

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF NEWS ROUTINES OF LOCAL AND
ENGLISH LANGUAGE RADIO STATIONS: THE CASE OF *ADOM*
F.M. AND *JOY F.M.***

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that except for references to other works which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is my original work produced from research under the supervision of Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo and Prof. Isaac Blankson.

I also affirm that no part of this work has been presented for the award of another degree either in this university or elsewhere.

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ABSTRACT

Since the liberalisation of the airwaves in Ghana in the 1990s, most of the news was broadcast in English language. Currently, local language radio has gained popularity among Ghanaian audiences and has become the most preferred source of news and information. However, there have been several complaints that local language news is a deviation from the norm and is different from English language news. This study explored the similarities and differences in the news routines of the newsrooms of a local and an English language radio station in Ghana (*Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* respectively) because the two stations belong to the same media company and have the same guiding philosophies. The study explored the role news routines play in contributing to differences in the news of the two radio stations. The study as well investigated the extent to which the two newsrooms abide by professional standards in the course of their routine practices as they also contribute to shaping the news.

The study which adopted the case study and ethnographic approaches combined participant observation, in-depth interviews and documentary reviews to collect data. The study found that even though most of the news routines of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* are similar, there are some key differences in their newsroom practices. The study also found that in the course of news production, *Joy* newsroom tended to adhere more closely to set down professional standards than *Adom* newsroom. The study concluded that differences in news routines such as selection and presentation, together with some internal and external factors contribute to differences in the news of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.*

The study recommended that the two newsrooms are involved in discussions on how best to improve upon their practices in order to ensure that the news transmitted to their audiences is not compromised and in the case of *Adom* maintain professionalism.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God for His Grace and Mercy upon my life. I also dedicate this work to my wonderful family for their love and support. I could not have done it without you. God bless you all.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This study investigated the news routines of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* This preliminary chapter introduces the entire study by first discussing the background to the study. The chapter proceeds to discuss the problem this study sought to address, the objectives of the study and the reason why this study is relevant to both academia and the media industry.

Journalists adopt routine practices to primarily guide them through their work of producing the news for their audiences. These are called news routines. According to the International Encyclopedia of Communication (2008: para. 1) news routines are “repeated practices and forms that make it easier for journalists to accomplish tasks and ensure immediacy in an uncertain world while working within production constraints.” One of the news routines at the initial stages of news production is newsgathering. This basically involves searching for information to present to audiences. One way of going about this is to wait for events to happen after which newsrooms decide on whether or not to report them as news. Another method employed in newsgathering which proves that newsrooms pre-empt where incidents are likely to happen is the beats system. With this method of newsgathering reporters are stationed at places (mostly institutions) where news is likely to occur. Journalists assigned to the institutions check on their beats and report on events which occur in those locations (Lowrey, 1999).

Another important news routine is gatekeeping. Because newsrooms mostly receive more information than needed, it becomes necessary to select a few news stories out of the whole. The metaphor of a gatekeeper, who allows or stops information from going through a gate, is

used to explicate this routine in newsrooms. Gatekeepers employ certain criteria to guide them through selection of information (Schudson, 1989). These include the relevance, and timeliness of the information, as well as the prominence of the personalities in the story. Editing, proof-reading, production, and presentation are also part of the news routines employed in news production.

Different schools of thoughts have over the years emerged about news production processes and what factors influence the news. Media researchers such as White (1950) believe that news is influenced by primary and individual forces. Hence journalists, especially gatekeepers, who determine what is news or not, have influence on the news.

Contrary to this viewpoint, another school of thought on news production championed by organisational theorists such as Edward Jay Epstein suggests that the organisation itself has a far more reaching impact on the news. Schudson (1989: 273) expands this view by stating that news is “the social manufacture of an organisational product.” This is because newsroom workers modify their personal values to meet that of the organisation in which they operate. The organisational theorists, therefore, believe that in order to understand the output of newsrooms, there is the need to understand the organisation itself and not the individuals.

However in contrast to the aforementioned views, routine theorists, including Gaye Tuchman and Mark Fishman, suggest that news routines rather tend to have a larger influence on the news content (Schudson, 1989). This perspective about news production illustrates how in employing some routine practices journalists are able to plan the news ahead of happenings even though they do not always know where exactly the next news will come from. By implication, the news is a carefully prepared product which results from the application of routines to the raw material (information) in newsrooms. The significance of news routines in shaping the news content has been explored by researchers such as Stephen Reese and Walter

Gieber. In 1956, Gieber conducted a study with 16 wire editors. Contrary to earlier findings by White, the study found that all the wire editors selected news stories in the same way giving an indication that selection of news stories is not a task necessarily informed by subjectivity but rather a task informed by routine newsroom practices (Schudson, 1989).

The routine theorists argue further that due to the routines journalists apply to the news, news is not a raw product but rather a processed version of occurrences in the world. Overall, the routine theorists' point of view demonstrates that news routines tend to affect the final news product much more than individual journalists who work on the news.

Modern researchers, however, contend that there is rather a multiplicity of forces that influence the news. Hanitzch & Hoxha (2014) identified the community and society, organisation, and individuals as forces who influence the news. Shoemaker & Reese (1996) also identified five forces that influence the news. These are individuals who work in the media; media routines; organisations; forces outside the media such as advertisers and audiences; and ideological factors.

All these perspectives about what influences the news prove the complexities involved in the attempt to understand news and news production processes, especially in modern times when there is a proliferation of news channels resulting in different news cultures which challenge conventional notions of newsgathering and presentation. Radio broadcasting in Ghana paints a clear picture of this development in the history of the media.

Local Language Versus English Language Radio Broadcasting in Ghana

Several radio stations have been established in Ghana since the liberalisation of the airwaves in the 1990s. As at the first quarter of 2015, a total number of 309 radio stations were in

operation in Ghana (NCA, 2015). Some of these radio stations broadcast news in English whilst a greater number of them broadcast news in local languages.

