

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF GHANAIAN WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE. A STUDY OF
PRIMETIME NEWS PROGRAMS OF SELECTED MEDIA HOUSES**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH OF THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNICATION**

SEPTEMBER, 2020

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation was undertaken by me under the supervision of Dr. Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor. All materials used have been duly acknowledged where necessary to the best of my knowledge.

Therefore, I declare that this dissertation as my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this institution or elsewhere.

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.....

SIGNATURE

.....

DATE

SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this dissertation was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of dissertation laid down by the School of Graduate Studies and Research, Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Dr. Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor.

.....

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DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my entire family most especially my beloved late father, Rtd. Chief Inspector Andreas Avorgbedor, my elder brother, King David Selorm Ayelesor, and my lecturer and mentor, Dr Ebenezer Malcom for their enormous support in my journey to this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I give thanks to the Almighty God for His abundant mercies and favour upon my life, and the continuous blessing showered on me by bringing wonderful people into my life.

I appreciate the patience and guidance of my ever supporting supervisor, Dr. Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor who in spite of her busy schedule, provided meaningful contributions, guidance and constructive criticisms which made this study successful. And to my family, colleagues and friends who supported me during this Master's program, may the Almighty God bless you all for your encouragement and support.

ABSTRACT

The media play a critical role in the construction and re-construction of perceptions and stereotypes against women. The narrative regarding media's portrayal of women's involvement in politics and governance positions are presented in stereotypic ways despite increased women's involvement in politics and economic development. The media cover women in politics less than their male counterparts and also tend to trivialize issues concerning women in politics when giving them limited reportage. Studies indicate that the media portrays women who are involved in politics as unable to hold political offices, people who only possess soft skills and women who cannot get married due to their chosen careers. It is thus essential to study how the media represents and portrays women in political and governance positions.

The study adopts the quantitative content analysis approach to study this phenomenon. The study samples a total of 120 7pm news programs from GTV and Citi TV across April to July to assess media's portrayal and representation of women in politics and governance. The paper concludes that it is essential to study how the media portray women's involvement in politics and governance in order to empower them appropriately.

This study will be crucial to literature concerning the general media landscape in Ghana. Furthermore, this study will hold immense benefit to studies regarding how the media represents and propagates stereotypes against women.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The world over, it is an undeniable fact that women form the majority of the world's population. As such, they have been essential to the development of every society today. In other words, the participation of women in decision making or governance is very crucial for societal development because they equally contribute significantly to national economies (Hamdaratu 2017). Aside that, the participation of women in politics and democratic governance where critical decisions are taken for the society are very crucial for societal development. The reason being that, they are the ones that are mostly affected by the decisions taken and also, their participation would enable them gain an appreciable amount of power to take part in decision making both at the grassroots and national level that would affect their lives (Hamdaratu 2017: Azanu 2017: Haraldsson & Wängnerud 2019).

Despite their huge population, and contribution to societal development, in many societies, women's roles are still not given much recognition as accorded the male sex. To add to this, Willis (2009) posits that although women constitute more than half the population of the world, they have been marginalized when it comes to key decision making right from creation because there is ample evidence from Eve, who was created to support the first man (Adam). This order has been established through medieval times till recent. This assertion is largely supported by Otieno (2013). He argues that Women's role in governance has for a long time been downplayed not only in Africa but in the world. This he alluded to the fact that women are viewed as second class citizens whose role in the society is to accept the status quo and obey their male counterparts. "They have been taught that it is in the men's place to be right: that they

[men] are the ones who make the laws, implement them and punish whoever is acting contradictory to the law and for the women to be the foot-soldier and only obey as they are told” (Otieno 2013:6).

Fast-forward in modern times, globalization and democracy have become bedfellows as some advocates of democracy stress the need for women’s participation in high places as a precursor to the transition and consolidation of democracy in developing economies. On the other hand, the negative effects of globalization often have an impact on how new democracies are able to perform, especially relating to gender and minority issues. One central question is the impact of democracy on the rights and political participation of women in emerging democracies (Dawuni, 2009). Many women and women groups such as ABANTU for Development, Mbaasem Foundation, African Women’s Development Fund, Women’s Net and many others across the world have come to the realization that they need to fight for their rights in political participation and governance in most societies today.

