequences for victims and survivors. Robertson, H. A. et al believe that greater part of the sexual buses involving children happen on the blind side of authorities and organisations which are supposed to check it so perpetrators often go unpunished.

According to Latzman, N.E et al (2017), it is a global public health and social justice concerns affecting millions of children worldwide. Latzman and colleagues further stated that its victimisation cuts across cultural and economic boundaries and it can be linked to impair neurological, physiological, psychosocial functioning and multiple health related problems. In 2015 for example, UNICEF made a systematic review of global Child Sexual Abuse situation on regional basis. It was revealed that 14 -28% girls in Europe experience various acts of sexual abuses. In the United States of America and Canada, it is 20 -27% for girls and 7-8% for boys whereas in South America, it is 8% – 13 % for girls and 2 – 14 % for boys. In Africa, it is 20 – 43 % for girls and 10 – 30 % for boys with Asia recording 7 – 68% of girl child sexual abuses and 4 – 35% for boys. It was thus concluded that Africa has some of the high rates of Child Sexual Abuse in the world.

In conducting a study on child sexual abuse among the Vietnamese school-age children, Do, H.N. et al (2019) concluded that global rate for girls is 18% and 7.6% for boys. Relying on data from World Health Organisation (WHO), they argued that 1 in 13 men and 1 in 5 women have suffered various forms sexual violence and abuses during their childhood years. They maintained that, it is one of the crimes against children which is often covered leaving the perpetrators to go unpunished.

In Africa, Badoe, B. (2017), argued that the African context differs in terms of country under study, the type of sexual abuse being studied, the quality of data collected and the definition used. Badoe, B. (2017) contends that data on child sexual abuse in Africa is very difficult to come by as majority of child sexual abuse cases are not reported to respective agencies and claimed that the overall highest rates of child sexual abuses as far as Africa is concern come from Morocco, Tanzania and South Africa.

In 2019, the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) again made an assessment of rates child sexual abuses in Africa and revealed that national prevalence rates of child sexual abuses especially girls is a major problem throughout Africa. In Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Swaziland for example, lifetime prevalence rates of sexual abuses against children is between 22% and 37.6% for girls and between 8.8% and 17% for boys. In Malawi, it was reported that some 22% of females are on record to have admitted that they experienced some kind of sexual abuses during their girlhood years whereas in the case of Ghana, it is reported that some 17.9% were defiled and some 8% were raped. In South Africa, 1 out of 5 South African, whether male or female risk being sexually abused before turning age 17.

1.1.1 Child Sexual Abuse in Ghana

Markwei, U. & Osei-Hwedie, K. (2019) is one of the recent studies on child sexual abuse in Ghana. In their work *Betrayed and Broken*, they argued that Ghana's child sexual abuse situation is not different from other countries worldwide though there may be variations in rates depending on the nature of the studies being conducted. They conducted a phenomenological in some Ga communities in Accra and revealed the abuses vary in nature. Their study proved that there were socio-cultural factors which makes child sexual abuse appeared normal despite its effect and consequences on the victims.

Ibrahim, U. (2014) also conducted an exploratory study to investigate perception of people towards child sexual abuse victims in Ghana. The study revealed how cultural factors influence conceptualisation of child sexual abuse in Ghana and how children are willing to conceal their experiences of being abused sexually because of fear of being blamed. The findings of the study revealed that children are rather blamed and perpetrators are often unpunished.

According to Owusu- Addo, E. et al (2018), records on child sexual abuse and other violent crimes against women and children are not up-to-date and this makes study of this nature very difficult in Ghana. However, in 2014, Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service reported that some 1296 were defiled while some 335 women were also raped. In 2018, UNICEF Ghana and Ghana Health Service also conducted research project on child abuse titled Capacity and Gaps of Ghana Health Sector's Response to Child Abuse. According to the study, there was increase in child sexual related offences as reported by DOVVSU in 2002 from 1128 to more than 1600 in 2009. In 2015, DOVVSU reported 1198 cases of defilement, 167 case of indecent assault, 19 cases of incest and 15 cases of attempted defilement.

In Ghana sexual activities involving children below the age of 16 is crime, Bohm, B. (2016). It is more serious if a perpetrator should have sexual intercourse with a child below the age of 16. The perpetrator risks being jailed between 7 and 25 years per section 101 of Act 29 of 1960. Children below the age of 16, are deemed to incapable of giving consent to sexual related activities. It is therefore a criminal offence in Ghana to be involved in any sexual related activities with a child below the age of 16 in Ghana.

Relying heavily on the studies of Pappoe & Ardayfio- Schandorf (1998) and Coker-Appiah & Cusack (1999), Ghanaweb (2014) reported that child sexual abuse in Ghana is between 7% and 13%. The abuse is usually in the form of rape, molestation, touching of private parts, watching of pornography, use of inappropriate language and dirty jokes. According to Quarshie, E. N. B. et al (2018), scandals, shame and stigmatisation are some of the reasons why many family members are not willing to report matters of child sexual abuse to appropriate authorities responsible for investigating child sexual crimes. Quarshie, E. N. B. et al (2018) maintained that child sexual abuse involving family members and close relations is underreported in Ghana making it very difficult

very difficult to obtain reliable data especially if the perpetrators are family and close relatives of the victim.

1.1.2. Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse.

According to National Children's Advocacy Centre (NCAC) 2018, perpetrators of child sexual abuse can be anybody which may include family members, family friends, coaches, teachers, clergy, babysitters and any other acquaintances. Strangers abusing children rather happen on rare occasions. These perpetrators can be of any age, race, gender, religious beliefs and people from diverse backgrounds NCAC (2018) further threw light on relationship between victims and perpetrators of child sexual abuse and established that from age 0 - 5, 1.3% of children are abused sexually by strangers, 48.3% by acquaintances and 48.6% by family members. From age 6 – 11, 4.7% of them are abused sexually by strangers, 42.4% by family members and some 52.9% by acquaintances and from age 12 – 17, 9.8% are abused sexually by strangers, 24.3% by family members and 66% by acquaintances.

Darkness to Light (DL) is a research group who provide statistics on Child Sexual Abuse and violent crimes against children. In 2015, they published revealing statistics about child sexual abuse and stated that the closer the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, the higher the risk of being abused sexually and the farther their relationship of the victim to the perpetrator, the lesser the risk of being abused sexually. Perpetrators are often less suspected people who abuse children sexually and about 90% of children who are abused sexually know the perpetrators.

Bringing facts on child sexual abuse to bare, DL (2015) reported that approximately 30% family members abuse children sexually and only 10% are perpetrated by strangers. The younger the

child, the likelihood that he or she can be abused sexually by family members and close relations. For children under the age of 6, 50% of them are abused sexually by family members and for those ranging between age 12 and 17, 23% of them are abused sexually by family members. As to where the abuses happen, both DL (2015) and NCAC (2018) agree that the immediate environment of the child are most possible places of sexual abuses and violent crimes against children. According to WHO (2012), the most common perpetrators of child sexual abuse are likely boys or men from the neighbourhood of victim and survivors

1.1.3. Nature of Child Sexual Abuse

In a position statement issued by Prevent Child Sexual Abuse America (PCSAA), the agency cautioned about the subtle nature of child sexual abuse which often makes it very difficult to detect in its early stages. According to PCSAA (2020), the physical signs of child sexual abuse is difficult to detect as perpetrators often try to avoid physically harming their victims. PCSAA (2020) states that in extreme cases, the child may be present with vaginal or rectal bleedings, genital pains, itching, swelling or discharge.

There has always been arguments about the exacts of perpetrators which is deemed as abusive but the WHO (2004) definition of child sexual abuse appears comprehensive and elaborate as far as the subject of child sexual abuse is concerned. It describe the nature of child sexual from physical contact with the victims by perpetrators to noncontact forms of sexual abuses. According to Murray, L.K. et al (2014), child sexual abuse includes many sexually abusive acts towards children which include sexual assault, rape, incest and commercial sexual exploitation of children. These acts include vaginal penetration by sexual organs of perpetrators or the use of fingers and other objects which drives gratification for perpetrators.

Essabar, L. et al (2015) did a review on 311 reports on child sexual abuse and stated that at the extreme end, the abuse include intercourse and its derivations but all other offences which include touching and non-touching of the victim is equally harmful and devastating to the well-being of the child. According to Essabar, L. et al (2015), fondling. Making the child to touch sexual organs of an adults, penetrating the vaginal or anus of the child are some of the extreme abusive acts whereas indecent exhibitionism, exposing children to pornographic materials, deliberating exposing a child to acts of intercourse among others remain some of the non-touching form of abusive acts which are equally dangerous.

1.1.4 Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

The global prevalence rate for girls is 18% and that of boys is 7.6%, Do, H.N. et al (2016). Relying heavily on the data for WHO for their analysis, Do, H. N and colleagues argued that 1 in 13 men and 1 in 5 five is on record to have suffered some form sexual violence and abuses while being a child. The National Sexual Violence Centre (NVSRC) published an article titled What Is Child Sexual Abuse in 2015. The article was meant to provide statistics and some key information on child sexual abuse with respect who are the victims of child sexual abuse, perpetrators and the circumstance under which child sexual abuse happens. According to NVSRC (2015), child sexual abuse remains a crime and abuse of trust, power and authority against children and remains one of the worst crimes perpetrated against children. According to NVSRC (2015), girls are abused three times more than boys but boys are likely to serious injured or suffer death as result of child sexual abuse compared to boys.

Murray, L.K. et al (2014) opined that children all over the world are at risks of being abused sexually irrespective of their socioeconomic backgrounds. Murray and colleagues argued that though all children are at risk to be abused sexually, there are certain factors which make some of

them at high risks compared to others. Factors like parental substance abuse, low parental education, single parenting and high levels of poverty are some of the identified factors which greatly exposed children to the dangers of child sexual abuse.

Giving expository facts and figures on child sexual abuse, DL (2017) expressed that no child is immune to child sexual abuse. DL (2017) further expressed that in as much as no child is immune to child sexual abuse, certain factors make some children prone and highly risk to child sexual abuse than others. Age, family structure, gender, ethnicity and race are some key factors which were mentioned by DL (2017) as factors which stand the chance of heightening or lowering risk of children to child sexual abuse depending on the environment and circumstances in which the child herself or himself.