Local language broadcasting has become very prominent in Ghana as more people turn to local language broadcasters for news and entertainment (Ipsos, 2015). However, with this increase in importance comes concerns about what appears to be a difference in local language news and English language news presentation. While English language news broadcasts are mostly straightforward, systematic and very formal, local language news is presented in a storytelling format making it very informal. Local language news is mostly characterised by the use of literary devices including anecdotes, euphemisms, humour, hyperbole, innuendos, metaphors, onomatopoeia and proverbs.

This difference has become a source of concern for media experts and some members of the general public who believe local language radio newsrooms in Ghana lack professionalism. As a result, there have been several criticisms about local language broadcasting in Ghana.

For example, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) expressed concern about what it considers to be the low standard of local language broadcasting in Ghana. The MFWA pointed out that exaggerations and excessive humour in local language news presentation is unethical (Daabu, 2009).

At a stakeholders' forum organised by Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), a veteran broadcaster, Bosie Amponsah also, criticised local language radio stations for their lack of professionalism. According to him, news should not be interspersed with proverbs and gimmicks. Amponsah also pointed out that news must not be composed of transliteration and wrong pronunciation as is the case with local language news. He was, especially, concerned about how local language radio stations report on rape with indecent expressions and with no sign of sympathy for the victims (Kuseh, 2014).

Emmanuel Sarpong Owusu-Ansah, an investigative journalist and *Ghanaweb* columnist, also noted in an article that local and specifically Akan language newsreaders are “pathetic jokers” due to their lack of “precision, simplicity and professionalism” (Owusu-Ansah 2013: para. 3). Owusu-Ansah claimed he had arrived at this conclusion after monitoring Akan news on several radio stations for more than a year. According to him, Akan newscasts unnecessarily make use of circumlocution, repetition and even songs, a result of which is that the news becomes uninteresting. Owusu-Ansah also condemned the use of uncivil and profane vocabulary and jokes in Akan news presentation. He argued that because local language newscasts do not employ politically correct language, they sometimes end up disrespecting and abusing the physically and mentally challenged, as well as other vulnerable groups in society (Owusu-Ansah, 2013).

The National Media Commission (NMC) moved a step further in dealing with such concerns by compiling the ‘Guidelines for local language broadcasting’ to serve as a guide to local language broadcasters in the course of their work. The NMC is a regulatory body for the Ghanaian media backed by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and established by a Parliamentary Act in 1993. The Commission’s roles include ensuring that journalists adhere to the standards of the journalistic profession (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). It is in pursuance of this that the NMC came up with the guidelines on local language broadcasting in 2009. The guidelines were produced by media and language experts, as well as professional translators, in consultation with broadcasters and aimed at improving local language broadcasting in Ghana.

A portion of the guidelines (Article 2) is dedicated to local language news and gives instructions on varied issues. The guidelines state that local language radio stations should ensure that journalists are able to write and speak fluently in the language in which they broadcast. They also prescribe that local language news must not be presented in a

spontaneous manner. The guidelines as well stipulate that where translation is necessitated, it must be done accurately. They further give instructions on translation (Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting, 2009). But six years after the guidelines were produced and disseminated to media organisations, there has not been much change in the way local language news is broadcast in Ghana.

However, no empirical study has been conducted to interrogate the complaints and to determine what might account for the manner in which news is presented on local language radio stations as compared with English language radio stations. This study explored the news routines of a local language radio station (*Adom F.M.*), as well as an English language radio station (*Joy F.M.*), and the role news routines have in shaping their news.

1.2 Problem Statement

For years and since the advent of radio in Ghana in 1935, most of the news was broadcast in English. However, in recent times, local language radio broadcasting has gained popularity among Ghanaian audiences and has become the most preferred source of news and information in the country. An audience research conducted by Ipsos¹ indicates that *Peace F.M.*, a local language radio station, had the largest listenership in Accra as of February 2015. *Adom F.M.*, a local language radio station which belongs to Multimedia Group Ltd., established after Multimedia's English language radio station, *Joy F.M.* currently has a greater audience share than their English language counterpart (Ipsos, 2015). This suggests that local language radio stations have become a preferred source of news, especially for Ghanaian radio audiences, many of whom are not very competent English language speakers. However, as pointed out earlier, there have been several complaints about the manner in

¹A global market research company

which local language news presentation deviates from the way English language news is rendered. Yet, little or no scholarly attention has been paid to the differences in the local and English language news in Ghana despite the complaints.

This study, aimed at addressing this gap by exploring the similarities and differences in the newsgathering and presentation of a local and an English language newsroom in Ghana, as well as the role news routines play in contributing to differences and similarities identified in the newscasts of the two radio stations (*Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.*). The two radio stations were chosen because *Adom F.M.* broadcasts in a local language while *Joy F.M.* broadcasts in English language. They also belong to the same media company (Multimedia Group Ltd.) and therefore should ideally have the same guiding philosophies thereby justifying comparison between them.

1.3 Study Objectives

This thesis aimed at exploring similarities and differences that exist in the news routines of local and English language radio stations in Ghana by observing the case of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* The study had these specific objectives:

Firstly, the study aimed at finding out the nature of newsgathering, processing and delivery in the newsrooms of both radio stations.

Secondly, the study sought to find out the similarities and differences which exist between the news routines of both radio stations.

Thirdly, the study sought to explore what factors account for differences in the news routines of the two newsrooms if any, as well as to examine the role news routines employed in the

two newsrooms play in contributing to differences and similarities identified in the news of the two radio stations.

The fourth and final objective of this study was to find out the extent to which the two radio stations adhere to professional guidelines and editorial policies in the course of news production and delivery.

1.4 Research Questions

In exploring the news routines that exist behind the news of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.*, the researcher interrogated the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of newsgathering, processing and delivery of both local language and English language news?
2. What similarities or differences exist between the news routines of both stations?
3. What accounts for the differences if any, in the news routines of both stations?
4. To what extent do the two stations adhere to professional guidelines and in-house editorial policies on professional standards?

1.5 Significance of Study

While some studies have explored the news production processes of various newsrooms, most of these studies were conducted in the West. Thus, findings of these studies might not necessarily apply to the Ghanaian situation given cultural nuances. With the liberalisation of the Ghanaian airwaves, so many radio stations have been established with most of them broadcasting in local languages. As a result, different newsroom practices and cultures have

emerged which have yet to be given scholarly attention. This, study, therefore contributes to literature by filling that gap in media research.