Over the years, democratization waves that reached the African continent came along with a concern to encourage women participation in politics. The growing wave of this consciousness towards women’s participation in political governance across the world is anchored by legal and policy frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Beijing Platform of Action (1995). Karam (2010) asserted that the Beijing Platform for instance committed signatories to the Beijing declaration and plan of action which is embodied in a comprehensive set of recommendations for the global community to advance women’s participation in political decision making process and increase women’s representation in political power structures. However, in spite of the progressive global effort to advance the course of women’s development, the scourge of gender discrimination and

marginalization which is an unhealthy reality in most developing countries barracked women from full participation in society (Kurz & Johnson-Welch, 2000: Hamah, 2015).

In Ghana, the story doesn't seem to be much different although women make an overwhelming majority of the nation's population. The 2010 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), shows that Ghanaian women constitute about 51.2 per cent of the national population. Ironically, more than half of the Ghanaian population (nearly 52%) - like elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa - is made up of women who are responsible for the majority of household tasks such as provision of health care, food and water. They also have greater influence on population growth rate, infant mortality and children's education and nutrition. Regardless, women lack equal opportunity to education, credit facilities, technology, employment, administrative roles and political powers, despite the profound and pervasive effort they have on the wellbeing of their family and community (Kamaldeen, 2005).

Men's dominant power position over women stems from traditional socialization and thus perpetuated through forces in the socialization process of which one agency of that socialization is the media.

Numerous studies have shown a persistent bias in the way women are covered in the media through stereotypes, trivialization and underrepresentation, as compared to the coverage men receive. According to Ryan (2013:13) "the media continues to cover female politicians in gendered terms, focusing on their marital status or appearance and emphasizing stereotypically "female issues like education and healthcare". Ross and Carter (2011) also revealed that when women did appear in the news, they were mostly covered as victims, eye candy or as mothers. This goes to show that stereotyping in news reportage still remains a problem for women.

With regards to the underrepresentation of women in the media, The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2015 report revealed that from 2010 to 2015, there has been no improvement in the coverage women receive in the media with regard to quantity. The report showed that “women make up only 24% of persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news” (GMMP 2015:8). In addition, the underrepresentation of women in the media is not only limited to the traditional (print and broadcast) media but has also found its way into new electronic media forms, showing only 26% of people in internet stories and media news tweets to be women (GMMP 2015).

Lünenborg and Maier (2015); Avumegah (2017) have shown that the media describes politics and governance as a male field by emphasising the gender of women and suggesting that they belong to the ‘second sex’ where politics is concerned. Therefore, women are still considered as greenhorns in the field of politics, despite their achievements. Other scholars have shown the trivialisation and stereotypical treatment of women in politics which is not the same for men. Gill (2003) posits that political women do not escape from the negative patterns of representation that affect other women. Their age and marital status are routinely commented on in news reports whereas men receive issues coverage. Women are frequently referred to only by their first names, photographed in domestic, instead of professional settings and have their physical appearance excessively picked apart by journalists. Political women who make the news are frequently presented in ways that trivializes the issues they present and focus disproportionately on their appearance. The ‘tyranny of beauty’ or ‘attractiveness’ has become worse, not better in the last decade, and women’s appearance is repeatedly commented upon and evaluated in the press, radio, television and the world-wide web in ways which have no parallel for men. Women’s images are consistently more likely to appear than their arguments or opinions. The

flip side of this is that women who do not conform to the media's requirement that they be 'eye candy' are subject to vilification (Gill, 2003).

Studies done in Ghana further emphasize these issues in literature. Gadzepko (2003), Donkor (2016) and Avumegah (2017) for instance iterate that female politicians have been portrayed as prostitutes, unmarried women smokers, witches and quarrelsome. The Ghanaian media's reportage of female politicians can therefore be seen as emphasizing existing patriarchal dominance within society.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The media stands accused of showing biases towards women in their reportage and have been criticized for reinforcing socially constructed gendered roles. In fact, research on women presidential candidates have consistently revealed that when women contest elections as presidential candidates, the type of media coverage they garner focuses on all other aspects of their lives that have very little or nothing to do with their work. They also receive very little attention in terms of quality and quantity of reportage (Scharrer, 2002; Heldman et al, 2005; Fofie, 2016).