According to DL (2017) family is a key factor which lowers or heightens child sexual abuse risks. Children living with both their biological parents are at lower risks of being abused sexually compared to children living with single parents, step-parents or foster parents and with respect to gender, DL(2017) maintained that girls are five times abused sexually compared to boys. Others factors like age, ethnicity and race have their various role play when it comes to child sexual abuse

1.1.5 Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

Prevent Child Sexual Abuse America (PCSAA) is known for its effort to curb child sexual abuse in America and other parts of the world. In an article published on the website of PCSAA titled Preventing Child Sexual Abuse, PCSAA described child sexual abuse an act which is very exploitative and degrading. Making an assessment of on the effects of child sexual abuse, PCSAA mentioned that there are immediate and long term effect of child sexual abuse. With the immediate,

effect, PCSAA mentioned vaginal injury and discharges, rectal and vagina bleeding, itching, stomach and headaches among several others. With regard to long term effects, PCSAA were very specific and mentioned chronic self-perception of helplessness, hopelessness, depression, impaired trust, self-blame, self-destructive behaviours and low self-esteem.

The American Centre for Disease Control (CDC) on March 20th, 2020 published an article on its website with the title Preventing Child Sexual Abuse. The article described child sexual abuse as an adverse childhood experience that can affect how a person thinks, acts and feels over a lifetime. According to CDC (2020) child sexual abuse can have effects on physical, mental health and behavioural consequences. CDC mentioned unwanted pregnancy, physical injuries and chronic conditions such as heart disease, obesity, cancer among several others as some of the physical effects that victims and survivors of child sexual may endure.

In their published work *Understanding The Scope of Child Sexual Abuse: Challenges and Opportunities*, Latzman, N.E et al (2017) sought to explore the full scope of child sexual abuse and dangers it possess to victims and survivors. They describe child sexual abuse as significant public health and social justice problem affecting millions of children which has no limits to economic and cultural boundaries.

1.1.6 Media Coverage on Child Sexual Abuse

The media has a role to play to unearth the evils of child sexual abuse. Singh, G. & Pandey, N. (2017) described the media as a reflection of society. In their work *Role and Impact of Media on Society*, they contended that the media depict how society works. It serves as platform which helps to inform the masses apart from entertaining and educating them. Also relying on the works of Kitzinger and Skidmore (1995), Nair, P. (2018) argued that media representation of child abuses

and its related crimes are important as it creates a public attitude to formulate and child protection policies thereby urging the right methods to address issues of child violations like child sexual abuse within social and legal frameworks. Poppvic, S. (2018) argues that public knowledge and attitudes toward child sexual abuse are shaped through media depiction and coverage as the media remains the only source of information about child sexual abuse. Relying heavily on the works of Etnam (1993), Popovic, S. (2018) further argued that the media has the potentials to influence policy-makers on issues of child sexual abuse and while using framing theory as the basis of argument, Popovic maintained that through framing, the media plays a key role in defining social problems by selecting and highlighting some facets of the issues and creating the link between them to promote a particular interpretations.

Qayyum, H. (2018) expressed that the media plays very critical role in disseminating information, increasing awareness and changing perception of society through news coverage. According to Qayyum, the media communicate with large number of people and has the potential to create mass awareness among the public in the bid to curb the prevalence of child sexual abuse. Qayyum in his article *Media Coverage on Child sexual Abuse in Developing Countries* described the media as the most powerful social change agent and effective medium that can revolutionise the deter society into civilised, responsible and composed society.

Doring, N. & Walter, R. (2019) however cautions the media against sensationalist and stereotyping coverage of child sexual abuse stands the chance of harming victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. According to them, sensationalist and stereotyping media coverage of child sexual abuse can be detrimental to rational and solution-oriented public debates. They called for Public Interest Media (PIM) of normative media theory that promotes generic quality dimensions for discussing child sexual abuse. They further opined that currently there is no framework of issue-specific

media quality for reporting on child sexual abuse and that is what the media should aspire for as far child sexual abuse is concerned.

1.2 Problem Statement

Murray, L. K. et al (2014) described Child Sexual Abuse as common phenomenon perpetrated against children of all kinds and types irrespective of their backgrounds. Being a common phenomenon that is perpetrated against children of all kinds and types, Robertson, H .A et al (2016) also described it as a significant public health problem which is very difficult to assess and according Latzman, N.E et al (2017), it remains public health and social justice concerns which can lead to impaired neurological, physiological and psychosocial functioning in short and long terms. Just as Robertson (2016) argued that the magnitude of child sexual abuse problem is difficult to assess due to its complexities, various studies have indicated varying prevalence rates depending on the type of the study and the place of study. Do, H.N et al (2016) for example when studying perceptions and attitudes about child sexual abuse among Vietnamese school-age children argued that the global prevalence rate is 18% for girls and 7.6 % for boys. In another study conducted by UNICEF in 2015 mentioned Africa to have some of the highest rates of child sexual abuses in the world. The study further noted that prevalence rate of child sexual abuse in Africa for girls hovers around 20% to 43% for girls and that of boys is 4% to 35%. Ghana being on the continent of Africa has its own shares of woes of child sexual abuses. A study conducted by UNICEF Ghana and Ghana Health Service (GHS) also cited Ghana as one of the countries in the world with high rates of child sexual abuses. The study mentioned that official cases of sexual crimes reported to DOVVSU increased from 1128 in 2002 to more than 1600 in 2009 and maintained that some 53% of the sexual abuses occur at home and 43% at school. The child sexual abuse situation in Ghana

is argued to be more than what official sources have recorded as Owusu-Addo, E. et al (2018) maintained that records on child sexual abuse in Ghana is not up-to-date but despite the woes of child sexual abuse and its implications, the media is on record to have the proven effect to influence policies of child protection against child sexual abuse. Though not so much have been done on media coverage on child sexual abuse, studies like Mejia, P. et al (2012) and Weatherred (2013) are similar studies of nature which were conducted in America and here in Ghana, Owusu-Addo, E. et al (2018) conducted media coverage on violence against women and children leaving a huge knowledge gap in the media coverage on child sexual abuse. It is light of that this study seeks to explore media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana using *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* as case studies.

1.3 Scope of the study

This is a study which focuses on media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana using *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* as case studies. The study intends to explore newspaper publications of *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* with respect to how they covered child sexual abuse stories from January 2017 to December 2018. Both newspapers are state owned with wider coverage as far as newspaper coverage is concerned in Ghana. With respect to this study, a child is defined as a person who is between age zero (0) and sixteen (16) so the study intends to explore news coverage of children between these age range who were involved in child sexual abuses and same covered by these two newspapers. News stories related to child sexual abuse will be analysed contextually based on the objectives of the study in order to appreciate the nature of media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana with respect to these two newspapers. In Ghana sexual abuses involving children is classified as defilement and indecent assault and they are all

punishable under the criminal code of Ghana (Act 29/60). Defilement is contrary to section 101 of Act 29 of 1960 and that is when one has sexual intercourse with a child below the age of 16. The abuses in this respect includes child sexual exploitations and pornographic performance as captured in the WHO (2004) definition of child sexual abuse. Indecent assault on the other hand is when perpetrator abuses the child sexually by touching without sexual intercourse and that is contrary to section 103 of Act 29 of 1960. The study intends to explore these extremes of sexual abuses involving children and how the media, specifically *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* covered the stories using research method of content analysis to contextually analyse the various stories as they were covered by *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic*.

1.4 Significance of the study

The media has a role to play to curb the menace of child sexual. Studies conducted by Mejia, P. et al (2012) and Weatherred, J L. (2013) proved that the media has what it takes to cause effects in policy formulation and implementation against child sexual abuse through coverage. Owusu – Addo, E et al (2018) conducted a study on media coverage violence against women and children in Ghana described the media as a powerful tool which has the capability to cause changes in policy formulation and implementation against violence against women children. In light of these studies and many more that were not mentioned here, this study is suitably crafted to explore media coverage on child sexual abuse using *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* as case studies. This study intends to do in-depth analysis of media coverage on child usual to provide insight into the child sexual abuse problem and how the media stand the chance of making positive impact in their bid to cover news stories of sexual abuses involving children. At the end of the study, hopefully recommendations from this study may serves as road map for covering child sexual abuse stories in Ghana and beyond.

1.5 Organsation of the study

The chapter one of this study gives an introduction, followed by background to the study and its related subtopics. The chapter one also discusses the problem statement, the scope of the study and relevance of the study. Chapter two basically deals with literature review of key themes and concepts of child sexual abuse. The same chapter two also discusses the theoretical frameworks and related studies. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study whereas chapter four discusses the findings and the discussions in relations to the objectives of the study and lastly, chapter five deals with summary of the study and recommendations.

1.6 Conclusions

This chapter looked at the background of the study which delved into the dangers that child sexual abuse possess to children and its related health complications. In this chapter light was threw on the role the media is capable to play through its coverage to curb the menace of child sexual abuse. This chapter also contains the problem statement, the scope of the study and its significance as well as organisation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter there is literature review on conceptual discussion of child sexual abuse followed by a review on major themes of child sexual abuse like public health, criminal justice and media coverage on child sexual abuse. There is also the theoretical frameworks which justifies why framing theory is applicable and suitable to this studies and related studies which serve as evidence of similar studies done by other researchers elsewhere. The objectives of this study is also clearly spelt out here and finally there is conclusion of this chapter.

2.1 Conceptual Discussions on Child Sexual Abuse

From public health perspectives, David, A.N et al (2016) described it as endemic situation which is putting lives of young people, especially teenagers at risk considering how it is exposing them to sexually transmitted diseases accompanied by psychosocial and mental health challenges. According to Hayes, S et al (2014) child sexual abuse is predominant in modern societies with greater part of it going unnoticed and undetected.

Singh, M. et al (2014) agree with Hayes, S. et al (2014) that child sexual abuse is a global issue with varying estimates depending on the country being studied, the definitions used, the extent of coverage and the quality of data analysed. In their publication titled Child Sexual Abuse, Murray, L. K et al (2014) also noted that child sexual abuse towards children, especially adolescent is a stark reality confronting the world but often misrepresented to be uncommon happenings perpetrated against girls by male strangers. To Murray, L. K. et al (2014), the reality of child sexual

abuse is the fact that it is common occurrence which inflicts harm on millions of children globally and not restricted to only girls as it is commonly believed but boys alike.