Also, literature on news production shows the complexities involved in understanding the news and news production processes. A result of this is that different schools of thought have emerged over the years in the attempt to explain the intricacies of news and news production. By exploring the differences in news routines of local and English language radio stations in Ghana, this study hopes to lay a foundation for understanding the news and news production processes in Ghanaian radio broadcasting thereby contributing to theory building in this area of research.

Furthermore, this study anticipated creating awareness about some current newsroom practices in Ghana in order to sensitise those involved in radio news production about the role of newsroom practices in shaping the news.

1.6 Scope of Study

This study took a case study approach and therefore the scope is limited to only *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* According to Wimmer & Dominick (2011), case study helps the researcher to get detailed information on the topic being researched and also affords the researcher the opportunity to explore a varied range of data collection methods such as observation, document review and interviews which eventually ensures validity of the qualitative study. This study investigated two cases: *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* Due to the fact that the study focused on two cases generalisations were not made based on the findings of the study.

1.7 Operational Definitions

The following are key concepts used in this research. Given the fact that they might have different meanings in other contexts these concepts have been operationalized as follows in order to meet the needs of this particular study:

- **News:** information that is processed and transmitted by the media.
- **News routines:** newsgathering, gatekeeping, and delivery.
- **Local language radio stations:** radio stations which mainly broadcast in any of the Ghanaian local languages.
- **Adom newsroom:** sometimes used in place of the expression, ‘the newsroom of *Adom F.M.*’
- **Joy newsroom:** sometimes used in place of the expression, ‘the newsroom of *Joy F.M.*’
- **Newsroom policy:** main principle(s) either written or unwritten which guides the routine newsroom practices of the chosen radio stations.
- **Professional Standards:** benchmarks set to ensure the media maintains good standards of practice in the discharge of their duty. In this study the term ‘professional standards’ is used in reference to Ghana Journalist Association’s (GJA) Code of Ethics, and the National Media Commission’s (NMC) Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting since these guidelines have been prepared specifically for the Ghanaian media.

1.8 Summary

This chapter presented the background to this study by discussing the different schools of thought which exist about news and news production. It also discussed the current state of

Ghanaian media and the kinds of newsroom culture which exist in both local and English language radio stations in Ghana. The chapter then presented the problem statement, objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. Operational definitions were as well outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This study was underpinned by four theories – the sociology of news production, the theory of gatekeeping, the theory of news selection, and networked journalism. Collectively, they provided the theoretical framework for this study. This chapter discusses these theories in terms of what they posit and how they help to increase the understanding about news routines.

2.2 Sociology of News Production (SNP)

This study was situated within the sociology of news production, which suggests that news is not spontaneous but rather a carefully prepared product. Geiber (1964) further describes the news as a construction of reality. This is because there are a number of interventions at play in the news production process (Schudson, 1989). Gatekeepers, for example, select what they consider to be news out of several occurrences in the world. Nevertheless, Schudson (1989) points out that news production goes beyond just the gatekeeper who has the power to determine what passes through the gates or not. Since the gatekeeper's selection is based on some criteria, a number of sources of media information, including public relations practitioners are able to anticipate the gatekeeper's criteria. They eventually construct information to suit those criteria in order for their information to be selected as news (Schudson, 1989). Thus, news production proves to be a lot more complex because it involves more forces than just a gatekeeper. The sociology of news production paradigm puts forward three different perspectives to help explore the complexities of news production.

The political economy of news: This view suggests that the politically powerful people and agencies in society are able to intervene in the construction of news. Advertisers, for example, are able to interfere in the amount of time in which the news is broadcast. Hence, the news is an outcome of the economic structure of news organisations. This perspective is pertinent to understanding the general framework of news (Schudson, 1989).

Social organisation of newswork: This perspective states that news is not a detection of spontaneous happenings. News is rather a social product which tends to be planned (Schudson, 1989). For this reason, newsgathering is organised in a beats system where reporters are attached to various agencies including government agencies. These agencies become the constant and reliable news sources of journalists who provide newsrooms with the largest volume of information (Fishman, 1980). A result of this is that news is an end-product of constant collaborations between journalists and officials (Schudson, 1989). This perspective also considers the intervention of the news editor in the production process as influential (Schudson, 1989).

Another angle to this viewpoint evolves from organisational theorists such as Edward Jay Epstein. According to them news is an organisational product influenced by the organisation's routines. Hence, in order to understand the news, organisational theorists see the necessity to firstly understand the organisation, rather than the individuals since the individual newsroom workers are easily socialised into news routines (Schudson, 1989).

Culturological approach: this perspective, championed by Marshall Sahlins, an anthropologist, indicates that "an event is not just a happening in the world; it is a relation between a certain happening and a given symbolic system" (Sahlins, 1985 in Schudson 1989: 275). In effect, there is an existing culture within which news production takes place and this culture ends up shaping the news. For example, a study conducted by Paul Hartmann and

Charles Husband in 1973 revealed that there were certain elements in the British cultural tradition which were offensive to immigrants, especially blacks. Since the British media operate within this culture they were found to share in these cultural elements (Schudson, 1989).

According to Richard Hoggart, culture is the most significant screen through which news is passed (Schudson, 1989). As a result, culture is able to dictate to journalists about what is accepted or not within the society in which they operate. According to Schudson (1989: 279), culture has a 'form and content'. The content refers to values which are normally overlooked such as democracy whilst the form refers to "assumptions about narrative, storytelling, human interest, and the conventions of photographic and linguistic presentation that shape the presentation of all the news the media produce" (Schudson 1989: 279).

In all, this theory posits that news is a carefully prepared product influenced by political, social, organisational or cultural factors. However, in the end, as Lowrey (1999) points out, all these perspectives hypothesise the role of routines in news production in quite the same way, namely that:

- News is a manufactured product, not a mirror on "reality."
- The world is not arranged for news gathering purposes, but rather confronts the news organization with the unexpected and uncontrollable.
- News organizations create routines in order to efficiently and profitably manage the unexpected.
- External institutions, through sources and officials, impact the news product by meshing with journalistic routines.
- Individual journalists suppress personal values and embrace professional values which serve organizational routines.
- Routines largely determine the content of the news product and therefore the way the world is made known through the news (Lowrey 1999:10).