Again, empirical evidence on media coverage of politicians has consistently demonstrated that there is a systematic bias in the way men and women in politics are portrayed in the media, in terms of volume and substance of coverage (Ross et al. 2013; Boateng, 2020).

According to Lindner (2004) research on the portrayal of women has constantly reported various degrees of stereotyping when it comes to their depiction in the media. The GMMP (2005 & 2010) also reported that very little has changed in the way in which men and women have been

featured in the media over the years. Central to these issues of women is the role of the media in presenting and representing women in governance.

Several studies have been conducted where gender and media is concerned. Again, several studies have been conducted to compare the coverage women in political races or elections receive to that which their male counterparts receive. However per my search, there has been little studies examining how women in governance are portrayed – i.e women who hold national government positions such as within the executive, legislature or the judiciary remain relatively unexplored within most especially Ghanaian literature. This study therefore seeks to assess media’s portrayal of Ghanaian women in governance by studying some primetime news programs of selected media houses in Ghana.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The study will seek to achieve the following objectives that are in line with assessing the media coverage and portrayal of women in governance in Ghana.

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess Ghanaian media’s portrayal of women in governance.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To compare the quantity of coverage received by male and female in governance position in Ghana.
2. To compare the quality of coverage received by male and female in governance position in Ghana.

3. To explore the tone of coverage for female in governance position as against their male counterparts.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the quantity of coverage received by male and female in governance position in Ghana?
2. What is the quality of coverage received by male and female in governance position in Ghana?
3. What tone of coverage were given to female in governance position as against their male counterparts

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is aimed at bringing to the attention of the Ghanaian media the role they play in shaping the perceptions of audiences where women in politics and governance are concerned. Therefore, based on the findings, the role played by the Ghanaian media in the fight for gender equality will be revealed especially where governance, leadership and politics is concerned.

Empirical evidence from this study may also validate or not the concerns of liberal feminists, who are largely concerned about women empowerment, on how the media portray political women in the news. This might result in the development of in house editorial policies that will promote women's cause in the country.

The study is again significant because by addressing this question in a country not extensively analysed in the literature, the study contributes to increasing knowledge in the field of gender,

media and politics and situates coverage in a setting that has not received much scholarly attention.

Finally, this study seeks to contribute to existing literature especially with regard to coverage of women in elected or non-elected offices. This is because the majority of studies conducted in relation to the portrayal of female politicians in the media, have focused on women in electoral races mostly.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the paper is focused on reviewing literature related to the study. This section will therefore review literature related to media's portrayal of women in general, and then how the media portrays women in politics and governance. The section will also focus on reviewing the Framing theory as theoretic framework underpinning the paper. Furthermore, studies that have been conducted in relation to media's portrayal of women and women in politics and governance will also be reviewed to put this paper in empirical perspective.

2.2 WHAT IS MEDIA?

The word media is derived from the Latin parlance which means middle or in the middle (Bastinade, 2008). The media simply refers to medium of communication. It also refers to forms of mass communication systems and content generators as well as technologies that mediate human communication. This includes traditional forms of publishing (newspapers, periodicals, books) traditional electronic media (broadcasting, broadband, cable, or satellite), motion pictures, video gaming, recorded music, advertising, and adaptations of the Internet for any of these media (Hoag, 2008). Mass media specifically refers to a means of communication that is designed to reach a wide audience. Mass media platforms are commonly considered to include radio, newspapers, magazines, books, video games, and Internet media such as blogs, podcasts, and video sharing. Another way to consider the distinction is that a mass media message may be disseminated through several forms of mass media

2.3 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN GHANA

Much of the media landscape can be structured into pre-independence, post-independence, post-1992 and current practices. While it is essential to recount the Ghanaian media landscape in the pre-1992 constitutional era, it is critical to note that it is after the 1992 republican constitution that the media in Ghana grew truly independent as well as proliferated all across the country (Owusu, 2011). Indeed it was after the 1992 constitution had been put into full effect and the nation had seen a complete new political make-up after series of coup d'états that the private media had started springing up. Owusu (2011) avers that by 2001 Ghana begun to witness a great proliferation of private media across the country to rival state-owned media that had existed through the various military and democratic governing eras. This expansion of media was particularly within the electronic media (television and radio) and it was not long until Ghana had begun to feel the impact of media liberation in its socio-political sphere. Currently, there is at least one media form (TV, radio, newspaper etc.) in every district in the country that are fully functional with wide reach of audiences.

