

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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**THE ROLE OF THE PRINT MEDIA IN PROMOTING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE
MANAGEMENT IN GHANA.**

BY:

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DECLARATION

I, **Osei Kwame Wise**, do hereby declare that, except for the specific references to other people’s work which have been duly acknowledged, this work is the result of the original study done by me under supervision. I further declare that it has neither in whole nor in part been submitted for any degree in this university or elsewhere.

.....
OSEI KWAME WISE
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.....
DATE

SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION

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

.....
DR. LOUISE CAROL SERWAA DONKOR
(SUPERVISOR)

.....
DATE

DEDICATION

This work is specially dedicated to the loving memory of the late Victor Kwame Nkansah and Michael Kofi Osei, your investments paid off! It is also dedicated to my wonderful and loving sister and her husband – Stella Nkansah and Dorsu Wisdom for their kind support every step of the way. This study is again dedicated to Antoinette Gyan and Martin Thompson Ntem (MTN) for their support and kind words of encouragement throughout this journey. And to all my friends who in one-way or the other helped me come thus far with this work, this work is dedicated to you. And above all, this study is graciously dedicated to God Almighty for his mercies and endless love.

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This essay could not have been successful without first and foremost, the unfailing grace and favour of God Almighty. I am most grateful for his gift of life, strength and wisdom. I owe the success of this work to the patience, direction, supervision and constructive criticism of my supervisor – Dr. Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor. God richly bless you for making time despite your extremely busy schedule to peruse and guide this work. Your inputs and constructive criticisms helped make this a success.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Menstruation is a needful biological process which is an integral and normal part of human life and existence. This process prepares the body for its reproductive operations, and menstrual hygiene is fundamental to the dignity and well-being of women and girls and an important part of the basic hygiene and reproductive health services to which every woman and girl has a right (McMahon, Winch, Caruso, Obure, Ogutu, Ochari, & Rheingans, 2011; House, Mahon, & Cavill, 2012). However, in 2017, a 12-year-old girl in India committed suicide after her teacher reproached her for soiling her uniform with menstrual blood (BBC, 2017). A 12-year-old was also made to sleep in a hut next to her house while menstruating and she lost her life to the Gaja cyclone (BBC, 2018). In 2018, some girls in the central region of Ghana were banned from crossing a river to school while menstruating and reports indicate about 70 percent of girls in rural Ghana can only bath once during their periods as they are barred from fetching water during their menstrual periods (BBC, 2018; Ghanaweb, 2019). These instances highlight the ostracized treatments women and girls consistently receive on account of their menstrual activity in the very crucial and formative years of their being.

In many cultures across the globe, the transition from girlhood to womanhood and the start of fertility is occasioned by the first menstrual cycle (Menarche) of the adolescent girl (Rembeck, Moller & Gunnarsson, 2006). This transition may alter the perception of the adolescent girl about herself as well as the perception of society about the adolescent girl (McMahon et al., 2011). Menstruation, although an essential and integral biological process, is perceived by many women to be characterised by shame, fear and anxiety and people do not discuss it openly as it is often considered a taboo, and menstrual blood viewed as dirty with feelings of

embarrassment and suppression during menstrual periods (McMahon et al., 2011; Aflaq & Jami, 2012; Shanbhag, Shilpa, D'Souza, Josephine, Singh & Goud, 2012; Burrows & Johnson, 2005). In some cultures, like the Jewish Mikvah, menstruating women are considered unclean and therefore mandated to take a ritual bath to sanitize themselves before they can have any intimate encounter with a man (Cicurel, 2000; Goldenberg and Roberts, 2004). In other societies, even sanitary materials like sanitary towels or tampons can cause people to distance themselves from women. Given the level of hatred to menstrual blood, a stain may be regarded as a blemish on a woman's character (Roberts, Goldenberg, Power, & Pyszczynski, 2002). Again, the cultural beliefs that portrays women to be physically (menstrual phase) or mentally (premenstrual phase) disordered, ignites and sustains the stigma of menstrual women as ill, disabled, out-of-control, or even crazy (Chrisler 2008; Chrisler and Caplan 2002).