This theory is helpful to this study because it gives a comprehensive explanation as to why news turns out the way it does and can inform why the news of *Adom F.M.* differs from that of *Joy F.M.*

2.3 The Theory of Gatekeeping

This study was also underpinned by the theory of gatekeeping. Shoemaker et. al. (2001: 223) define gatekeeping as, “the process by which the vast array of potential news messages are winnowed, shaped, and prodded into those few that are actually transmitted by the news media.”

The term ‘gatekeeping’ can be traced to the psychologist, Kurt Lewin who used it in reference to how food passes through various ‘channels’ and ‘gates’ from the garden to the grocery store before arriving on the dining table. In this context the term ‘gatekeepers’ referred to the buyers, transporters, and the cooks who had control over what food item to choose or reject at certain points in the food production process.

The concept was later adapted into communication studies by David Manning White who applied it to the study of news (Shoemaker et. al., 2001). The theory posits that information (news) passes through channels and gates before it gets to the recipients. Hence, “channels” refer the communication links in news production (Shoemaker et. al. 2001: 235). According to Shoemaker et. al. (2001), ‘sections’ refer to what events take place inside the channels such as editorial process. ‘Gates’ refers to decisions which allow stories to proceed through the channels or to be halted. ‘Gatekeepers’ are individuals who determine if a news story will get to pass through the gates or not. Lewin called the routines and individual factors which influence news content as “forces” (Shoemaker et. al. 2001: 235).

Shoemaker et. al. (2001) opine that the meaning of the term 'gatekeeping' has expanded beyond 'selection' to include the way in which the messages are shaped and also timed for transmission, as well as how it is handled.

McQuail (2005) critiques the theory arguing that it tends to purport that only one person (the gatekeeper) wields absolute control over the news content thereby individualising the selection of news. However, Shoemaker in a research in 1991 broadened the theory to account for a wider social context as well as many other forces at work in the gatekeeping process. She therefore highlighted the role of advertisers, public relations persons, pressure groups, news managers and other varied sources in influencing the news content (McQuail, 2005).

Shoemaker & Reese (1996) also explained that media content, including news is influenced as well by even the audiences directly and indirectly. This according to them is because human attention has become a very profitable product lately. Due to advertisers' preference for media houses which have large audience members, media houses tend to compete with each other for audiences as well as advertisers by making their contents appeal to more audiences. Also in the theory of gatekeeping, the cost of production is considered influential in determining the news content (McQuail, 2005). Therefore, contrary to McQuail's (2005) critique, the theory of gatekeeping accounts for group decision-making in determining the news content.

The theory of gatekeeping is pertinent to this study because it helps to explain how news stories transmitted on the airwaves go through certain procedures and processes before being broadcast. It also shows that the news stories received by audiences are only a few out of the whole lot of stories received daily in a newsroom.

Similar to the sociology of news production, this theory tends to highlight the fact that news is not a raw product but rather a finished product which undergoes routine processes. As a result, news can undergo some amount of influences in the course of processing.

2.4 Theory of News Selection

This study was also supported by the theory of news selection. The theory of news selection attempts to explain the key factors which determine what news stories are selected. This theory according to McQuail (2005) was the first clear explanation of news value or factors that influence selection of news stories. The theory of news selection was propounded by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge in 1963 (Harcup & O’neill, 2001).

According to the theory, twelve factors influence the selection of news stories and these are: frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons, and reference to something negative (Harcup & O’neill, 2001). Galtung & Ruge (1965) explain that these factors are not mutually exclusive. These 12 factors are expatiated by Harcup & O’neill (2001).

Frequency: An event which happens at the same or similar rate as the news medium, for example murder, is more likely to be reported than something which happens over duration. For this reason an event which happens over duration will be ignored unless it is dramatic.

Threshold: An event is more likely to be reported if it happens on a large scale. Hence, the event has to reach a certain threshold to be reported.

Unambiguity: Events which are easier to understand are more likely to be reported than ones which require interpretation.

Meaningfulness: This is in terms of cultural proximity and whether the audience can identify with the topic or not.

- **Cultural Proximity:** Events which are culturally similar are more likely to be reported. Hence geographical closeness is a determinant factor.
- **Relevance:** Cultural similarity can be ignored if the report has implications for another distant culture or geographical location.

Consonance: The media tend to have some pre-conceived ideas about what will happen. Therefore stories which meet the media's expectations are more likely to be reported. Consonance comes in the form of predictability and demand. Predictability refers to an expected event. Demand refers to an event that audiences would like to occur.

Unexpectedness: An event which is out of the norm or rare will most likely be covered than an everyday event.

Continuity: This is what is popularly called 'running story'. A story which has already become news is easy to interpret and therefore is more likely to be reported even if the magnitude has gone down.

Composition: The chance of a story making it to publication depends on what the competing stories are.

Reference to elite nations: Global powers are more likely to be covered in the media than less influential nations because their actions are more far-reaching.

Reference to elite people: The media are more likely to give coverage to important and influential people because their actions are more influential.

Reference to persons/Personification: An event which has a named person or group of people will most likely be reported because the events are seen as a consequence of the named person(s).

Reference to something negative: Bad news seems to attract more than good news and therefore the media will more likely give coverage to bad news than to good news.

McQuail (2005) believes the theory of news selection is a better alternative to the theory of gatekeeping since decision-making about the news content is not portrayed as a subjective one. In this research however, the theory of news selection was used to complement the theory of gatekeeping as they both proved useful in explaining the news routines of the newsrooms of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* Whilst gatekeeping theory helped explicate how news stories pass through selection and other procedural processes before being broadcast, the theory of news selection helped to explain further the key factors that determine the news stories that are selected or ignored. This theory, just as the previous two, proves that news is indeed not a mirror image of happenings but rather a processed image of happenings.