It suffices to note that, the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law in 2001 as well as the implementation and commissioning of other laws and commissions respectively that set the tone for media freedom in Ghana. Since then, Ghana's media led by private media organizations have championed advocacy struggles, social change, political change etc. and have earned its place as critical component for the socio-economic development of the country (Isbell & Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). Subsequently, Ghana has seen a steady climb on the league of media-friendly and active media nations in the world, rising on the World Press Freedom Index from 67th in 2002 to 23rd as at 2018 globally. On the African scene, the efforts of the media as well as

governments' support for freedom of the media saw Ghana ranked from 19th to 1st by 2018 (Reporters Without borders, 2002; Reporters Without Borders, 2018). The proliferation and vibrancy of the media has obviously had sterling effects on the country's socio-economic activities as well as its reputation on the global media and democracy index.

Electronic media (Television and radio) are the most used forms of media in Ghana although social media and other internet enabled media platforms are gradually gaining grounds among the Ghanaian populace (Isbell & Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). As at 2017, the total number of TV operators authorised by the National Communications Authority (NCA) to operate in the country stood at 128 TV stations. 21 of which were analogue terrestrial TV stations, while the remaining were digital terrestrial and digital satellite TV stations (National Communication Authority, 2017). Media proliferation is expected to increase as over 30 new TV stations had sprang up as at 2018 and an estimated total number 350 commercial and community radio stations established across the country. At this rate and with the rapid advancements in media technology, the internet and social media, the current number of TV and radio stations is a tall list of private media entities that have sprang up as a result of media entrepreneurship, media digitization and freedom (Botchway, 2019).

2.4 MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN

A majority of people hold the belief that the media (especially movies) are a reflection of what goes on in society. Consciously and unconsciously the media mirrors what happens in society through movies and news coverage of media organizations. Scholarship however indicates that, the media have a huge socio-cultural influence on society (Mishra, 2015). The media's power of influence is more evident in the construction and representation of gender in society. Media

products are perceived as one of the core socio-cultural elements that construct our understanding of being a man or woman. Thus in understanding femininity and masculinity, the media and its portrayal of such is critical to such studies (Ross & Byerly, 2004).

Media representation and portrayal of women have long existed, possibly right from when the first media content was produced. Through the many decades until now, the media has continually represented women and the entire concept of femininity in a manner that has nurtured stereotypes within society. Hence as a result of media's representation and portrayal of women through the many years of the existence of this phenomenon, current generations and cultures have developed specific stereotypes about women, the feminine gender and their supposed roles in society (Alkan, 2016). Kang (1997) and Gizycki (2009) argue that today, the narrative on female representation and portrayal in the media has not changed. Rather, it has been reinforced with many variations emanating as a result of new media trends. Gizycki (2009) particularly argues that gendered media stereotype, especially female stereotypic representations are deeply seethed within current media systems that removing them would be very difficult. As many female movements spring up and more women move into the workforce of many nations, it would seem that media's portrayal of women as homemakers would change, however, media continues to represent women in similar light as it used to.

Research on media's representation and portrayal of women gained immense prominence in the 1960s following a global surge of print media. The 1970s, saw an even more intense study of how media represented and portrayed women in society following continuous increase in women movements that sprang across the world. Media's portrayal of women were studied particularly in the context of advertising in magazines (Lindner, 2004). Studies that were conducted to understand media's portrayal of women were primarily geared at understanding stereotypic roles

propagated within the media that gendered roles to females. Such studies thus, focused mostly on print media's stereotypic representations of women as background to ensuring women's empowerment.