As societies evolved, the perception of menstruation changed accordingly (Thomas, 2007), however, menstruation is still deemed a taboo in many societies and thus consequently affected the lives of women at every level and more specifically on their health, well-being, sexuality and social status (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2011). The way in which menstruation is viewed in many societies is influenced by socio-cultural practices and perceptions reinforced by institutions such as religion, science and the media (Cevirme, Cevirme, Karaoglu, Ugurlu & Korkmaz, 2010). As a result of these awkwardly framed images of menstruation as a taboo in many societies, the stigma revolving around it, the unclear understanding of menstrual processes, as well as the misinformation about menstruation, many studies have argued the media as a public sphere plays a critical role in changing or reinforcing these perceptions about menstruation (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2013; Rosewarne, 2012). As menstrual taboo is argued by Thornton (2011), to be enforced and transmitted through discourses just like in the

past, the media was used to change of behaviour and perception of people regarding taboo topics such as HIV/AIDS and homosexuality in some societies. (Yagnik, 2013).

1.1 Problem Statement

At least 26% of the world's population experiences menstrual cycle as part of a natural biological process (UNICEF, 2018), which enables them to sustain a healthy reproductive system. Nonetheless, this natural human process is stigmatized, considered a taboo topic and rarely discussed publicly in most countries including African societies (UNICEF, 2018; House S, Mahon T, & Cavill S., 2012). Addai (2016), documented instances when girls menstruating are prevented through varied means from living normal lives in the North Dayi and Zabzugu Districts in the Volta and Northern Region respectively in Ghana.

Among other things, menstruation has been, and still is, used as reasonable grounds for the exclusion of women from fully partaking in many social and economic activities in the society, and serving as a justification for the control of women's body and their sexuality (Merskin, 1999). Many of these misconceptions, misrepresentations and cultural myths regarding menstruation and the conceived perceptions are transferred through generations by family, story tellers and the media (Ibid).

As argued by Wang & Jiang (2017), media text can affect an individual's perception and ability to construct an accurate and informed imagery of an issue. As an example, in a study conducted by Lyons (2000), on the coverage of menopause in the media, it was identified that the media inter alia, influence and shape health beliefs, and convey social meaning attached to health issues. Thus, by extension, media (re)presentations of menstruation and menstrual hygiene can have extreme implications on the health, education, social, economic and political well-being of a woman and the society as a whole. Therefore, it is essential to study within the context of

the Ghanaian society, what role the media (print) plays in promoting menstrual hygiene management.

1.2 Research Questions

This essay shall be guided by the following research questions

- a. How often do the Ghanaian print media report on menstruation and menstrual hygiene management?
- b. How often do the Ghanaian print media place reports about menstruation and menstrual hygiene management on front pages?
- c. What choice of words are used to describe issues of menstruation and menstrual hygiene management in the Ghanaian print media?

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this essay is to assess the role of print media in promoting menstrual hygiene management in Ghana. The specific objectives are to:

- a. To establish the frequency of reports (news, feature stories, editorials, and columns) about menstruation and menstrual hygiene management.
- b. To examine the relevance placed on menstruation and menstrual hygiene management.
- c. To determine the framing of menstruation and menstrual hygiene issues in the Ghanaian print media.

1.4 Significance of the Study

One major identifiable gap in society's misunderstanding of menstruation and menstrual-related health issues is the absence of extensive study on menstrual cycles and hygiene. This according to Dr. Rowe in an interview with Kathryn Clancy, a biological anthropologist, is