2.5 Networked Journalism

The networked journalism theory was propounded by Beckett (2009). The theory attempts to expand on earlier perspectives about news production processes by exploring specifically the role technology and audiences play in the news production process in contemporary times. The theory posits that due to the availability of technology and the internet, journalism is now an activity shared between journalists and audiences. Audiences are able to employ communication technologies such as telephones and new media tools such as social media (*Facebook, Twitter, etc*) to participate in the news production process. First, audiences

generate content for mainstream media. For instance, audiences are able to employ *Facebook* and *Twitter* to disseminate information to news channels. Audiences are also able to interact with journalists in mainstream media by sharing their views and thoughts on the news (Beckett, 2009). Beckett (2009) calls this process of collaborations between journalists and their audiences as networked journalism.

Networked journalism proves to be positive from the perspective of the audiences. By involving audiences in the news production process, audiences are empowered to contribute to news construction. Audiences are also given voice as their views are allowed into mainstream media. However, the theory contends that this new trend of journalism is not only reshaping conventional journalistic practices, norms, and the news but will eventually destroy the conventional norms of journalism practice (Beckett, 2009). The theory further states that since news production is no longer the preserve of journalists, the concept of news is being reinvented and this is facilitated by advancement in technology. This theory enhances the arguments of the first three already reviewed. According to networked journalism, modern day news is even under more influence from audiences than ever before due to the availability of and improvement in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

2.6 Summary

This chapter reviewed theories within which this study is situated. The sociology of news production which was first reviewed contends that news is a processed product which undergoes influences of news routines. The theory of gatekeeping was also reviewed in this chapter. The theory which was propounded by David Manning White emphasizes how gatekeepers, especially, are able to influence the news. The theory of news selection propounded by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge was also reviewed in this chapter.

The theory throws light on the factors which inform news selection by gatekeepers. This theory is, therefore, a build-up on the theory of gatekeeping. Finally networked journalism was also reviewed in this chapter. The theory highlights the role of today's audiences, equipped with improved technology, in the news construction process.

In all, these theories were chosen to guide this study because they all highlight the fact that news is definitely not a mirror on reality but rather an edited image of reality. Hence, news will take one form or another depending on the kind of influences it undergoes.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Several studies have been conducted across various newsrooms in an attempt to explore the complexities of news and news production. Studies have, therefore, been conducted on news routines and practices in some newsrooms. First, this chapter reviews some of the research studies which pioneered investigations into news routines. The chapter then goes further to review contemporary research studies which have been conducted in relation to newsroom practices in and outside Ghana to serve as a form to guide to this study.

3.2 Related Studies

One of the earliest research works on news routines was conducted in 1988. Eliasoph (1988) conducted a study into the news routines of a politically oppositional newsroom to find out which components of production made the news oppositional. Employing participant observation to explore the news routines of the newsroom, Eliasoph (1988) found out that the oppositional newsroom applied the same routines as other conventional newsrooms. Eliasoph (1988) then contended that economic and organisational factors shaped the news far more than news routines.

Shoemaker et. al.'s (2001) research is considerably among pioneer research works on news routines. Shoemaker et. al. (2001) conducted a study to find out whether gatekeeping, and for that matter the news, was influenced by individual or routine forces. The study specifically explored the role of individual and routine forces in determining how prominently major

Congressional bills were reported by U.S. newspapers between 1996 and 1998. The study was underpinned by the theory of gatekeeping. The researcher content analysed newspaper stories about 50 Congressional bills and also surveyed the writers and editors of the stories. The study found that the routine of newsworthiness was positively related to the quantity of bills' newspaper coverage, thereby proving that news routines influenced the news far more than individual forces.

Despite the contributions of these and other early research works to unravelling the complexities surrounding news and news production, there remain some unexplored intricacies about contemporary news and news production. It is for this reason that contemporary researchers have heeded to the call by Cottle (2000) to explore news production processes in various newsrooms. Vandendaele & Jacobs (2014) conducted a newsroom study to explore the sub-editor's role in the news production process at a Belgian newspaper and another newspaper in the Netherlands. According to the researchers, the two newspapers had close relations because the Dutch newspaper had been acquired by a Belgian publishing house thereby making comparison between the two reasonable. The study took an ethnographic approach and data was collected through participant observation and interviews. In the end, the study revealed there was better sub-editing practice in the Dutch newsroom with regard to timing, and communication. The study found that factors such as the newsroom arrangement, division of labour, as well as a diverse sub-editor profile contributed to this trend in the Dutch newsroom. The study concluded that the role of sub-editor remains significant in Belgium and the Netherlands (Vandendaele & Jacobs, 2014).

In another newsroom study that used an ethnographic approach, Nylund (2013) set out to assess creativity and idea generation in the routine newsroom practices of the largest Swedish-language newspaper in Finland, *Hufvudstadsbladet* (HBL). The study, which concentrated on how ideas were generated as well as developed during editorial meetings

employed participant observation, interviews and document review to collect data. The study found that there was less creativity during editorial meetings and that most of the meetings rather focused on what competitors had already covered. The study also revealed that even though ideas were developed at meetings, the ideas were mostly generated outside the formal meetings.

Jordaan (2013) was interested in finding out whether the professional use of *Facebook* and *Twitter* had an impact on news selection and presentation in the newsrooms of two weekly newspapers in South Africa: *Rapport*, and the *Mail & Guardian*. Jordaan (2013) also took an ethnographic approach. Spending a week each at both newsrooms, the researcher used observation and interviews to collect data. She also employed survey technique to augment these data collection methods. The study found that the professional use of social media by journalists of the two newspapers made the journalists change their news selection and presentation methods. It concluded that the use of social media professionally in the two newsrooms tended to have a direct and indirect impact on news generated by the journalists of the two newspapers even though they believed social media only complemented their work as journalists.

Lund (2012) also sought to assess how *TV2 Norway* implemented 24/7 news production and the impact it had on the professional values of the newsroom. She conducted an ethnographic case study and employed observation and interviews to gather data. The study found that by adjusting staff's use of time, space and resources, *TV2 Norway* produced more news in restricted time and still remained professional.