While analyzing child sexual abuse and sexual aggression in children, Osadan, R. & Reid, E (2015) agreed with Murray, L. K et al (2014) that child sexual abuse is a common global phenomenon. They argued that there has always been false impression that child sexual abuse is uncommon because many victims and survivors of child sexual abuse fail to disclose their ordeals but in reality, it is a common sexual crime against children which cuts across all socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic, cultural and religious lines.

Osadan, R & Reid, E (2015) asserted that 90% of child sexual abuse victims and survivors know the perpetrators and even some 68% of all child sexual abuse offences are committed by family members and close associates of the child proving the fact it is a common social phenomenon which is very predominant in human settings as earlier on argued by Murray, L. K et al (2014). Osadan, R. & Reid, E. (2015) and Murray, L. K et al (2014) noted that child sexual abuse is not unique phenomenon to only girls but boys are equally sexually abused at almost equal numbers as girls.

Arguing from epidemical perspective, David, A. N. et al (2016) concluded that child sexual abuse is a subtype of child maltreatment and a very complex life experience with grave lifelong consequences for survivors and victims. To them, it is a hidden epidemic that can negatively affect the life of victims and survivors in the present and in the future so there is the need for an urgent attention to take all proactive and pragmatic measures to address it

In his published article titled *Child Sexual Abuse: An Overview*, Bhat, A. (2017) agreed with Murray, L. K. et al (2014), Hayes et al (2014) and Osadan. R & Reid, E. (2015) who had done

similar studies that child sexual abuse is indeed a worldwide issue which prevails in every society. He consistently cautioned that it has serious lifelong consequences for victim and survivors due to the fact it has been studied and proven worldwide that it can lead to existential and personal conflicts if all efforts are not made to curb it. According to him, worldwide statistics on child sexual abuse is troubling and it has been estimated to be 19.7% for females and 7.9% for males, an indication that children population is at high risk to be sexually abused globally. He maintained and agreed with Osadan, R. & Reid, E. (2015) that with all the child sexual abuse cases, 90% of the offenders are mainly acquaintances or people who are related to the child whereas the 10% are committed by strangers.

Seth, R. & Srivastava, R. N. (2017) defined child sexual abuse as all kinds of sexual acts, both penetrative and non-penetrative sexual intercourses and all other types of sexual acts which involve children. Their position is firmly grounded in the WHO (2004) definition of child sexual abuse which broadly elaborates on sexual acts and conducts which constitute child sexual abuse. Also relying on the WHO (2004) definition of child sexual abuse for their studies just like Seth, R & Srivastava, R. N. (2017) did, David, A. N. et al (2016) earlier admitted that the definition of child sexual abuse by WHO (2004) broadly elaborates on conducts and acts which constitutes what child sexually abuse is, but they were quick to state that there is lack of consensus when it comes to definitions of child sexual abuse and approaches used in studying it.

To buttress the argument that there are inconsistencies in defining child sexual abuse as noted by David, A.N et al (2016) and Seth, R & Srivastava, R. N (2017), Singh, M. M. et al (2014) had earlier in 2014 maintained that studying child sexual abuse is very difficult due to varied definitions used. They posited that the term child sexual abuse can variedly interpreted as “intercourse”, “attempted intercourse”, “oral genital contact”, “fondling of the genitals” directly

or through clothing, “exhibitionism” or exposing children to adult sexual activity or pornography and the use of child for prostitution or pornography. Pretiwi, A. A & Asyary, A. (2017) argues that definitions of child sexual abuse is multidimensional and variedly defined to as sexual intercourse or any of its related activities involving persons below the age of 18 years.

The position of Pretiwi, A. A & Asyary, A (2017) however has its own arguments for and against as far the age of sexual consent and the conceptual definition of child sexual abuse is concerned. The argument of child sexual abuse is premised on the capacity of the child to give sexual consent as the position of Pretiwi, A. A & Asyary, A. (2017) sought to establish. Researchers and academicians have raised serious disputes about the concept of child sexual abuse and questioned that how can having sexual intercourse and its related activities with a child below the age of 18 be sexual abuse when some countries and jurisdictions have pegged their age of consensual sex to be as low as 12 years though they may vary worldwide.

2.1.1 Child Sexual Abuse and Age of Consent

Sexual consent is key and critical in determining whether sexual intercourse with a child is an abuse or not. According to Public Legal Education and Information Services of New Brunswick (PLEISNB) 2017, to give consent to sexual activity means to agree freely without intimidations and use of threats or force. It is a personal and voluntary decision for persons to engage in sexual activities at their own free will and choices.

Gillespie, A. & Ost, S. (2017) however expressed that the term age of consent is very controversial and confusing. It is often interpreted to be age of liability for offenders than rather the age of consent at which young people can freely agree to sexual intercourse and its related activities.

They continued to argue that in the context of sexual age of consent, it is much more about the establishment of age at which the law permits a child to engage in sexual activities but not really about the capacity of a child to engage in sexual acts with adults because people vary though they may be young especially in the case of adolescents and where one lacks the capacity, another may have the capacity irrespective of age.

Gerberg, R. & Dunn, L. (2014) made very interesting arguments and some profound assertions about sexual consent. To them, it is the basis for any judicial proceedings to determine whether a sexual conduct is offensive or not. They further asserted that sexual consent ought to be initiated and must be present throughout the period of sexual activity to differentiate it from sexual assault or other sexual related offences.

Even to victims and survivors of sexual violence, Gerberg, R. & Dunn, L. (2014) argued that sexual consent is critical in assessing the decision of whether to report or not report an offensive sexual conduct to the police or any other authority responsible for handling sexual offences. They progressively argued that sexual consent must be proactive and it ought to be voluntary, affirmative and lastly, it must be contemporaneous. For consent to be voluntary, they expressed that it should not be through coercion, under pressure or through intimidations, threats or fear.

For consent to be affirmative, Gerberg, R. & Dunn, L. expressly stated that it must be verbally expressed to be “yes” and must never be inferred through silence, passivity or lack of resistance to sexual advances and lack of active response and above all, sexual consent must unambiguous or be clearly expressed through affirmative actions. They however, cautioned that consent cannot be given when in situations of mental imbalances, unconsciousness, intoxication, drugs or when one is asleep and consent can be revoked at any time in the course of a sexual activity.

Girls Not Bride (GNB 2019) posits that there is a confusion when it comes to consensual sex with relations among adolescents and that makes the concept of child sexual abuse very confusing. In analyzing age of marriage and age of consensual sex among children especially girls, GNB (2019) noted that there is a worldwide agreement that girls should not be coerced into marriage but there is far less consensus on when young people should be permitted to have consensual sex and at what age should they be allowed to engage in consensual relationship at their own free will. GNB (2019) further asserted that though governments in recent years have increasingly stepped up efforts to stop child marriage and set legal age of marriage to be 18 years, the minimum age of engaging in consensual sex and its related activities have remained discrepantly the same worldwide thereby creating confusion especially in areas where it is a taboo to have sex outside marriage.

While arguing that adolescent to adolescent child sexual abuse should be decriminalized, Kangaude, G. & Skilton, A. (2018) posited that there are two major policy decisions why there is consensual sex restriction on the age of children and that is for punitive and non-punitive reasons. They further argued that punitive measures are instituted as justifications that they are necessary to protect adolescents, especially girls from teenage pregnancies and other sexual abuses but the fact remains that age of sexual consent among teenagers deny them from sexual autonomy and agency and that needs to be decriminalised especially if it involves two adolescents in accordance to their recognized rights.

Hayes, S. et al (2014) who expressed that the world seem to be in cultural paranoid in the last few decades when it comes to increasing the consensual sexual age of children though the general consensual age for young people to engage in consensual sex is 16 years in many jurisdictions and that defeats the definition of child sexual abuse which indicates that having a sexual intercourse or

any of its related activities with a person below the age of 18 years as Pretiwi, A. A & Asyary, A. (2017) insisted on.

In their work Decriminalising Adolescent Sex: A Right – Based Assessment of Age of Consent Laws in Eastern and Southern Africa, Kanguade, G. & Skilton, A. (2018) advocated for more progressive and corrective measures of handling matters of consensual sex age restriction of children who are in their teens more especially if the sexual conducts is between teenagers in the same age bracket than criminal actions of jailing offenders who are in their teens. In their opinion, age of consensual sex especially among adolescents of the same age group should be decriminalize.

To settle the argument of consensual age and sexual consent, Wrigley-Asante, C. et al (2016) while analyzing poverty and crime situation in some selected urban low-income communities in Ghana in relation to sexual crimes concluded that consent of a minor below the age of 16 years is very irrelevant as far as sexual offences are concerned in Ghana though the consensual age of other countries and jurisdictions may differ. Above the consensual age, the minor can engage in sexual activities with anybody he or her pleases and that cannot be termed as sexual abuse contrary to the position of Pretiwi, A. A & Asyary, A. (2017) and other authors who made a blank statement that engaging in sexual intercourse and its related activities with a person below the age of 18 years without recourse to consensual age in various jurisdictions and countries.

DISCUSSION OF KEY THEMES

2.2.1 Child Sexual Abuse as a Public Health Concern.

From public health perspectives, it is almost unanimously agreed by National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) 2020, Letourneau, E. J. (2014), Letourneau, E.J. (2017), Do, H. N et al (2019), Sharma, M. et al (2018) and several other scholars and researchers that child sexual abuse is a major public health issue aggressively confronting the world. It is more precarious and dangerous because researchers and authors like Murray, L. K. et al (2014) believe that greater part of it go unnoticed or unreported making it a very difficult phenomenon to deal with despite several research works carried on it with hopes of finding lasting solutions to it.

Being a public health matter of concern, in their work *Childhood and Adolescent Sexual Abuse, Victim Profile and its Impact on Mental Health*, Fontes, L. F et al (2017) called for collaborative efforts and government strategies to deal with it considering its devastating effects and challenges on mental health. Analyzing the effects of child sexual abuse on victims and survivors, NCIPC (2020) agreed with Sharma, M. et al (2018) and Do, H, N. et al (2019) that it has both long and short term effects on victim and survivors and it can lead to physical and emotional outcomes just like Fontes, L. F. et al (2017) argued.