because menstrual hygiene is not regarded as a ‘serious’ science enough to merit extensive study. Thus, most of the menstrual-related misconceptions and distortions are based on a ‘predominantly male perspective.’ Dr. Rowe further asserts that this results in the lack of knowledge and understanding women generally have about menstrual cycle and hence women have to rely on information from the media and superficial traditional conversations to be informed about their menstrual cycle. As such, this essay can be relevant to various stakeholders in the following ways: First, it will serve as an important material for future researchers and academicians as it acts as a source of reference regarding the role of the media in promoting menstrual hygiene management in Ghana. Again, this essay will help various health institutions, NGOs and advocacy organizations and individuals who are into reproductive health, to develop policies and laws that will help demystify the misconceptions and stigmatization associated with menstruation. Finally, the essay would also be beneficial to students and researchers since recommendations would be proffered based on the literature review on areas to improve and further investigate.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This essay consists of four chapters. It begins with chapter one which discusses the background to the study, problem statement, the specific objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. The second chapter reviews the theoretical framework associated with the study as well empirical works done by other scholars in this field of this study. The third chapter focuses on the methodology, research design, population and the sample size for the study. The final chapter concludes the study and provides reflection on the contributions of this study to literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

A review of the most relevant theory underpinning the role of print media in promoting menstrual hygiene management in Ghana will be critically examined in this chapter. Along with that would be a considerable discussion of related scholarly works both in the past and present regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene management in the media.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This section of the chapter takes into consideration, the important aspects theories play in a long essay. It shall examine a relevant theory that best explains the role of the media in promoting menstrual hygiene management. Grant & Osanloo (2014), underscores the importance of theories in a research study as the foundation for which all knowledge is built both in the metaphorical and literally form. The theoretical framework serves as the guiding principle for the researcher and consequentially a baseline for the literature review, methodology, and analysis (Ibid). For the purposes of this essay, the framing theory is considered relevant and appropriate to provide a comprehensive foundation for the essay.

2.1.1 Framing Theory

Framing after its onset in the mid-1970s, have undergone some rapid developments. The once exclusive sociological concept coined by the 20th century sociologist, Erving Goffman in 1974, has today, become a multidisciplinary theory used in communication study. The underling idea of the framing theory is that communicators (media personnel) perceive some aspect of

reality to be imperative and hence include or place emphasis on that while excluding other aspects of reality in the production and distribution of media text (Goffman, 1974).

The concept of framing has over the years received varied scholarly definitions. Entman (1993: 52), asserts that framing encompasses the selection of “some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommended for items described.” Entman (1993:52), further argues that, media texts “contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, source of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements.” For Gitlin (1980:7), framing essentially is about the “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbolic handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual,” and consequently, framing enables the news reporters to “process a large amount of information quickly and routinely and package the information for efficient relay to their audience” (Ibid). Similarly, Valkenburg et al. (1999) argues that a media frame is a meticulous way in which journalists compose their news stories to improve audience accessibility.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989), posits media frames are necessary to enable media personnel convert meaningless and non-recognizable happenings into a distinct event. Cappella and Jamieson (1997:3940) highlights media frames as “those rhetorical and stylistic choices, reliably identified in news that alter the interpretations of the topics treated and are a consistent part of the news environment.” Sheafer and Gabay (2009:449), observed that framing involves “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution.”

These definitions of framing and the many others that could not be captured in this study, all suggestively points to the systematic presentation of events and news in the media to affect how media consumers perceive and understand these news or events. Thus, the choice and representation of frames about menstruation in the media are techniques adopted by the media and reporters to reinforce the ideology, values, and orientations associated with menstruation and menstrual hygiene management. Johnston-Robledo, Barnack & Wares (2006), notes how portrayal of menstruation in the media are biased and inadequate with an aim of presenting menstruation as “inconvenient, bothersome, incapacitating, and unnecessary”.

Basically media texts can be framed in two ways – positively or negatively. Positive framed texts provide some form of gains to the audience for adopting the message whereas negatively frame texts plays emphasis on the shortcomings the audience may experience as a result of not adopting the media texts (O’Keefe & Jensen, 2007; Yang & Lee, 2016). Media texts either positively or negatively framed, is based on the socio-cultural values of a society and are “context specific and are thus shaped by the prevailing hierarchies and power relations” in the society (Colombini et al., 2016: 495). In addition to these socio-cultural values, individual perceptions equally affect how media texts are framed. Perceptions such as preexisting beliefs, values, and attitudes affect the framing and understanding of media texts (Henize, 2013).