Also in a newsroom ethnography of *The Daily Times* (an American newspaper), Ryfe (2009) used observation and interviews to explore reporters' response to a new editor's reformation of routine newsroom practices. These changes were aimed at reviving the newspaper. One of

the reforms, aimed at increasing circulation, was that routine newsgathering and reporting had to change; reporters of the paper were to visit their beats made up of public agencies less frequently. Reporters were rather to come up with attention-grabbing stories and not stories on public agencies. According to the study, reporters eventually ignored the new rules because they opposed fundamental and useful practices in journalism.

In another newsroom study, Meier (2007) explored innovations processes at the *Austria Presse Agentur (APA)* in Vienna. Prior to its move to a bigger and open newsroom in 2005, *APA* newsroom was distributed across several floors of the former edifice that housed it thereby bringing about architectural barriers. Against this backdrop, Meier (2007) conducted a case study to explore the innovations processes of *APA*. The researcher conducted observations and in-depth interviews, as well as online survey before and after *APA*'s move. The study found that modernised newsrooms have the potential to intensify the speed and quality of work journalists produce. The study concluded that building structure and space are key factors for innovation in a newsroom.

In Ghana, a few newsroom studies have been conducted to explore news production processes. Avorgbedor (2009) investigated newsroom practices of *Radio Ghana* with a focus on gatekeeping practices of *Radio Ghana* journalists. The study was underpinned by the Theories of Gatekeeping, Newsworthiness, and Ownership. Using a combination of participant observation and in-depth interviews to collect data, the study found that *Radio Ghana* journalists placed a premium on professional standards and generally ensured fairness, accuracy and objectivity. The study also found that even though the journalists selected stories that would promote peace and unity of the country, there were a few journalists who were influenced by their political affiliation in the selection of stories – something that would sometimes create misunderstanding between such journalists and some of their supervisors.

Also in another ethnographic newsroom study, Hammond (2004) used participant observation and in-depth interviews to assess newsroom practices at *The Evening News*, a newspaper in Ghana produced by the New Times Corporation. The study was underpinned by the Theories of Story Selection, Gatekeeping, Agenda Setting, the Theory of Sources, and Diffusion of Innovation. Findings of the study showed that *The Evening News* was organised in quite an unconventional manner because the paper did not have a sub-desk and journalists did not plan the pages of the paper. It also found that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which were virtually unused, had no effect on newsroom culture at *The Evening News* newsroom. The study again found that unavailability of adequate transportation affected the newsroom staff in their newsgathering activities.

3.3 Summary

This chapter explored some early and contemporary production research studies. This review revealed that most production research studies tended to explore specific news routines such as, gatekeeping and editorial meetings solely, rather than news routines in entirety. Quite notable though is the fact that most of the researchers adopted an ethnographic approach and employed observation, and interviews to collect data for the studies. This in turn informed the methodology adopted for this study. The next chapter discusses in detail the methods and techniques used to gather data for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study drew on the methods employed by researchers who have also investigated into routine newsroom practices. This chapter discusses the approach that this researcher employed to collect the needed data for the study. It presents details about the research design, data collection methods and the setting of the study. It also discusses how the data was analysed.

4.2 Research Design

This study was qualitative and employed the case study and ethnographic approaches. Devereux (2007) explains that research studies which explore news production are mostly qualitative in nature. The case study approach is very helpful in qualitative studies. As stated by Yin (2003 in Wimmer & Dominick 2011: 141) a case study is, “an empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, in which the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident.” Wimmer & Dominick (2011) suggest that case study be used when a researcher is seeking to comprehend or clarify a phenomenon because the method is resourceful in gathering detailed information on a topic under study and is able to help explain why something has happened. Case study is also helpful because the researcher gets to pay attention to the particular situation or event of interest.

This study also took an ethnographic approach because it was interested in understanding practices related to particular groups (Cramer & McDevitt, 2004). According to Wimmer & Dominick (2011), ethnography involves studying the culture of a group in their natural environment and is advantageous to use because the researcher gets to be in the centre of the topic under investigation. As a result, the researcher gets to see things from the perspective of the participant. Ethnographies are also able to demonstrate behaviour which come about naturally and therefore tend to have extreme external validity (Bordens & Abbot, 2002).

Cottle (2000: 19) underscores the need for newsroom ethnographies by calling for a 'second wave' of ethnographies into news production in order to explicate the contemporary news environment. He later explains that, such studies provide priceless information to help understand the nature of news and factors that define the news. To him, such information is not only useful to media experts but even other people outside the newsrooms as they are enabled to understand and appreciate the amount of work that goes into news production (Cottle, 2007).

4.3 Data Collection Methods

A combination of observation, in-depth interviews and document reviews was drawn on to collect data. Wimmer & Dominick (2011) indicate that observation and in-depth interview form part of the four common techniques used in ethnographic research (observation, in-depth interview, focus group discussions and case studies).

4.3.1 Observation

The observation method of data collection required the researcher to be in the newsrooms of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* to see first-hand how the two newsrooms employed news routines

in the process of news production. This section gives an account of how the researcher gained access and how she conducted the observation.

Procedure

Approval for the study was obtained from the Department of Communication Studies. Since the researcher is not a staff of any of the two radio stations, she needed access to the newsrooms of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* Her supervisor contacted the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Group Radio and Interactive Media of the Multimedia Group Ltd., and sought access. The researcher later called the COO and negotiated the duration for the observation. Even though the researcher proposed a period of two months, (a month each at the two newsrooms), she was given permission for a month; two weeks each at both stations because the COO felt the news teams would get uncomfortable if the researcher stayed too long in the newsrooms.

Although ethnographic studies usually require a longer duration of stay with the group under study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011), Cramer & McDevitt (2004) also point out that the duration of time spent with the group under study in an ethnographic research is also dependent on limitation factors such as access. In this study, the researcher spent a month with the two newsrooms under study because of access as she was not given the two months she had initially planned and requested for by the administration of the Multimedia Group Ltd.