In their article *Treating Victims of Child Sexual Abuse*, Hanson, R. F & Wallis, E. (2018) mentioned that demographic factors like sex and age increase the risk of child sexual abuse with most studies concluding that girls are more prone to it than boys though boys endure their own levels of sexual abuses. Aside age and sex, they cited lower socioeconomic status, single parenting, domestic violence and mental illness as some of the predisposed factors which heighten risk of child sexual abuse.

Letourneau et al (2017) emphasised that it is a public health problem confronting the globe and possess lifelong consequences for victim and survivors if not handled with appropriate measures to halt it. In another related studies of child sexual abuse from the perspectives of public health, Letourneau, E. J et al (2014) emphatically stated that child sexual abuse is part of 24 worldwide risk factors which contribute to worldwide burden of diseases as noted by WHO. They further mentioned and emphasized that child sexual abuse contribute to 0.6% of worldwide diseases resulting in unipolar depression, HIV/AIDS, alcohol disorders, self-inflicted injuries among a whole lot of unbearable psychosocial challenges.

Analyzing risks and predisposing factors of child sexual abuse in relation to public health, Murray, L.K. et al (2014) admitted that though there seem some inconsistencies in the measurements in the prevalence of child sexual abuse due to different methods and definitions used.

According to Murray and her colleagues, child sexual abuse can only occur when the child is predisposed to risk factors like low parental education, single parenting, substance abuse, domestic violence and several other factors which greatly exposed the child to the dangers and horrors of child sexual abuse. It is for this reason that all frantic efforts should be made to address the problem of child sexual abuse as Fonte, L. F et al (2017) called for.

Bhat, A. (2017) described the global prevalence situation of child sexual abuse as worrying and troubling and quoted it to be 19.7% for girls and 7.9 for boys. Bhat, A. (2017) further mentioned that there is a seemly believe among professional in the field of child sexual abuse that prevalence rate among boys are much lower to that girls.

2.2.2 Child Sexual and Criminal Justice

Child sexual abuse is a problem of crime and one which is fraught with challenges when it comes to criminal justice for victims and survivors. Though not so much research works and studies have been conducted into that aspect, Pavlovic, Z. & Bijoets, J. (2016) admit that child sexual is a significant problem of criminology.

Salter, M. (2017) described it as an impactful crime that engages harm and power which are the main themes of criminology. Supporting the argument that child sexual abuse is a criminology problem as claimed by Pavlovic, Z. & Bijoets, J. (2016), Tozdan, S. et al (2019) argued that it is a common crime generally believed to have been perpetrated by men against girls when scientific knowledge has proven that it is a crime perpetrated by both sexes though that of females seem to be lowly reported compared that of males.

Salter, M. (2017) in his published work titled *Child Sexual Abuse*, maintained that it is a common crime with lasting impact on victims and survivals of child sexual and the community at large and finds it very surprising that it has attracted very little attention from critical criminologists. He again described it as a common crime which is overwhelmingly perpetrated against girls and agreed with Bhat, A. (2017) that the global prevalence rate is 19.7 for girls and 7.9 for girls and also it is a crime which possesses serious threat and danger to girls and boys of all socioeconomic backgrounds irrespective of race, ethnicity and cultural affinity.

Being a crime which needs to be milled through the criminal justice and administration systems, Lubaale, E. C. (2015) describe the trial and prosecution of offenders of child sexual very difficult task often due to lack and cogent evidence to warrant prosecution beyond all reasonable doubts. According to Lubaale, E.C. (2015) child sexual abuse offences are difficult to prosecute resulting

in a wide justice gap between conviction rates of child abuse offences and reported cases of child sexual abuse. To add up to the argument of Lubaale, E. C. (2015) Block, S.D. & Williams, L. M. (2019) described the adjudicating processes of child sexual offences as notoriously difficult especially if the sexual abuse is alleged to have happened not in recent times.

Making analysis of the global trend of investigations and prosecution rates and conviction of child sexual offences, Ernberg, E. et al (2018) said that legal professionals around the world do agree that there is great difficulty in investigating and prosecuting cases of child sexual abuse. They argued that for prosecution of child sexual abuse cases to be successfully through with prosecution, there is the need for high corroborative evidence.

In their work *When Should the Police Investigate Cases of Non-recent Child Sexual Abuse*, Maslen, H. and Paine (2019) also agreed with Ernberg, E. et al (2018) that medical evidence is critical and a key determinant in the prosecution of child sexual abuse cases but often times medical evidence to support child sexual abuse cases is less than 5% which makes prosecution very difficult because prosecutors will have to rely on sole testimonies of victims. Maslen, H. & Paine (2019) assert that dealing with child sexual abuse cases comes with a lot of ethical dilemmas and challenges with often times become stumbling blocks in the way of prosecution and the quest to seek justice for victims of child sexual abuse.

In line with the arguments of Maslen, H. & Paine (2019), Newbury, M. (2018) had earlier called for law reforms while making a critical assessment of traditional and historical investigations into child sexual abuses and noted that historical child sexual abuse investigations usually ends up with degraded evidence which prevents successful prosecution. They referred to the investigations processes as very complex and restrictive especially when it comes to police investigations into child sexual crimes.

2.2.3. Child Sexual and Media Coverage

According to Lubaale, E. C (2015), child sexual abuse became a public issue of concern and interest between 1970 to 1980. Prior to that period, child sexual abuse remained secretive and socially closed subject which was so shameful to discuss publicly until the media started to highlights its dangers and impact on children in particular, and society in general. Since then, the media has fairly played it role stimulating issues of child sexual abuse and continued to influence the public to make informed opinions about child sexual abuse and its dangers.

The role of the media is very critical in shaping public opinion about what exactly child sexual abuse is and its effect on children and society as Weatherred, J. L. (2015) posits that the media plays very important role in practice, policy making and public perception about child sexual abuse through the way news stories are framed.

Nair, P. (2019) argued that the media does not only create social awareness about child social abuse through news coverage, analysis and interventions. It also sets social and political agenda which go a long way to enhance policy change against child sexual abuse. He reiterated the position of Lubaale, E. C. (2015) that the media put the problem of child sexual abuse into the minds of the public thereby going a long way to set the agenda on child sexual abuse due to how child sexual abuse is framed in the news media. Nair further argued that media coverage of child sexual abuse has a major impact on the public and help them to picture what really child sexual abuse is, and why child protection and safeguarding policies are very necessary to fight the prevalence of child sexual abuse.

While making a content analysis of child sexual abuse news coverage, Popovic, S. (2018) espoused that public knowledge and attitudes toward child sexual abuse are shaped through media

depictions and coverage. Popovic maintained that the media serve as the main source of information to the public about child sexual abuse through news coverage.

Tracing the history of media coverage on child sexual abuse from the publications of the *Battered Child in the United State of America*, Weatherred, J. L. (2016) argued that there has been five periods of media attention and coverage on child sexual abuse from the 1960s to present. According to Weatherred, J. L. (2016), from 1960 to 1979 was the discovery of the child sexual abuse in the media and the time at which the media started paying attention to issues of child sexual abuse. The second period was the 1980s which Weatherred, J. L. (2016) referred to it as the period of backlash against lack of child protective measures in the United States of America. Then comes the period in the 1990s where very strict legislations were initiated in the bid to protect children from sexual abuses. In the period between 2000 to 2009 Weatherred argued that the media shifted the attention to institutional child sexual abuse. Then to the period from 2010 to present after the prolong coverage of the Jerry Sandusky child sexual abuse scandals at Pennsylvania State University and the subsequent release of the Boys' Scout of America perversion files.

2.3 Theoretical framrwork

Framing theory of mass communication is suitable to this study. According to de Vreese, C. H & Lecheler, (2015), framing initially originated within the fields of Sociology and Psychology in mid 1960s. It has since become one of the used theories in communication researches and studies with a proven effect on the public. Adrevol-Abreu, A. (2015) agreed that it has paved way for holistic study of media effect on individuals and media audience. Arowolo, S. O. (2015) however disputes the position of Adrevol-Abreu, A. (2015) that the framing theory was originated in the mid-1960s but emphatically states that it was originally propounded by

Gregory Bateson in 1972. Despite the arguments about who propounded the theory, it is for sure known to have effect on media audience and that is what matter the most as far as this study is concerned.

Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times are two most widely distributed newspapers in Ghana so the study seeks to do a comprehensive content analysis on how they covered issues of child sexual abuse from January 2017 to December 2018. Framing theory is therefore suitable and applicable to this study because it intends to evaluate the nature of news coverage

According to Freezell et al (2019), framing is simply how the media portray prevailing issues to its audience and the way and manner the media frame stories can be episodic or thematic. Acknowledging the works of Iyengar (1991), Freezell, T. J et al (2019) espoused that extensive political communication research has proven that media audiences respond differently to issues depending how the media present the issues to them.

Dwelling much on thematic and episodic framing, Freezell, T.J (2019) further noted that when issues are framed episodically, citizens perceive the issue as individuals' problems at which the solution lie with individuals. On the other hand, if the issues are framed thematically, media audiences or the public perceive the problem from societal perspectives. To buttress the argument of thematic and episodic framing, Weatherred, J. L. (2016) also maintained that when the media started framing child sexual abuse thematically in the United State of America, the attention shifted from society perceiving child sexual as individual's problem to a societal problem which needed urgent and proactive measures to address it. The end result to such thematic framings were change in policies which enhanced safety and protection measures to protect children from child sexual abuse in the United States of America.

The arguments of Freezell, T. J et al (2019) and Weatherred, J. L (2016) thus form the basis and the reason why framing underpins this study.

According to Alonso, N. O. (2014), framing is both organisational and individual psychological process, a political strategy tool which can have a significant effect on people how make and formulate an opinion about issues in the media. To throw more light on the effects of framing on media audiences, Mass Communication online (2017) posits that framing theory simply suggest how something is presented to audience in what is called frame and how it influences the choice people make about how to process that information.