As regards framing of menstruation in the media, Yagnik (2014: 621) argues that “framing can play a pivotal role in demonizing or normalizing any stigma or taboo” associated with menstruation. That is, media framing of menstruation or menstrual hygiene affects the perception of the audience either positively or negatively and thereby influencing their view of menstruation either stereotypically or as a normal biological processes that must be considered a normal part of being female. Yagnik (2014: 621) further notes that in a traditional menstrual hygiene advertisement in the United States and United Kingdom, menstruation is framed “as a villain, and the female hygiene products as the hero that relieves women of the pain.” This

frame perceives menstruation negatively and sustains menstrual stereotypes and misconceptions.

2.2 Review of Related Works

2.2.1 Social Construction of Menstruation

Today, Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) has become a growing public health topic around the world. Globally, an increasing coalition of governments, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international donor agencies, women's organizations, multinational companies, and concerned activists inter alia, are putting in efforts and contributions in varied forms to bring attention and resources to menstrual-related issues such as taboos, embarrassment, and shaming experienced by many girls in many low- and middle-income countries. Despite the efforts and contributions of these international organizations, feminist movements, scholars and individuals, many young girls and women across the globe still experience diverse forms of stereotypes due to the social construction of menstruation in many parts of the world.

Results from a study conducted by McMahon et al (2011), affirmed that menstruation has been socially constructed to be a hidden part of womanhood in many societies. The findings of the study noted that several girls are expected by society to maintain secrecy about their menstruation. Though it is usually not possible to know when a woman is menstruating unless she discloses it, or unless she stains her clothes, McMahon et al (2011), found that girls would fear getting stains on their clothes while menstruating to avoid being stigmatised. Burrows & Johnson (2005), notes that girls would often change the kinds of clothing they wore in order to hide any indication of menstruation and in some cases, girls would prefer to wear tight jeans or more revealing clothing so as to create a facade that they are not menstruating when they actually are, just to avoid being stigmatised (Kowalski & Capple, 2000). Also, as a way of

hiding the visible symptoms (beyond menstrual stains) of menstruation, some girls would not use sanitary dispensers even if they were provided in schools and public places whereas other girls would take the necessary precautionary measures to prepare for unexpected menstruation. In doing so, some girls could wear a sanitary towel at all times to ensure unexpected menstruation would not stain their clothes (Burrows & Johnson, 2005).

As noted by WaterAid, in Ghana, 95% of girls in rural areas say they feel embarrassed during their period and 90% say they feel ashamed as a result of the stigma they experience from boys and the society. In Malawi, 82% of girls in a small scale survey conducted by WaterAid did not know about menstruation before the onset of menarche. In other communities while some girls were prevented from cooking or bathing, others were also excluded from water sources during menstruation. Similarly, McMahon et al., (2011) also found that feelings of shame, fear, distraction, confusion and powerlessness were usually associated with menstruation particularly at school or in a public area. Thus, the stigma, attitude and negative construction of menstruation as dirty and disgusting often makes girls keep menstruation concealed and a secret (Schooler et al., 2005).

According to findings of a study in Turkey by Demirbag and Gungormus (2011), 70.3% of their female sampled students lacked appropriate knowledge about menstruation and menstrual hygiene management, and also, that the knowledge the female sampled students had was inadequate for healthy menstrual behaviour. It was again discovered that issues of menstruation and menstrual hygiene is a prevalent taboo within their socio-cultural context (Demirbag and Gungormus, 2011). Using a sample of 199 female students from an undergraduate psychology class in a university,