Sexton and Haberman (1974) note that women models were used for decorative purposes. Thus, women models were used as accessories to sell magazines. They posit further that this use of women as magazine decorators sharply increased between 1970 and 1971. They note that, print media portrayed women as housewives and homemakers whose primary were to keeping their families, keeping up physical appearances and being submissive to their male counterparts. Further, the media portrayed women as members of society with low levels of education, self-esteem. In essence, Sexton and Haberman advance that, the media portrayed women in magazines as periphery members of society with very little to no education. Women were portrayed in magazines only as decorators and played no prominent roles in these magazines. Furthermore, the media portrayed women as home keepers. Thus people whose only place were the homes and taking care of children while being submissive to their male counterparts. In agreement to this, Kang (1997) posits that, women were portrayed as traditional mothers, with core roles of taking care of the home. Kang (1997) avers that the portrayal of women in the media was thus limited to these roles, disregarding the inherent diversity women possess.

Generally, the media portrays women in four main stereotypic roles. This includes the home maker role, the non-decision maker and completer of non-important duties, dependent on men and requiring male protection and sex objects (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971). These portrayals run through most of researches conducted between the 1970s and 1990s. Studies such Wagner & Banos (1973) and Sullivan & O'Connor (1988) for instance found similar portrayals in their subsequent researches that studied print media advertising. However, they posit that these

portrayals existed in varying formats with many other variations of media's portrayal of women emanating post 1970s to the 1980s.

Kang (1997) argues that the for portrayal forms identified by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) were still evident in the 1990s even after women movements and women participation in economic activities had increased considerably. He underscores that women were still portrayed in the media as members of society whose decisions were not so important; social members who are dependent on their male counterparts for survival and protection; social members whose place are the homes; and sex objects. Chi and Baldwin (2004) in their study of gender and class stereotypes in US and Taiwanese advertising media discovered more males were portrayed in the media as working class members than females. Furthermore, the study found that the media portrayed women in non-professional working fields across a vast array of professions including sports and entertainment. They conclude that the media portrayed women as non-working members of society and social members whose involvement in socio-economic activities were minimal and inferior. In concurrence to this, Wolin (2003) posits that women were portrayed in the media as unable to hold higher offices of power in business organizations as much as their male counterparts. Wolin argues that the media portrayed males as more capable of manning higher offices of corporate organization than women.

One critical portrayal of women that has permeated the media for years is media's portrayal of women as sex objects. Thomas and Treiber (2000) argues that media's representation of women around the late 1990's and 2000s were mostly a representation of women empowerment, social activists and not passive members. However, portrayals of women as sex objects were highly dominant in the media. Images of beautiful, half naked women selling product were predominant in the media space, marking a slow but definite sway away from images of women portayed as

homemakers. Advertising agencies in particular propagated this portrayal while they tried to sell products with romance and sex appeal (Brown, 1996). Brown (1996) argues that the consistent portrayal of women as sex objects diminished the increasing wave of women empowerment in the media, ensuring that the core portrayal of women in the media was that of sexual objectification and commodification.

In summary, media's representation of women can be seen as largely negative within literature. Since the proliferation of media products in societies across the world, women have mainly been portrayed as weak and incapable members of society. Furthermore, the crux of media's representation of women centres greatly on sexual objectification and commodification; passive traditional mothers; incapable of managing high offices and inferior to their male counterparts.

2.5 GHANAIAN MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

The media have been noted as one of the core custodians of democracy in Ghana. The media continues to play a critical role in the educating voters on their civil rights to choose leaders, campaigning and also safeguarding peaceful elections in Ghana. Also, the media plays a key role in helping political parties and personalities communicate their messages to electorates and debate political and national matters. The role of the media in the political scope of Ghana is thus indispensable and crucial (Akapule, Achonga, & Kwode, 2020). The media therefore has a lot to do with the visibility of issues and personalities during elections and other prominent political calendar times.