Weatherred, J. L. (2016) further argued that framing was developed in tandem with agenda setting theory to examine the influence of the media on the public. It focuses on the nature of news coverage than the amount of attention given to an issue as the case of agenda setting may be. In firm agreement with Weatherred, J. L. (2016), Bajracharya, S. (2018) admit that framing is the adaptation of the agenda setting theory as they both have the capability to draw the attention of the public to what the media wants to projects. It has the power to change the perception of the public and impact their decision on sociopolitical choices.

2.4 Review of related studies

In this section, related or similar studies which employed the same theory and methodologies are discussed together with their findings and recommendations. Two studies, Mejia et al (2012) and Weatherred, J. L. (2013) were selected due to their relevance and appropriateness to this study

Mejia et al (2012) did a comprehensive content analysis of news coverage titled *Child Sexual Abuse and Prevention* in the United States of America from 2007 to 2009. The study captured

the dominance of accusations against the Catholic Church in the American press in its involvement in child sexual abuses. The study sought to analyse how the American press through the framing theory stimulated public discussions on child sexual abuse from 2007 to 2009.

Using a content analysis as the methodology, 348 articles were selected from the various newspapers in the United States of America and were coded. The result indicated that 80% of the coverage was episodic and 20% of the coverage was thematic.

The study produced four main findings.

- i. Child sexual abuse remained out of media sight until there is a reported incident of child sexual abuse before the media focus its lens on it so news coverage remained largely episodic or eventual.
- ii. Usually the media focuses on the criminal trial of people who are suspected to have sexually abused children because child sexual abuse has achieved some positive feats in the criminal justice system of America.
- iii. Solutions and prevention were largely absent from media coverage as most of the stories were about interventions and treatment of victims after they have been abused.
- iv. Many newspaper articles did not specify the type of sexual and the language used in the news report were very vague

Mejia et al made some recommendations which have been summarized as follows:

- i. Reporting on child sexual abuse should be solution and preventive based though other aspects are equally important.
- ii. Reporters should be precise with their choice of words rather than the often suggestive manner in which they have been reporting about child sexual abuse.

- iii. Reporters should endeavour establish between the victims of child sexual abuse and perpetrators of child sexual abuse.
- iv. Much attention should be focused on preventive stories which analyse the effect of child sexual abuse on socioeconomic well-being of individuals and society as a whole.

Weatherred (2013), conducted a longitudinal study on media coverage of child sexual abuse in America titled *Child Sexual Abuse In The Media: Is The Institutional Failure To Blame?* The study employed content analysis as the method and framing as the theory to analyse the shift of media attention from episodic child sexual abuse coverage to thematic coverage.

The study sought to analyse some major institutional child sexual abuse occurrences like the Catholic Church child sexual abuse scandal, the arrest, trial and conviction of Jerry Sandusky who was the assistant football coach of Pennsylvania State University among other incidences of child sexual abuse which caught the attention of the American media. It is a longitudinal study which covered a period of 10 years, from 2002 to 2012. A period in which major incidences of institutional child sexual abuse unfolded in America and how the media covered them.

Samples were selected from New York Times, Washington Post, ABC News, NBC News, CBS News, CNN, Fox News and MSNBC. At the end, 436 articles and news items were culled from the selected samples and were analysed to produce the findings and after which recommendations were made. The findings of the study are summarised as follows:

- i. It was revealed that the media shifted attention of child sexual abuse scandals towards institutions and blamed them as a contributing factors to major child sexual abuse scandals that dominated the American media from 2002 to 2012.
- ii. It was revealed that from 2002 to 2012, national news presented societal-level cause compared to previous decades when national news focused on individual –level causes.

- iii. It was revealed that still solution for child sexual abuse remained individual-level despite the fact news coverage has shifted from individual levels to societal levels.

The following recommendations were made:

- i. The media, public health experts and child protection professionals should increase awareness and societal-levels solutions to child sexual abuse
- ii. Journalists who are reporting child sexual abuse should seek experts, researchers and advocates as sources when covering child sexual abuse rather than focusing on the offender and the criminal justice process.

2.5. Objectives

- 1. To examine nature of coverage on child sexual abuse
- 2. To explore how the stories on child sexual abuse established the relationship between victims and perpetrators.
- 3. To examine the extent to which media coverage called for policy intervention for child sexual abuse.

2.6 Definition of terms

- 1. **Child** is a person below 16 years of age
- 2. **Sexual abuse** engaging in sexual intercourse and its related activities with a person below 16 years.
- 3. **Consensual age** is the age at which a child can give consent to sexual activities.
- 4. **Victim** a person below 16 years who is enduring sexual abuse
- 5. **Survivor** a person irrespective of age who has previously experienced **sexual** abuse.

6. **Perpetrator** is a person who engages in sexual activities with a child
7. **Relationship** is the state of the victim knowing the perpetrator prior to sexual abuses
8. **Episodic** is the nature of news coverage which present child sexual abuse as problem for only the victim
9. **Thematic** is the nature of news coverage which present child sexual abuse as problem for society which need to be addressed collectively

2.7 Conclusion

Review of literature on child sexual abuse proves to the fact that it is indeed a complex phenomenon confronting the world. It is a subject which has variedly been defined and studied with different approaches resulting in data discrepancies globally. It is a public health concern which has several psychosocial and physical health challenges with lifelong consequences for victim and survivors. Being also a problem of criminology, literature review has proven that it is very difficult to investigate and prosecute especially if it is non-current child sexual abuse. In all these, the media has a critical role to play to influence policies that enhance the protection and safety of children and that is done through how the media frame child sexual abuse.

The next chapter discusses methodology and research approach to this study.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to address the methodology of the whole research project. To conceptualise research methodology, Mishra, S. B. and Alok, S. (2017) in their book Handbook of Research Methodology defined it as the science of studying how research is conducted systematically. Igwenagu, C. (2016) referred research methodology as set of methods or best practices which can be applied to a specific case of study.

To expound further on research methodology, Rajasekar, S. et al (2013) appreciated that research methodology is essentially referred to the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting a phenomenon. It prescribe the systematic way of solving research problems to achieve research goals and objectives.

Here in this chapter, research designs, data source, and techniques of data collection, instrument, and technique of data analysis and quantitative are subtopics which will be discussed as the pathway or the roadmap to achieve the goals and objectives of the research project. These subtopics will serve as the methodological frameworks for the whole research project.

3.1 Research Design

Akhtar, I. (2016) described research design as the “glue” which binds all element of research together. He further stated that it is the proposed plan for the research work which is to be followed systematically and meticulously to achieve research goals and objectives. It facilitates the smooth flow of the various research operations.

This is a quantitative research project that intends to explore media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana with respect to *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times*. Being a quantitative research project, Apuke, O. D. (2017) defined it as research methods quantifying and analyzing variables in order to get results. It includes utilization and analysis of numerical data involving statistical techniques to answer the questions of how much or how many with respect to research projects. It includes gathering data in numerical form and analyzing them with mathematical methods.

To satisfy the demand of the research goals and objective, pages of daily publications of *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* will be flipped from cover to cover in search of articles, features and news reports with respect of child sexual abuse which occurred between 1st January 2017 and 31st December 2018. Reported news stories relating to child sexual abuse will be recorded in details, classified and coded. After classification and coding, mathematical tables will be used to analyse and interpret the findings.

Using content analysis at the research method, contents of newspaper publications of *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* will be analysed contextually and thematically to determine whether they were episodic or thematic, weather the media made efforts to influence policy making with respect to child sexual abuse through appeals and lastly weather the media in the course of their coverage established the relationship between victims and perpetrators.

3.2 Data Source

According to Ajayi, V. O. (2017) data collection is very critical and crucial to statistical analysis. Without data, there would not be anything to analyse or evaluate to make a meaningful understanding of the research objectives and goals. Data source determine the legitimacy and credibility of the research project hence the need to declare the data source for verification.

Data source for this project is secondary. To collect suitable and relevant data to meet the demands and of the research objectives and goals, newspaper publication of *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* between 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2018 are the main source of data for the study. Pages of daily publications of these newspapers will be flipped from cover to cover and from page to page in search of news stories related to child sexual abuse.

3.3. Technique of Data Collection

In his handout titled Data Collection techniques meant for training reproductive health research, Chaleunvong (2009) listed five techniques for collecting data and they are: i. available information ii. observing iii. Interviewing iv. administering written questionnaires and v. focus group discussions. In relation to the mentioned data collection techniques, the most suitable one for this research project is certainly the available information technique as the published newspapers for both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* are readily available at respective archival department both *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* agencies.

3.4. Instrument

The instrument for collecting data are two exercise books, one which is to be used separately for recording newspaper publications of *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times*. Pen and pencil will be used for recording details. Letters of introduction will also be obtained from Research and Graduate School to be sent the respective news agencies to seek their permission and approval for data to be collected for the purpose of this research.

3.5. Technique of Data Analysis

This is a quantitative research project which intends to analyse media coverage of child to know the nature of news coverage. The suitable data analysis technique to satisfy the needs and demands of the research project is certainly content analysis. To situate content analysis properly in this study, Showkat, N. and Parveen, H. (2017) (2017) simply defines content analysis as the interpretations of what is contained in a message. They further expounded that it is the study of recorded human communication to make meanings out of it. They elaborated that it is the scientific study of content of communication which examines contexts, meanings, subtexts and intentions of messages which employs the use of systematic classification processes of coding and identifying themes and patterns of human communication.

After data collection, it will be classified and coded to know whether the publications were episodic, that the publications were mainly about victims and perpetrators or thematic coverage which presented issues of child sexual abuse as problems of society which needs collective effort to fight it. Mathematical tables will then be used to interpret the findings after the data has been analyse contextually.

3.6 Quantitative

This is a quantitative research work which seeks to gather numerical data with respect to media coverage of child sexual abuse using *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* newspapers as case study. These two newspapers have been chosen as a case study because they have comparative distribution advantage over all other newspapers in Ghana. Being a quantitative research project Bhat, A. (2020) described it as systematic investigation of a phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and performing statistical, mathematical or computation techniques. This definition situate

this research work in proper context as the study intends to analyse newspaper coverage on child sexual and present the findings in mathematical tables with interpretations.

In the end, it is expected that pages of some 1152 copies of daily newspaper publications of *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* will be flipped in search of news reports related to Child Sexual Abuse. Respective news reports which may appear in these newspapers will be classified and coded after which contents will be analysed contextually to suit the objectives of the research. After coding and classification, mathematical tables will be used to interpret the findings.