Schooler et al. (2005), studied the role of menstrual attitudes and body shame in predicting sexual decision-making. One of the research questions focused on ascertaining whether menstruation had any form of relation with generalised body shaming of females. It was

identified that women's attitudes toward menstruation were significantly connected with their general level of comfort with their bodies. Girls are made to learn as they pass through puberty that the female body is derogated and cannot be valued as the male body. This often makes females develop feelings of shame about their bodies as regards its attractiveness and cleanliness. This however, is in contrast to what boys are made to learn as they pass through puberty; that their masculine bodies can equate to power, pride and self-worth (Fingerson, 2006). Thus, whereas ladies are groomed to be self-conscious from tender ages, boys on the other hand are coached to be powerful and proud, and to dominate women (Ibid). Oxley (1998) argue that women go through a lot of efforts to hide their menstrual cycle due to the stigma associated with menstruation. Kowalski and Capple (2000) further argue that women and girls behave in a very calculated and careful manner in order to keep their menstruation hidden so as to avoid being stigmatized or perceived differently.

Aflaq and Jami (2012), in their study, explored how differences regarding the sources of information about menstruation influenced girls' attitudes as well as their menstrual-related experiences. The findings of the study identified that girls who get information from their mothers have a more positive attitude towards menstruation and menstrual hygiene as well as menstrual-related experiences (Aflaq & Jami, 2012). In a study by Bell and Dittmar (2011), it was identified that the media contributes crucially to girls' perceptions of their bodies as well as what their perception of what the 'ideal' lady's body is or should be. Consequently, consumption of media texts affects the long term perception of the female body and its appearance (Bell & Dittmar, 2011). As noted by Fingerson (2006), many boys and girls have identified advertisements they see on television and in magazines as their source of information regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene and its related issues. Guthrie (2007), studied how magazines and body guides portray information on menstruation and menstrual products. The study found that advertisements and body guides often uses euphemisms to describe

menstrual-related issues. Words such as ‘leaks’ or ‘liquid’ are used in place of explicitly mentioning menstruation (Guthrie, 2007, p. 23).

2.2.2 Media Construction of Menstruation and Femininities

The mass media plays an important role in the construction of meaning and contributes towards sustaining power structures and social relationships. The media contributes the most to the social construction of femininity and discourse. These social constructions and ideologies about being a woman are sometimes unnatural and unrealistic but end up promoting and maintaining negative prevailing perceptions about womanhood and its related activities (Del Saz-Rubio & Pennock-Speck, 2009). Through the media and other forms of socio-cultural means, the stigma of menstruation is relayed and reinforced regularly (Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler, 2013).

Cann (2012) conducted a study that sought to explain how femininity and gender roles are constructed in teen magazine advertisements. The findings of the study identified that advertisements aimed at young girls reinforced traditional gender roles or portrayed females as victims or sex objects whereas advertisements directed at young men are defined by independence. Bell and Dittmar (2011) also identified that long term exposure to media texts shapes girls’ perception of their bodies and what the ideal body is or should be.

Media advertisement of menstrual hygiene products plays a key role in sustaining the stigma of menstruation. Guthrie (2007) argues that advertisement of menstrual hygiene products promotes the misconception that menstruation should be hidden and kept as a mystery. Guthrie (2007) further asserts that by advertising only the absorption power of menstrual products and menstrual blood as a blue liquid, prevents men and children from understanding menstruation and exactly what menstrual products do thereby strengthening the stigma of menstruation. Docherty (2010) postulates that although manufacturers of menstrual hygiene products

ultimately assist menstrual management, their principal agenda promotes the idea that menstrual blood should be concealed because it is dirty and a threat to the ideal modern female body and appearance. Kissling (2006) argues that manufacturers of menstrual hygiene products leverage and profit from the advertisements of menstruation as a hidden and mysterious event. Again, as seen in some menstrual hygiene advertisements, women are portrayed as being able to function at an optimal level during their menstrual cycle after the use of the said menstrual hygiene product to imply that women and girls who experience menstrual discomfort may believe that their discomfort is unnatural. This Guthrie (2007) argue is a deliberate advertising strategy of the manufacturers of menstrual hygiene products to promote their products and emphasis the stereotypical social construction that menstruating women who may behave irrationally or act physically or mentally ill are unrealistic.