Studies conducted world wide indicate that as much as the general portrayal of women in the media are stereotypic and skewed, media's representation of women in politics is similarly poor

and under-represented. Coverage of women involvement in politics continues to be poor in both quality and quantity. Women are only seen in the political media because of their unique value or when they are attached to some men of prominence (Goodyear-Grant, 2013). Studies on gendered coverage at both local and global levels dates back in several decades with the most extensive of these studies conducted by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2019). Findings from the GMMP (2019) report, indicates that women make up 24% of subjects seen, heard and read about in the media. Only 16% of the stories focused on women specifically while 48% reinforce gender stereotypes and only 8% of the news stories challenged such stereotypes. This trend of giving little attention to female issues in the media raises a lot of questions given that they (female) constitute a huge percentage of the population in the world. Akapule, Achonga, & Kwode (2020) argue that female politicians are often misrepresented in the Ghanaian media landscape. This continuous misrepresentation in the media portrays female politicians incapable of becoming leaders in the Ghanaian society. Gadzekpo (2011) further underscores that the situation in Ghana, is an exact replica of how the media portrays and misrepresents women in politics across the globe. As the media in Ghana continues to mirror structure and content of the global media scene, women's representation in politics continues to receive similarly misrepresented coverage. However, the other side of the debate is that, the Ghanaian media simply mirrors what it sees in the Ghanaian society and that its portrayal and misrepresentation is an exact copy of what happens in the Ghanaian society (Akapule, Achonga, & Kwode, 2020).

In a study by Yovonoo (2016) she studies how the media covers women parliamentary aspirants in three national dailies (the Daily Graphic, the Enquirer, and the Daily Guide). She found that the three dailies heavily favored male counterparts in their reportage. However, the study found

that tone of coverage favored female parliamentary candidates. The study concludes that overall, males enjoyed more coverage in the newspapers than their female counterparts. Even though women candidates received more calmer tones in coverage, their male counterparts were more often represented in the newspapers than female politicians. The British Council in a report in 2012 affirms that indeed even though men are more often represented in the media, women politicians enjoy a less harsher representation (British Council Report, 2012). The report further establishes that although being portrayed in a less harsher tone might seem positive, the media trivializes this, to condone with existing social stereotype that portrays political women as having 'soft' skills and soft people.

The media in Ghana further presents women in politics in very light manner while their male counterparts receive coverages that portrays them as huge decision makers in society. The media in Ghana tend to focus greatly on such trivial issues about women as their make-up, style of dressing, hairdo, manner of speech etc. This only portrays women in politics as incapable of handling the tough sides politics while their male counterparts enjoy coverages that suppose they do (Manya, 2013). To further stress on the trivialization of women who indulge in politics, Gadzekpo posits that media reportage of women in politics is littered with stories that intentionally focus on the either the husbands of these women. In case where they are unmarried to, the Ghanaian media is focused greatly on their singleness in a tone that suggest that they are being punished for choosing to be active political members. Such framing thus, suggests that women are not meant to be politicians (Gadzekpo, 2003).

In summary, the media's portrayal of women in politics in Ghana is both reminiscent of global media portrayal of women and Ghana's local stereotypic representation of women in society. Women are portrayed as unable to hold political positions and people with soft skills.

Furthermore, the media's portrayal of women in politics focuses greatly on trivial issues such as their romantic lives instead of political lives; sense of fashion etc.

2.6 THEORETIC FRAMEWORK

2.6.1 FRAMING THEORY

The foundations for the what is now reegarded as the framing theory is attributed to the work of Goffman in 1974. Since then, scholars refined the framing theory and frame analysis and it has become a critical theory in the analysis of media coverage on critical socio-economic issues especially on political matters (Shih, Wijaya, & Brossard, 2008).

Despite the fact that the theory is widely known and used in media and communication studies globally, placing a single definition to what it is very difficult. Thus, the framing theory is defined and explained differently by many scholars despite being the bane for many media related studies (Botan & Hazleton, 2006). When (Goffman, 1979) introduced frame analysis, he explained how the media selected certain aspects of perceived reality to highlight, interpret and communicate. To him, the frames identified were shaped by the dominant order and used by advertisers to structure ways in which audiences saw women. In a more recent study, Dewulf and Bouwen (2012:5) also define framing as the forceful portrayal and direction of meaning in ongoing interactions which are temporal communications structures that people build around issues during discussions or debates. Stromback and Luengo (2008) considered the different viewpoints of other scholars on framing and concluded that despite the different interpretations, there is a high degree of consensus that the theory is basically about the selection or choice of words, emphasis, sources, placement, and use of images and other journalistic methods of treating news stories. As a result of the media's ability to emphasise framing, Peng (2008)

indicates that the physical space dedicated to a portion of a particular story in a print news medium, frames the story in such a way that, that portion may take more space which will be more persuasive in a reader's understanding of the story.