Nevertheless, the researcher did not allow this to be a limitation in any way as she was able to gather as much information as possible within the given period by taking a ‘condensed account’ (Shaw 1995 in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 146) of what she observed daily in a journal.

Also, apart from the month spent at the two newsrooms under study, the researcher revisited both newsrooms on three different occasions in order to clarify things she had not gained full understanding of by the end of the official one month period she spent there. This conforms to what Cramer & McDevitt (2004) suggest – that an ethnographer may have to visit the group several times in order to fully gain understanding on reasons for the group’s activities.

The Field Study

The researcher started observation in the newsroom of *Joy F.M.* from the 5th of January, 2015. This was because she anticipated that during the first week of January 2015 (which started on a Thursday), there would not be much activity in the newsroom to observe due to the New Year holiday.

In observation, Wimmer & Dominick (2011) explain that an observer can be an overt or covert observer and an overt or covert participant observer. The researcher was an overt participant observer in this study. According to Wimmer & Dominick (2011), an overt participant observer is one who is known by the group under study to be a researcher. However, the researcher oversteps the role of observer to participate in the activities of the group s/he is observing. In *Joy Newsroom*, although the researcher was nicknamed ‘observer’ for her obvious role of observation, she was also allowed to be part of the daily routine of the newsroom. The researcher sat in editorial meetings, contributed ideas and critiqued when necessary. She also answered calls, booked appointments with interviewees and also went on assignment with some reporters.

In *Adom* newsroom, the researcher was part of editorial meetings, pitched stories and also went on assignment with a reporter on one occasion. She was consistently assigned to call and interview sources and to write news stories based on the interviews. The researcher wrote two stories almost every day and at least one story on a two occasions. The researcher,

however, performed these roles as secondary to her role as an observer. The researcher had a list of news routines to serve as a guide during observation. These are newsgathering activities, gatekeeping practices, editing, and presentation.

Adopting one of Shaw's (1995 in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011:146) suggested types of field notes called 'Condensed Accounts', she kept a journal and noted down the things observed. As a result, the most important events or situations observed in the newsroom were described in the researcher's journal. Shaw (1995 in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) believes such descriptions come in handy when writing reports because they direct the researcher on which points to stress on in the report.

As stated earlier, the researcher also revisited the two newsrooms on three different occasions even after the official one month period given her was over in order to seek clarifications.

4.3.2 In-depth Interviews

The researcher drew on in-depth interviews to also understand and deepen insight into practices in the two newsrooms. The researcher was the interviewer in this study. She designed an interview guide based on the research questions of the study and also on what she had observed in the two newsrooms. Different interview guides were used for respondents because of their levels and nature of roles. Generally, the interview guide explored the educational backgrounds of the journalists in the two newsrooms. The guide also probed further into news routines of both *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* The guide as well probed into the knowledge and views of journalists in the two newsrooms about professional standards. This is because the researcher believed their level of knowledge and views would have an influence on whether or not they will abide by the guidelines.

The interviews were individual interviews and lasted between a maximum of two hours and a minimum of thirty minutes. With regards to *Joy F.M.*, five of the interviews were conducted in the newsroom while two were conducted outside the newsroom because those respondents wanted to avoid disruptions. With respect to *Adom F.M.*, only one interview was conducted in the newsroom. The remaining five of the interviews were conducted in recording booths in the newsroom in order to allow for open responses. The interview with the head of the marketing department was conducted in his office.

Interview Respondents

Purposive sampling method was used to select interview participants. According to Wimmer & Dominick (2011), purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting a sample that meets particular characteristics, non-randomly. At *Joy F.M.*, the managing news editor, a sub-editor, an assistant editor, four journalists, two of whom also read the news were sampled for the in-depth interviews. This sample was chosen to reflect the different roles of the *Joy* newsroom staff which have been explored in the chapter on findings of this study.

At *Adom F.M.*, one main editor was interviewed. The sub-editor, four journalists, two of whom also present the news were interviewed. This sample was also chosen to reflect the different roles of the *Adom F.M.* newsroom staff, details of which are given in the chapter on findings of the study. The head of the marketing department of Multimedia Group Ltd. was also interviewed to gain understanding into how the news is commercialised in the two newsrooms.

4.3.3 Documentary Review

Documents comprising the Ghana Journalists Association's (GJA) Code of Ethics, the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association's (GIBA) Code of Conduct, and National Media Commission's (NMC) Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting were reviewed.

The GJA Code of Ethics was written in 1994 to guide journalists in Ghana in making ethical decisions. The GIBA Code of Conduct was written in 2012 specifically to guide GIBA members in ensuring responsible reportage of Ghana's 2012 general elections, as well as subsequent elections. NMC's Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting was written in 2009. As implied by the name, the guidelines are targeted at local language broadcasting. Details of the three guidelines are given in the chapter on findings of this study.

Also to help increase understanding into the routine practices of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.*, the researcher requested for the newsroom policies of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* for review. The journalists in the two newsrooms indicated that the two newsrooms had separate written newsroom policies. However, the researcher was denied access to the documents because she was told it is against the company's policy to give the document to outsiders.

4.4 The Study Setting

The study was conducted in the newsrooms of two radio stations in Accra; *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.*, which belong to the same media company, Multimedia Group Limited (MGL). MGL is one of the media corporations in Ghana established in 1995 and is located in Kokomlemle, a suburb of Accra. It aims at becoming the leading as well as most trustworthy and reliable media brand in Ghana (www.multimediahana.com). The Multimedia Group started with only one radio station (*Joy F.M.*) but currently has five more radio stations

operating in the country: *Adom F.M.*, *Asempa F.M.*, *Hitz F.M.*, *Luv F.M* and *Nhyira F.M.* The corporation is also affiliated to 40 other stations across the country, which broadcast its news.

Apart from its radio stations, MGL also operates a free-to-air television network – *Multi TV*, which the company claims to be the leading free-to-air television network in the whole of Africa. The group also has three online platforms (www.myjoyonline.com; www.adomonline.com; www.multitvworld.com) and these according to MGL, are the biggest and most visited local online platforms in the country (www.multimediaghana.com).