Fingerson (2006) identified from a study that both boys and girls primarily obtained information about menstruation through the media. According to Fingerson (2006) some of the respondents noted that they learnt about menstruation from advertisements on television or magazines but added that the advertisements they see on television or in magazines are either funny, scary or do not correlate with the information they receive from school or their parents (Fingerson, 2006). In an analysis of menstrual hygiene product advertisements in women magazines from 1985 to the time of their study, Simes and Berg (2001) identified that themes of silence, shame and embarrassment were some of the dominant features of menstrual hygiene products advertisements. On the contrary, their study identified that information regarding the biological or physical aspects of menstruation was relatively little (Simes & Berg, 2001).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter shall describe the appropriate research design, target population, sampling, data collection instrument, and method of data analysis to be used to study the role of the print media in promoting menstrual hygiene management in Ghana. As such, this chapter shall provide justifications based on the review of related works and theoretical framework discussed earlier and presents contextual application of the chosen design, target population, sample size and data collection tool.

3.1 Research Design

This essay shall use content analysis to examine the role of the print media in promoting menstrual hygiene management in Ghana. In explaining content analysis, Berelson (1952:15) defines it is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Holsti (1968, cited in Riffe et. al, 1998:23) defines it as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”. As noted by Kerlinger (1986:525) content analysis is a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables; while Krippendorff (2004) sees it as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. The definition adopted for this study is from Broom and Dozier (1990:139). They define content analysis as “the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the content of documents, including print media and broadcast media coverage.”

Content analysis is an unobtrusive measure. It can facilitate empirical study without disrupting the research subject. Since the data is pre-existing, it is less likely to be biased, which would

jeopardize the validity of the research (Babbie, 2007; Krippendorff, 2004). Also, content analysis allows the researcher to correct mistakes and it is a robust methodology because the coding scheme can be corrected if flaws are detected as the study proceeds. If the researcher determines that a portion of necessary information was missed or incorrectly coded, it is feasible to return to the texts and supplement the original data collection (Babbie, 2007; Woodrum, 1984). Wimmer and Dominick (2006) assert that the content analysis method is popular with mass media researchers because it provides an efficient way to investigate the content of media texts such as the number and types of commercials or advertisements in broadcasting and in the print media. Hence, content analysis is appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to examine the actual content of the publications from the selected print media.

The above regardless, content analysis is not without limitations, and one of its limitations is that the method is limited to the examination of recorded communications whether oral, written or graphic within the study (Babbie, 2007). Nothing else can be included for analysis, leaving people with limited information to consider, analyse, and arrive at conclusions. Also, while content analysis can point to coincidences and concurrences, it does not establish cause-and-effect relationships. As a result, this essay will cater for these limitations by using framing analysis to exclude effects.

3.2 Sampling Method and Size

According to Best and Kahn (1989:10), to study a whole population to arrive at generalization would be impracticable if not impossible as some populations are so large that their characteristics cannot be measured. They describe a sample as a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis, adding that by observing the characteristics

of the sample, one can make inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn, provided there are similarities.

Berelson (1952) further notes that: “A small, carefully chosen sample of relevant content will produce just as valid results as the analysis of a great deal more - and with the expenditure of much less time and effort.” Thus, the sample population for this essay shall consist of publications from the Daily Graphic Newspaper and the Ghanaian Times Newspaper for the period January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. These two Ghanaian print media are purposively sampled for the following reasons:

- a. Both print media are state-owned daily newspapers.
- b. The Daily Graphic has the highest number of readership with 1.5 million readers per day (GeoPoll, 2017).
- c. The Ghanaian Times has at least 500,000 readers per day (GeoPoll, 2017).

3.3 Data Processing and Analysis.

The data analysis is of crucial importance in a content analysis. For Babbie (2007), it constitutes the single unit about which or whom descriptive and explanatory statements are made. It is really what the researcher counts and categorises. The data to be processed and analysed for this study would include news stories, features, columns, editorials and any other information provided by the selected newspapers for investigating the role of print media in promoting menstrual hygiene management in Ghana.