Framing is important in media content studies because, as found by Chong and Druckman (2007), through framing, the media is able to redirect the attention of a number of people from one side of an issue to the very opposite of the issue. They conclude that framing is thus a powerful determinant in the outcomes of elections in the field of political communication. They suggest that framing is a deliberate tactic used by politicians and media personnel to co-ordinate individuals around particular interpretations (ibid). Stromback and Luengo (2008) however, disagree and contend that though framing occurs through the actions of media actors, they do not always do so intentionally because it is a phenomenon that cannot be avoided by journalists.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an explanation of the study design, procedures and the tools used in collecting and analysing data for the study. Methodology is simply the research strategy that stipulates the ways in which a study will be undertaken. Furthermore, the methodology of a study explains the systematic approach the research employs in using various methods of data gathering tools and techniques, data analysis and presentation techniques as applicable to the study being undertaken. This chapter thus is focused on identifying and explaining as part of the methodology the best methods and techniques for gathering and analysing data for this study. (Igwenagu, 2016).

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is considered as the blueprint upon which the entire elements of the research project are built. It is considered as structural framework that holds the various elements of data collection and analysis as applicable to the objectives of the intended study (Akhtar, 2016; Zikmund, 1988). According to Manheim (1997), does not only specify or outlines the systematic decisions of engaging in data collection and analysis for the study, it most importantly provides theoretical and logical justifications for these decisions. Thus, when thinking of designing the research, the research design framework enables the researcher to make adequately justified decisions on how to collect data, how to analyse the data and how to present the data as well. Akhtar (2016) accounts that these logical and theoretical justifications stem from several questions that answer “what the study is about and what type of data is required; what is the

purpose of the study; what should be the place or area of the study; what type of sampling is needed; what methods of data collection will be appropriate; how will the data be analysed”? (p. 69).

Akhtar (2016) advances that four types of research design exist. These include the Exploratory Research; Descriptive Research; Explanatory or Analytical Research; and the Experimental Research. This study adopts the descriptive research design. Akhtar explains that the descriptive research design also known as the statistical research design simple seeks to offer descriptions to phenomena as they exist. “It is used to obtain information on characteristics of a particular issue like a community, group or people” (p. 75). The descriptive research design thus describes social events, structures, systems, situations and experiences of a select people.

3.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The study employed the quantitative research approach in order to achieve its objectives. According to Cohen and Manion (1980), quantitative research approach is defined as social research that employs empirical methods and empirical statements. Furthermore, Cresswell (1994) adds that quantitative research approach seeks to explain social phenomena by collecting and analyzing data numerically and statistically.

In particular, the study employed the content analysis approach as framework for data analysis in order to assess television coverage of women in political positions in Ghana. Quantitative content analysis is a technique that is highly common and applied in the social sciences. Quantitative content analysis is the numerical and statistical technique for objectively and systematical description of contents of communication. It involves both the manifest and latent

analysis of communication contents such as texts, videos, audios, pictures etc (Krippendorff, 2004; Krippendorff, 2013; Lock & Seele, 2015). Furthermore, Riffe and co. encompasses the totality of quantitative content analysis in their definition of the concept. They define quantitative content analysis as the “systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurements rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption” (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998:20).

Quantitative content analysis is favorable for a study like this because it limits the researcher’s biases; this is because it is not based on feelings or emotions. Thus, quantitative content analysis is highly essential in analysing communication and media contents by taking into consideration numerical and statistical data derived from these contents.

3.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Population of study in research parlance is defined as a group, class or unit of subjects, variables or phenomena for study. According to them, the population of study encompasses the entire set of units that the researcher is going to study and thus can project their findings on. The population of study are thus a group of homogenous characters, variables, phenomena that a researcher intends to study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011; Abdullahi, 2012).