3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, methodology for the project has fully been conceptualise and subtopics like research design, data collection technique, data analysis technique and among others which form the methodological framework of the research project. The next chapter will be analysis and discussion after data in relation to the research work has been collected.

CHAPTER FOUR – DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the research is discussed with regard to research objectives and the supporting theory. The theory of framing is argued to have the effect on audience of media depending on how news stories are framed. Weatherred, J. L (2016) argued that framing has the capability to cause policy interventions if the stories are framed thematically instead of episodic. The media is proven to be one of the critical tools to fight Child Sexual Abuse through news coverage and framing. It is in relation with this that objective of this study have been set to investigate media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana using *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* as case study.

Data gathered has been presented in mathematical tables below after which discussions will follow.

Data Presentation

4.1 To examine nature of coverage on Child Sexual Abuse

In this sections, the findings of the research project are analysed in percentages (%) with the aid of tables with regard to the three main objectives of the research project. After data was collected, it was classified, coded, computed and represented in mathematical tables below.

Table 1 Nature of coverage on child sexual abuse for 2017

Newspaper	Total publications	Thematic	%	Episodic	%
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	16	5	32%	11	68
<i>Ghanaian Times</i>	37	2	5%	35	95
Total	53	7	37	46	

Source: Field Data 2020

The above table indicates nature of news coverage of *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* for 2017. *Daily Graphic* published 16 stories related to child sexual abuse whereas *Ghanaian times* published 37 stories. In 2017, *Daily Graphic* had a total production of 288 copies of newspapers and out of these, there were 16 stories which were published in relation to child sexual abuse. With respect to *Ghanaian Times*, the news agency also produced 288 copies of newspapers for the year equaling the production of *Daily Graphic*. However, *Ghanaian Times* had 37 stories published in relation to child sexual abuse compared to *Daily Graphic* which had 16. After analyzing contents of both newspapers per their publications on child sexual abuse, 11 stories of *Daily Graphic* representing 68% of their total publications of the year appeared episodic and 5 of them representing 32% appeared thematic. On the other hand, out of 37 published stories by *Ghanaian Times*, 35 of their news stories representing 95% of their total news stories appeared episodic and 2 of them representing 5% appeared thematic.

The data available per the table above, though *Ghanaian Times* published more stories in relation to child sexual abuse than *Daily Graphic*, it is obvious that *Daily Graphic* framed more of their news stories in relation to child sexual abuse thematically compared to *Ghanaian Times* though

one can confidently conclude that both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* paid less attention to issues of child sexual abuse for the reason that 37 and 16 out of 288 newspapers publications for each of them can be termed to be woefully inadequate considering the dangers that child sexual abuse poses to children in particular and the nation at large.

Table 2 Nature of coverage on child sexual abuse for 2018

Newspaper	Total publications	Thematic	%	Episodic	%
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	16	11	69	5	31
<i>Ghanaian Times</i>	38	1	3	37	97
Total	54	12	72	42	

Source: Field Data 2020

The year 2018 did not see significant change in news coverage on child sexual abuse by both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* newspapers. In the year 2018, both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* produced 288 newspapers by the close of 2018 just like it happened in 2017. Again out of these 288 total newspapers produced in the year, *Daily Graphic* covered a total of 16 news stories just as it did in 2017, *Ghanaian Times* published 38 news stories.

On the nature of news coverage, *Daily Graphic* published 11 thematic news stories 69% of total news coverage and 5 episodic news stories representing 31% of total news stories. In the year 2018, *Daily Graphic* had additional 6 news stories which appeared thematic compared to its total publications in 2017. With regard to *Ghanaian Times*, nothing significant happened as there were 38 total stories on child sexual abuse from total production of 288 newspaper production. There was just 1 increase in coverage of news stories on child sexual abuse compared to 2017. 37 of

these news stories representing 97% of news stories of 2018 appeared episodic and 1 representing 3% appeared thematic compared to 2017.

Just as it happened in 2017, *Daily Graphic* covered more thematic stories than *Ghanaian Times* though in both years Ghanaian Times had much publications on child sexual abuse stories than *Daily Graphic*. However per quantum on their news publication for both years, it is safe to conclude that much less attention was given to stories of child sexual abuse by both news agencies.

4.2 To explore how the stories on child sexual abuse established the relationship between victims and perpetrators.

Table 3 indicating how the stories on child sexual abuse established relationship between victims and perpetrators for 2017

Newspaper	Total publications	Related	%	Not related	%
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	16	6	37	10	63
<i>Ghanaian Times</i>	37	25	68	12	32
Total	53	31		22	

Source: Field Data 2020

The table above indicate how both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* established relationship between victims and perpetrators in the course of covering child sexual abuse stories for 2017. In the same year, Daily Graphic published 16 stories in relation to child sexual abuse. With 10 of the stories representing 63%, *Daily Graphic* did not indicate relationship between victims and perpetrators whereas 6 of the stories representing 37%. *Daily Graphic* indicated relationship

between victims and perpetrators. *Ghanaian Times* on the other hand published 37 stories with 25 of these stories representing 68%, *Ghanaian Times* indicated relationship between victims and perpetrators. With 12 of the stories representing 32%, *Ghanaian Times* did not indicate relationship between victims and perpetrators.

Table 4 indicating how the stories on child sexual abuse established the relationship between victims and perpetrators for 2018

Newspaper	Total publications	Related	%	Not related	%
Daily Graphic	16	4	25	12	75
Ghanaian Times	38	35	92	3	8
Total	54	39		15	

Source: Field Data 2020

2018 did not see significant change in news coverage of child sexual abuse as far as both *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* are concerned. *Daily Graphic* published 16 stories related to child sexual abuse and *Ghanaian Times* published 38 stories. With 12 of the stories representing 75% of total news stories *Daily Graphic*, relationship failed to establish relationship between victims and perpetrators. With respect to *Ghanaian Times*, 35 of the stories representing 92% of the total news stories, *Ghanaian Times* indicated relationship between victims and perpetrators.

In it all *Ghanaian Times* had an increase of news stories in 2018 by 1 compared to 2017. 3 of their news stories representing 8% their total news stories, they failed to indicate relationship between victims and perpetrators. In 2017, *Ghanaian Times* had 12 stories about child sexual abuse in which they fail to indicate the relationship between victims and perpetrators but in 2018 it was

3 news stories that they failed to indicate the relationship between victims and perpetrators. In the case of *Daily Graphic*, in 2017 there were 16 published stories with regard to child sexual abuse. With 10 of those stories, *Daily Graphic* did not indicate relationship between victims and perpetrators and 2018, *Daily Graphic* had increase of 2 news stories in which they did not indicate relationship between victims and perpetrators.

Comparing the two newspapers for 2017 and 2017, *Ghanaian Times* obviously paid attention to stories of child sexual abuse compare to *Daily Graphic* as far as news coverage is concerned. *Ghanaian Times* indicating relationship between victims and perpetrators prove the fact children are abused sexually abused by close relations or people who know them compared to strangers

Ghanaian Times coverage of child sexual abuse with respect to relationship that exist between victims and perpetrators gives the impression that children are at high risk of being sexually abused by close relations than strangers. *Daily Graphic* on other hand could not impressively indicate relationship between victim and perpetrators but available data as presented in the table still gives the impression that sexual abuse can occur close related settings.

4.3 To examine the extent to which media coverage called for policy interventions against Child Sexual Abuse

Table 5 indicating the extent to which media coverage called for policy intervention against child sexual abuse in 2017

Newspapers	Total publications	Policy appeal	%	No policy appeal	%
Daily Graphic	16	2	12	14	88
Ghanaian Times	37	1	3	36	97
Total	53	3		50	

Source: Field Data 2020

The above table indicate how both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* called for policy interventions with respect to child sexual abuse for 2017. In 2017, *Daily Graphic* published 16 news stories whereas *Ghanaian Times* published 37. 14 of the news stories representing 88% of *Daily Graphic's* total published stories for the year had no calls made for policy interventions and in the case of *Ghanaian Times*, there 36 stories representing 97% of their total published stories for the year in which calls were not made for policy intervention with regard to child sexual abuse.

However, *Daily Graphic* had 2 stories representing 12% of their total published news which made appeals for policy interventions and in the case of *Ghanaian Times* only 1 new stories representing 3% of their total published stories made calls for policy intervention.

Table 6 indicating the extent to which media coverage called for policy interventions against Child Sexual Abuse in 2018.

Newspaper	Total publications	Policy appeals	%	No policy appeals	%
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	16	6	37	10	63
<i>Ghanaian Times</i>	38	1	3	37	97
Total	54	7		47	

Source: Field Data 2020

2018 did not see significant news coverage with respect to child sexual abuse for both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* with respect to child sexual abuse. *Daily Graphic* as usual published 16 news stories and with 10 of them representing 63% made no calls for policy interventions. *Ghanaian Times* on the other hand published 38 news stories with 37 of them representing 97% made no appeals for policy intervention.

For *Daily Graphic*, there were 6 news stories representing 37% made calls for policy interventions whereas *Ghanaian Times* had only 1 news story representing 3% which called for policy interventions with regard to child sexual abuse.

Comparing both newspapers, obviously *Ghanaian Times* published more news stories on child sexual abuse than *Daily Graphic* both in 2017 and 2018. However when it comes to calls for policy intervention with regard to child sexual abuse, *Daily Graphic* did comparatively better than *Ghanaian Times*.

4.4 Discussion of findings

Objective one: To examine the nature of media coverage on Child Sexual Abuse

The findings revealed that both *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* had some aspects of the news stories framed thematically and episodically in the course of coverage. For thematic coverage, the newspapers tried to make stories of child sexual appear societal and national problem whereas with episodic stories, the newspapers stories appeared to be problems for only victims.