In order to discover what frames could be present in each publication regarding the menstruation and menstrual hygiene management, this study would borrow from the coding procedures of several scholars (Brock, 1992; Brookes, 1995; Fair, 1993; Scott, 2009; Somerville, 2009). These scholars employed a systematic methodology to disclose the

recurrence of key words and phrases that can be grouped together to expose the frames used to describe the menstruation and menstrual hygiene management.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

During a research study, ethical considerations are very important and provide the basis for the researcher to report the truth and ensure that she or he collects data in an appropriate and ethical manner (Robnett & Chop, 2013). As such, the author in observing all ethical consideration for the conduct of this essay, shall officially write to the selected print media entities for the data needed for the study. For the purposes of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity, the researcher shall promise the respondents never to reveal any data collected to a third party. The data collected shall be well kept at a place only the researcher has access to.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

This study has a couple of limitations, the biggest challenge being the outbreak of the novel coronavirus which limited the study to a long essay due to government's restriction on movement and contact. As noted in the methodology chapter, the study adopted content analysis and hence the researcher could have managed to collect data but the researcher was restricted to the Institute's guidelines for the conduct of this academic study and as such, limited the study to long essay. This prevented the researcher from obtaining data and analyzing it to ascertain how the Ghanaian print media frames menstruation and menstrual hygiene management. Another limitation of the study stems from access to literature about the menstruation in the media especially in Ghana. Many studies about menstruation and menstrual hygiene in Ghana have been limited to perception about menstrual health, access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) products in schools or public places, among others. This limitation affected the extent to which the researcher reviewed literature about the topic. Finally, the study was constrained due to time. As an academic work, the limited time frame

for the conduct of the study coupled with course work and the impact of the novel coronavirus, restricted the researcher from expanding the scope of the study to cover both traditional and new media.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions drawn based on the study and provides recommendations emanating from the review of related works to aid in future research works on the subject matter.

4.1 Conclusion

The role of the media in shaping behaviour patterns can undeniably not be taken for granted as elucidated in the literature review chapter. Its impact on the day-to-day activities of an individual as well as the socio-cultural activities and perception of society as a whole should as well not at any time be underestimated. As such, the research work sought to explore the framing of menstruation and menstrual hygiene management in Ghanaian print media. The study sought to use content analysis to examine how menstruation and menstrual hygiene management are framed in the media specifically the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times newspapers. The framing theory served as the theoretical foundation for the study.

As established from the review of related literature, the mass media plays an important role in the society and it influences the perception of people about menstruation and menstrual hygiene. Thus, it is critical to ensure that information disseminated by the media about menstruation and menstrual hygiene does not reinforce the many stereotypes and misconceptions people have about menstruation. It is also important that the media promotes positive frames of menstruation and menstrual hygiene as a healthy and normal biological process.

4.2 Recommendations

Even though the author of this essay could not collect and analyze primary data, the author proffers recommendations based on the review of literature. As such, firstly, based on the limited number of studies regarding menstruation in the media in Africa and specifically Ghana, the author recommends that further studies pay particular attention to this topic to provide empirical literature as regards the framing of menstruation and menstrual hygiene management in the Ghanaian media. Also, it is recommended that the scope and sample for further studies be extended beyond print media to cover all aspects of traditional and emerging media. These media equally influence society and shapes people's perception about menstruation and menstrual hygiene management. Thirdly, the author recommends that due to the established power of the media in people's lives, media entities should take deliberate step to promote positive menstruation and menstrual hygiene news and reports which will help reduce or totally eradicate the socio-cultural stereotypes associated with menstruation and menstrual hygiene management. Advertisers should also consciously evaluate messages from menstrual hygiene product manufacturers to ensure that such menstruation related advertisements do not reinforce misconceptions and stereotypes associated with menstruation and menstrual hygiene. And finally, the author recommends that academic institutions invest in and encourage students to conduct studies related to menstruation and the media to enable us provide sufficient data on the topic and help reduce or eradicate the misconceptions and stereotypes associated with a normal biological process such as menstruation.

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