For the purpose of this paper, the population of this study includes all prime time news bulletins of Ghana Television (GTV) and Citi Television (Citi TV) in Ghana. GTV is selected due to its wide range of reach and the only public broadcasting television in the country while Citi TV is

selected due to its ability to combine traditional and modern media to reach her audience in the country.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLING SIZE

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011:87), a sample “is a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population”. The study employs the simple random sampling technique to sample out of the population of study. This is because, in simple random sampling technique, all members of the defined population have equal chances of being selected for the study (Alvi, 2016). Often considered as the lottery technique due to its ability to eliminate biases, the researcher systematically selected GTV and Citi TV prime timenews bulletins for the Study. Hence, a total of 15 TV news bulletins will be sampled from both TV channels for a period of four months (April and July 2020). Thus a sample size of 120 news bulletins from both selected media organizations across four months was selected as sample for the study. The choice of this period is purposive because the researcher intends to focus on the era of rife media attention to political activities in the country. Thus, due to the fact that these months are quite close to the Ghanaian month of election and usually recorded high levels of political engagements in the media, the researcher intended to study this period in light of women’s participation in the heightened political discourse of Ghana.

3.6 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

For the purpose of this study, a Code Book for content analysis was used as instrument for data collection. The Code Book is a list of variables you want to look for in your content analysis research. It contains the unit of analysis as well as its content categories.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data collected from the selected TV stations were input in research data analysis software known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22). The data was then interpreted and analysed in line with the objectives of this study. As noted, the study follows the descriptive approach to research; hence the data simply analysed to describe the critical phenomena that this study is focused on.

The analysed data was presented using simple frequency distribution tables and graphical representation charts such as bar graphs and pie charts.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is designed in line with the revised guidelines for the production of Master's thesis at the Ghana institute of Journalism. The guidelines were revised at the time this study was being conducted as a result of the nation-wide lockdown following the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher was therefore unable to collect data for this study. This long essay is presented as a form of extended proposal as required by the revised guidelines. The main limitation of this study is thus the researcher's inability to collect data due to the nation-wide lockdown

necessitated by the COVID-19 global outbreak. The study therefore followed the desk research approach.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The media is a critical factor or component in shaping the minds of people. Through their coverage of events and people in society, the media construct and reconstruct perceptions and propagate stereotypic representations. Studies have shown that since the inception and proliferation of the media globally, women have been at the wrong side of misrepresentations and negative portrayals. The narrative concerning media's coverage on women in politics remains the same despite increased women's participation in socio-political activities of nations globally. Women are misrepresented in the political landscape and suffer trivial coverage in the media.

The core of this study evaluated how media reports women in governing and political positions in Ghana. The study's objective is to assess both the quality and quantity of coverage given female politicians. The study focused on identifying how often women in governing and political positions were covered in the media and the tone of these coverages. This is to help better assess both the quantity of reportage and the quality as well.

The study shall employ the use of the quantitative research approach to achieve the enumerated objectives. The study shall employ the content analysis method to understand how the Ghanaian media represents and portrays. Hence the quantitative content analysis approach will be used in this study. GTV and Citi TV will be selected as case studies for this research. The study will seek to analyze 120 7pm news bulletins from both television stations. GTV was selected due to the fact that it is a state-owned TV station with nationwide coverage. Citi TV was selected as case study also because it represents a modern day private media organization with nationwide

coverage as well. Additionally, the station was selected because it was observed to have critical political participation and unbiased political reportage. The 120 sampled news bulletins selected across both media channels spanned the period of April to July 2020. The period was selected for the study because it represented a period of immense political atmosphere due to the parliamentary and impending presidential elections.

This study will serve as means of bringing to the attention of the media the role they play in shaping the perceptions of audiences specifically concerning women's involvement in politics as well as other areas of national life in the country. Additionally, this study will be impactful on how the Ghanaian media views gender equality in areas such as politics, governance and politics. Furthermore, this study will seek to add to literature that push the agenda of women empowerment and women participation in national activities. Within the area of literature, the study will add to existing literature regarding the study of media's portrayal of women in politics especially in Ghana.

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