For instance in 2017, *Daily Graphic* covered 16 stories on Child Sexual Abuse and 5 of them appeared thematic whereas 11 appeared episodic. *Ghanaian Times* on other hand covered 37 stories on Child Sexual Abuse in 2017 and 36 of their news stories appeared episodic and just 1 appeared thematic. The year 2018 did not show significant change in the coverage of child sexual abuse with respect to these two newspapers as indicated by table 2. In 2018, *Ghanaian Times* covered 38 news stories on child sexual abuse and 37 appeared episodic and just 1 appeared thematic. *Daily Graphic* on other hand covered 16 stories whereby 11 appeared thematic and 5

appeared episodic. *Daily Graphic* thus increased its thematic coverage on Child Sexual Abuse in 2018.

The analysis revealed that both *Ghanaian Times* and *Daily Graphic* coverage on Child Sexual Abuse appeared narrow and limited concept and context for child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse are framed as “*defilement*”, a criminal offence in the statutory books of Ghana (Act 29/60). Child sexual abuse stories covered by both *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* were those that perpetrators had sexual intercourse with victims and this is very limited in context to the definition of WHO (2004) of child sexual abuse. WHO (2004) broadens the scope and context of child sexual abuse contrary to what was covered by both *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* for the period under review.

Child sexual abuse according to WHO (2004) goes beyond sexual intercourse between a child and adult. Whereas the attention of the media in the course of covering child sexual abuse focused mainly on unlawful child sexual activity between adult and a child. Others aspects like using child for pornographic performance and child sexual exploitation like prostitution as defined by WHO (2004) which are part of main component of definition of child sexual abuse were exclusively absent in the news coverage. This proves the assertion of Hayes, S. et al (2014) who argued that grater part of child sexual abuse go unnoticed as the focus is mainly on sexual activities involving a child and adult.

In relation to the first objective of this study, news coverage was largely episodic especially in the case of *Ghanaian Times*. For both 2017 and 2018, *Ghanaian Times* had two thematic stories whereas *Daily Graphic* had 5 thematic stories in 2017 and 11 in 2018. This confirm the position of Mejia, P. et al (2012) news coverage on Child Sexual Abuse has largely been episodically framed.

Mejia, P. et al (2012) conducted similar studies looking at how the media frame stories of child sexual abuse in the United States of America. After examining the contents of some 348 news items related to child sexual abuse as reported by the American media from 2007 to 2009, Mejia et al (2012) found out that 80% of the news coverage was episodic. News coverage concentrated mainly on victims as individual children who have been abused sexually and perpetrators as adult who take advantage of the naivety of children and lure them into unlawful sexual acts.

Mejia, P. et al (2012) argued that in the course of framing child sexual abuse, the media failed to present child sexual abuse as a societal problem which put all children at risk irrespective of their social status but rather projected victims of child sexual abuse as children from less privileged homes and societies.

This study appears to confirm the position of Mejia, P. et al (2012) that in course of framing child sexual abuse and its related stories, the media focus its attention on victims of child sexual abuse as individual girls who are victims child sexual abuse and this is indicated by constant phrases and headlines like “*girl defiled, teenager defiled, girl sexually abused, man sexually assault a girl*”. These kinds of phrases and headlines of child sexual abuse related stories as reported by media according to Mejia, P. et al (2012) are the same manner both *Daily Guide and Ghanaian Times* covered their stories related about child sexual abuse. These kinds of phrases and headlines according to Mejia and colleagues present the girl child as susceptible to child sexual abuse and one kind of individual who is a victim of child sexual abuse ignoring how child sexual abuse poses threats and dangers to children generally including boys.

The content analysis revealed that the focal point of news coverage is always on perpetrators and what happened to them next after they were caught of sexually abusing children. Both *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* framed them as criminals who are often in detention of the police as they

were often described as “*man “caged” for defiling a girl, man jailed for defiling a girl, man remanded for sexually assaulting a girl*” and other similar sentence patterns which project images of detentions and imprisonment. These were major phrases which constantly featured in the news stories related to child sexual abuse and this finding confirms the position of Pavlovic, Z. & Bijloets, J. (2016) and Tozdan, S. et al (2019) who argued that child sexual abuse is often viewed and seen as criminal problem.

Media coverage by both *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* revealed themes of criminal prosecution of the perpetrators. It came to bare that the focus of the attention of the media was heavily on prosecution and always projected images of court settings where a prosecutor narrates the ordeals of the victim to a court for a sitting judge to pass judgment. The phrase “*the prosecutor told the court*” constantly featured in news reports of child sexual abuse as covered by both newspapers. This phrase is a major theme which project child sexual abuse as a criminal offence which is punishable by law in a court of competent jurisdiction. Child sexual abuse requires vigorous criminal investigations and subsequently the perpetrator is presented before a sitting judge as an accused person to face criminal charges of defilement.

Themes of criminal prosecution of perpetrators as revealed through the content analysis confirms the position of Lubaale, E.C. (2015) who argued that the end result of child sexual abuse is the criminal prosecution of offenders and after which the case dies naturally. The media often fail to do follow up on victims to report as they were they have been able to recover from the shocks and trauma of being a victim of child sexual abuse. Lubaale, E. C(2015) maintained that the only known solution to child sexual abuse is criminal prosecution which is a very difficult task and which usually end up to further traumatizing the victim instead of relieving and comforting the victim with hope of getting justice for being sexually abused. “*The prosecutor told the court*”

phrase is another thematic projection which is associated with news framing of child sexual abuse which is confirmed by Popovic, S. (2018) who argued that public knowledge and attitudes toward child sexual abuse are shaped through media depictions and coverage and one of such depictions is how the media project the narrations of prosecutors in a court.

The episodic frames also projected child sexual abuse as offences which attracted high term of imprisonment. Both newspapers focused on sentences and terms of imprisonment handed to perpetrators of child sexual abuse. Headlines like “*man jailed 7, farmer jailed 25 years*” for defilement among other phrases connote high terms of imprisonment constantly featured as headlines and sentence patterns of news report related to child sexual abuse. This is actually not unique with only Ghanaian media but a global situation with the media when covering matters of child sexual abuse. The media project child sexual abuse as one of the felonious crimes high prison terms and same reported by Mejia, P. et al (2012).

For thematic framing, *Daily Graphic* especially projected child sexual abuse as cultural and traditional practices which should be stopped to save the future of children especially girls. In covering such stories, *Daily Graphic* presented such stories as ones which needs collaborative efforts of states institutions like the police, Ministry of Children, Gender and Social Protection as well as chiefs, queen mothers and opinion leaders in communities to address it. Stories headlines like “*Don’t force girls into early marriage*” point to cultural and traditional practices of giving young girls into marriage at tender ages which make them prone to all forms sexual abuses with some kind of cultural and traditional legitimacy. Forcing young girls into early marriage is a form of legitimizing child sexual abuse considering its effect and consequences on children at later years therefore it is very imperative for both newspapers to thematically highlight the evils of these

cultural and traditional practices which exposes children to sexual abuses with some kind of legitimacy.

Both *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* had some child sexual abuse news stories thematically framed to project the stories in the right perspectives with hopes of attracting attention to have child sexual abuse menace dealt with holistically. In these thematic framing, the media in their own right tried to project child sexual abuse as a problem of society and to a larger extent a national issue which should be dealt with collaboration from various stake holders. News coverage of child sexual abuse is critical as Popovic, S. (2018) argues that the media the main source of information child sexual abuse and it is a platform which can be used to sensitise members of the public on the dangers of child sexual abuse.

Nair, P. (2019) posits that the media is a useful tool for sensitising the public against the evils of child sexual abuse. Nair, P. (2019) argues that the media creates social awareness by highlighting on the root causes of child sexual abuse which in the case of Ghana which may be child marriage as identified by the media as one of the root causes of child sexual abuse especially among the Northern folks of Ghana. Child marriage is culturally and traditionally entrenched hence the need for the media to continuously highlight some of its evils including child sexual abuse which poses great dangers to health of children in future and in that light, Nair, P. (2019) argues public knowledge and attitudes towards child sexual abuse are shaped through media depictions and coverage.

Thematically the media covered child sexual abuse as a national crisis which need urgent attention. Though not so many coverage were done thematically, there were few incidences of media coverage that projected child sexual abuse as national crisis with headlines like *“Issues of Defilement are National Crisis”*. Themes like this present child sexual abuse as national issues

which demand drastic actions to curb it unlike episodic frames which focused mainly on the individual characters of victims and perpetrators who are mostly at center of news reports. According to Freezell, T. J. (2019), issues are framed thematically if solutions to such issues lie with government or society to address it collectively and so for issue of child sexual abuse to be termed as a national crisis certainly qualifies it as a thematic frame which seeks to paint a bigger picture of the problem which needs a collective effort to have it address. Weatherred, J. L (2016) highlights the contributions of media in framing child sexual abuse in America whereby the media through its framing succeeded in presenting child sexual abuse as national problem which required a national solution to address it.

Objective Two – Explore how the news stories on child sexual abuse established relationship between victims and perpetrators.

Content analysis revealed prevalence of what Finkelhor, D et al (2017) described as intra-familial child sexual abuse. Finkelhor, D. et al (2017) described intra-familial child sexual abuse as the type of child sexual abuse which happens or occurs in the family environment and perpetrators are adults who are closely related to the child.

While covering news stories about child sexual abuse for 2017 and 2018, reporters of *Ghanaian Times* tried to establish relationship between victims and perpetrators. In 2017, Daily Graphic covered 16 Child Sexual Abuse stories. With 10 of these news stories, *Daily Graphic* failed to establish relationship between victims and perpetrators. In 2018, Daily Graphic again covered 16 stories and indicated relationship between victims and perpetrators in 4 instances as shown by table 4.

Ghanaian Times on other hand made stark revelations in their coverage as far as relationship between victims and perpetrators are concerned. In 2017 for example, *Ghanaian Times* covered 37 Child Sexual Abuse and with 25 of them, *Ghanaian Times* indicated relationship between victims and perpetrators. With 12 of them, *Ghanaian Times* did not indicate relationship between victims and perpetrators. In 2018, *Ghanaian Times* covered 38 news stories on Child Sexual Abuse and with 38 of them, *Ghanaian Times* indicated relationship between victims and relationship. The remaining 3, *Ghanaian Times* did not indicate relationship between perpetrators and victims. News coverage on Child Sexual Abuse by Ghanaian Times revealed high incidences of intra-familial child sexual. There were news reports about children, especially girls who were sexually abused by their *fathers, uncles, stepfathers* and other close relatives and associates.

Murray, L. K et al (2014) argued that the impression that children are abused by strangers is false because 90% of children are sexually abused by adult they know and that is exactly what this study confirms. Murray and colleagues emphatically argued that 68% of children are even abused by their close relatives and family members and that is exactly what the data indicated in table 3 and per *Ghanaian Times* coverage of child sexual abuse in 2017 and 2018. Stories headlines like “*girl defiled by father, father impregnates daughters, stepfather impregnates girl* and several other major headlines carried by both *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* while covering child sexual abuse proved the fact that child sexual abuse indeed happens in all human settings including homes where one expects the child to safe and protected from all forms of abuses including being abused sexually.

The extent of media coverage of girls involved in child sexual abuse, especially in intra-familial abuses creates the impression that boys are rarely abused sexually but this what Osadan, R. & Reid, E. (2015) claimed that it is a false impression as boys and girls are sexually abused in almost

the same proportion. David, A.N. et al (2016) argued that child sexual abuse involving both boys and girls is very predominant in modern societies with greater part of it going unnoticed especially if the abuses involve boys and if the abuse is perpetrated by close relatives and family members.

According to Murray and colleagues, it is fallacious to presume that boys are not sexually abused. Boys are equally abused sexually but often goes undetected compared to girls who are always suspected to be victims of child sexual abuse. To highlights on the evils of child sexual abuse involving boys, Russell, W and Hart, R. et al (2017) argued that the world is gradually appreciating the magnitude of child sexual abuse involving boys.

According to Tefera, M. (2018), majority child sexual abuse involving boys are equally perpetrated by people who are well known to the boys just like the girls. The environment of child sexual abuse involving boys can be described as intra-familial just Finkelhor (1984) described in his precondition model of child sexual abuse.

Objective three – Examine the extent to which Media coverage called for policy interventions against Child Sexual Abuse.

Tables 4.2.5 and 4.2.6 are the media coverage with respect policy appeals by both *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* for the year 2017 and 2018 respectively. It is clear from the tables that both *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* failed to call for policy interventions in the course of their coverage. In the year 2017 for example, *Daily Graphic* covered 16 stories on Child Sexual Abuse. With 2 of the stories, *Daily Graphic* made appeals for policy interventions whereas the remaining 14, there were no appeals for policy interventions. *Ghanaian Times* on other hand covered 37 stories and only in one instance that appeal was made for policy intervention with remaining 36, no appeal for policy intervention was made.

In year 2018, *Daily Graphic* again covered 16 with 10 of these stories, no appeal for policy interventions with regard to Child Sexual Abuse made. The case of *Ghanaian Times* did not change. Out of 38 publications of news reports about Child Sexual Abuse, 37 made no effort to call for policy interventions and only in one instance that appeals for policy interventions was made.

Lubaale, E. C. (2015) argued that child sexual abuse for a long time remained secretive and socially closed until the media started highlighting its dangers through news coverage. To highlights the contributions of media coverage to child sexual abuse through framing, Lubaale, E. C. (2015) narrated that child sexual abuse was such a shameful subject to discuss in public domain until the media set its lens on it through framing and since then the media has become a tool for stimulating issue of child sexual abuse.

Weatherred, J. L. (2015) argued that media is capable of influencing the public to make informed opinions through its coverage and news framing especially if the framings are thematic and so for news agencies like *Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic* to fall short in media appeals for policy change and implementations with respect to child sexual abuse tells how the Ghanaian media is doing very little to protect Ghanaian children from the evils of child sexual abuse. Weatherred, J. L. (2015) opined that the role of media to curb child sexual abuse is critical and crucial and for that to happen, the media ought to make child sexual abuse an agenda to pursue with hopes of influencing government and policy makers about the plight of teeming children who are being sexually abused. In highlighting on the role of the media to curb child sexual abuse, Weatherred, J. L. (2016) argues that the media ought to frame stories of child sexual abuse thematically to influence policies and decision-making with respect to child sexual abuse, in that case, child sexual

abuse become a societal problem than that of an individual problem of the child who has been abused sexually.

According to Freezell, T. J. et al (2016), framing is how the media portray prevailing issues to its audience and the way and manner the issues are framed can be thematic or episodic. If the media wishes to contribute to policy formulation and implementation, then the media ought to frame the issues thematically and if that happens, citizens perceive the issues as societal or communal ones which need the attention of the government or need collective attention and solutions.

To Weatherred, J. L (2016), attention of society shift from society perceiving child sexual abuse as individual problem to a societal one which need urgent and proactive measures to resolve. Citing the American situation as an example of how thematic framing is capable of influencing, Weatherred, J. L. (2016) argued that the attention of society shift from society perceiving child sexual abuse as an individual problem to a societal or national one which needs an urgent attention that this what Ghanaian media has failed per the data of this study after the content of both Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic were analysed from 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2018.

4.4. Conclusion

After the analysis, the findings revealed that news coverage with respect to both newspapers were largely episodic which concentrated on the situations of the victims and perpetrators child sexual abuse. With the second objective, news coverage on child sexual abuse by Daily Graphic revealed incidences of intra-familial child sexual abuse which put children risk at home even with close relatives and lastly, it was revealed that appeals for policy implementation with regard to child sexual abuse is inadequate.

The next chapter discusses recommendation and commendations.

CHAPTER FIVE - SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This is the final chapter of the study. In this chapter, it is expected that the summary of the study will be discussed to be followed with recommendations. Being a global phenomenon which possess serious health dangers to victims and survivors, children in Ghana are not excluded from its threats and dangers. There have been evidence of high rates of Child Sexual Abuse in Ghana though there are inaccuracies in the reports and studies conducted on Child Sexual Abuse in Ghana. The media is known to have a proven effect on curbing child sexual abuse through its coverage. It is in that light that this study was conducted using *Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times* which are two widely circulated newspapers in Ghana as case studies.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study looked at media coverage on child sexual abuse in Ghana using *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* as case study. The objectives were to examine the nature of media coverage, to explore the extent to which the media established relationship between victims and perpetrators and lastly, the extent to which the media coverage on child sexual abuse called for policy interventions.

Though there is no accurate data to support the magnitude and rate of prevalence of child sexual abuse in Ghana as posited by Owusu – Addo, E. (2018), available data from DOVVSU indicate that the rate of child sexual abuse in Ghana is a worrying concern. Despite how alarming the problem appears to be, one can confidently conclude that media coverage on child sexual abuse per the findings of this study is inadequate.

Per the findings of this study in relation to the first objective, Child Sexual Abuse appears not to be on the agenda of media despite its health threats and dangers to children. It reveals the media failed to put child sexual abuse in the right public contexts and perspectives to create the awareness needed to address it. Based on this study, one can confidently conclude that media coverage on child sexual abuse is inadequate and largely episodic though coverage of *Daily Graphic* had some interchanging discrepancies. It tells why the media fail to present child sexual abuse as threat to society but not the individual child who has suffered some kind sexual abuse.

The second objective sought to explore how child sexual abuse stories established relationship between victims and perpetrators and this studies per the coverage of *Ghanaian Times* for example confirmed the fact that children are at risk of being sexually abused by people known to them than strangers. There were high incidences of what Finkelhor (1985) described as intra- familial child sexual abuse, especially by coverage of *Ghanaian Times*. Coverage of *Ghanaian Times* indicated high incidences of child sexual abuse by close relatives of victim and survivors. For example in 2017, out of 37 stories covered by *Ghanaian Times*, 25 of them indicated victims were sexually abused by people known to them. Again in 2018, there were 38 news stories covered by *Ghanaian Times* and 35 of them indicated that victims were sexually abused by people known to them.

With the third objective, the media failed to call for policy interventions. As posited by Mejia, P. (2012) and Weatherred, J. L. (2013) the media has the capability to cause change in policy formulation and implementation against child sexual abuse. The findings of this study revealed that both *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* failed to call for policy interventions in the course of covering child sexual abuse stories. In 2017 for example. *Ghanaian Times* covered 37 child sexual abuse stories. Out of the 37 stories, only 1 story had appeals made for policy interventions against child sexual abuse. Again in 2018, *Ghanaian Times* covered 38 stories about child sexual

abuse and only 3 of the stories had appeals made for policy interventions against child sexual abuse. *Daily Graphic* had less coverage on child sexual abuse stories compared to *Daily Graphic*. In 2017, they covered 16 stories and only 2 made calls for policy interventions and in 2018, it was also 16 stories and 6 made appeals for policy interventions.

5.2. Recommendations

1. The media in the course of covering child sexual stories, the media must frame their stories thematically to present child sexual abuse as a communal, societal or national problems which needs to be addressed collectively.
2. The in the course of covering child sexual stories should highlight on short and long term health effect of child sexual abuse.
3. The media should use their platforms to highlight the causes and risk factors of child sexual abuse.
4. Stories of sexual abuses involving boys should be given equal attention like that of the girls.
5. The media should highlight the fact that child sexual abuse can be perpetrated by men, women and children of peers.
6. The media must have an agenda on child sexual abuse. Setting an agenda on child sexual abuse through coverage will go a long way to create the needed awareness and the attention it deserves to curb the dangers that child sexual abuse possess to children.
7. The media while covering child sexual abuse stories should not overly present victims as the only children who faces the dangers of child sexual abuse but all other children are equally at risk.

8. In the course of covering child sexual abuse stories, the media should call for child safety measures both at home and school.
9. The media should intensify calls for policy interventions against child sexual abuse
10. The media should embark on child safety advocacy against child sexual abuse in collaboration with state agency and non-governmental agencies responsible for promoting child welfare

5.3. Conclusion

Child sexual abuse is a global phenomenon with very devastating health effects. Ghana has its own stories of child sexual abuse and the media is known to be an effective tool for fighting child sexual abuse, In light of that, this study sought to analyse media coverage in Ghana using Ghanaian Times and Daily Graphic which are two widely distributed newspapers in Ghana as case studies. The findings revealed that child sexual abuse coverage is woefully inadequate, there were high incidences of intra-familial child sexual abuse and the media has almost failed to call for policy interventions against child sexual abuse. One should be confident to conclude that it thus the reasons why child sexual abuse seems to be on the increase year on turn. In this chapter, the findings were accordingly summarised and recommendations dully made.

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