MGL claims to be the biggest media company in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa currently. It prides itself on having received several local and international awards, including being the most vibrant media institution in Ghana by Security Watch Africa and Ghana's 6th most respected company in 2012 by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (www.multimediaghana.com). Just as some other media companies in the country, the television and radio stations of MGL broadcast in two languages: English and Akan (the most widely spoken local language in Ghana).

4.4.1 Joy Newsroom

Joy F.M. is a commercial radio station in the suburb of Kokomlemle in Accra, Ghana. It is one of the brands of the Multimedia Group Limited (MGL).

Joy F.M. has the first commercial radio station in Ghana following the liberalisation of the airwaves in the mid-1990s and was authorised to operate in 1995. It is an English language radio station targeting middle to upper income audiences (www.multimediaghana.com). The station operates on the frequency 99.7 MHz. *Joy F.M.* has an online platform (www.myjoyonline.com). The station also has an active social media presence.

The newsroom of *Joy F.M.* is located on the first floor of the Multimedia Group Ltd. building in Kokomlemle. There is a rectangular table in the middle of the newsroom by which journalists and editors gather to have editorial meetings. There is also a long table propped against the walls of the newsroom with chairs by it. Some of the journalists sit by this table to do their work once editorial meetings are over. There is an inner room in the newsroom with a transparent glass door which is the office of the managing news editor and the sub-editors. There is another inner room without a door where some of the assistant editors sometimes sit, although they are mostly in the main newsroom. Sometimes too, this inner room harbours some of the sport presenters. There are two recording booths inside the newsroom for taking recorded interviews but one is out of use because the equipment is spoilt. There is also a booth in the newsroom for voice-over recordings. There is one live news studio which is out of the newsroom itself but is adjacent to the newsroom. The newsroom shares this studio with presenters of other programmes.

4.4.2 Adom Newsroom

Adom F.M. is also a commercial radio station located in Kokomlemle in Accra. It broadcasts in Akan, the largest spoken local language in Ghana. The station, which was originally called *Groove F.M.*, used to be an English language radio station situated in Kuku Hill in Accra and specialised in Afro pop music. It was later acquired by Multimedia Group Ltd. from Aerocommunications in 2000.

Adom F.M., similar to what pertains at *Joy F.M.* which was formally located in Tema, was eventually moved to Kokomlemle to join *Joy F.M.* and the other brands of the Multimedia Group Ltd in the same edifice. The station targets lower middle to upper income listeners (www.multimediaghana.com). It operates on the frequency 106.3 MHz. *Adom F.M.* has an online platform (www.adomonline.com) as well as an active social media presence.

The newsroom of *Adom F.M.* is located on the second (2nd) floor of the Multimedia Group Ltd. building. There is a round table in the middle of the newsroom around which journalists (mostly senior journalists) sit during editorial meetings and also during their work routine. There is a long table propped against the walls of the newsroom. There are chairs by this table and some of the journalists also sit on these during editorial meetings as well as their work routine. The editor has a table and chair located right in the top left corner of the newsroom when approaching from the entrance of the newsroom. There are two recording booths for recording interviews and these also serve as a place for recording voice-over when necessary². *Adom* newsroom has a live news studio on the first (1st) floor of the Multimedia Group Ltd. edifice. The newsroom shares this studio with presenters of other programmes.

The two stations and for that matter their newsrooms were suitable for this study because *Joy F.M.* broadcasts mainly in English whilst *Adom F.M.* transmits mainly in a local language, Akan. They, therefore, fitted into the study criteria of investigating the news routines of a local and English language radio station.

Secondly, the two stations were chosen for this particular study because they belong to the same media company. Hence, it was expected that they will ideally have the same guiding philosophies. Being on this same platform made comparison between them reasonable and allowed for investigation to be carried out on why the two stations might have differed or not in their news routines and if they did what informed their differences.

² Voice-overs were rarely done in the *Adom* newsroom during the period under study.

4.5 Data Analyses

In analysing the data for this study, the researcher employed the constant comparative technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First, the in-depth interviews were transcribed after which a line by line analysis of the transcripts was done. These were put into two different major themes: news routines, and newsroom organisation. Observed data from *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom were likewise grouped into news routines, and newsroom organisation.

Secondly, the data was further categorised into six thematic areas; newsgathering, gatekeeping, presentation, advertising, regulations and newsroom organisation.

Relationships were then drawn between the themes and a report was generated. The GJA Code of Ethics, GIBA's Code of Conduct, and NMC Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting were examined carefully and related to the news routines identified in the two newsrooms.

4.5.1 Validity

Validity in qualitative research refers to how accurate and truthful the results of a study are (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Hence, a study which has accurate findings is considered valid. According to Hammersly (1992), validity is obtained when descriptions of observed occurrences accurately portray what was observed. A number of recommended steps were taken in this study to ensure that the study is reliable and valid.

As suggested by Maykut & Morehouse (1994 in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011), the researcher made use of multiple data collection techniques to ensure the accuracy of this research. This is because the data collection techniques employed (observation, in-depth interviews and documentary reviews) ended up complementing each other.

Wimmer & Dominick (2011) also suggest taking notes copiously on the field of observation. This researcher took a 'condensed account' (Shaw 1995 in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 146) of what she observed daily in a journal. The researcher took notes of procedures and incidences as and when they happened in the newsrooms in order to avoid forgetting important observations.

Daymon & Holloway (2002 in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011:147) suggest that ethnographic researchers should combine both the 'outsider' and the 'insider' perspectives to ensure reliability of their research works. This according to Wimmer & Dominick (2011:147) is also known as the 'etic' and 'emic' perspectives respectively. Denzen & Lincoln (1994:486) called the 'insider' perspective as 'reflexivity', which indicates that the researchers immerse themselves in the culture they are investigating. Accordingly, reflexivity ensures validity of ethnography and qualitative research as a whole. In both observation and analyses, this study combined the 'etic' and 'emic' perspectives. The researcher explicated the data by employing scientific theories (etic approach) and the native's perspective about their routines, which was acquired through observation and in-depth interviews (emic approach).

The researcher also provided a 'thick description' of events (Geertz, 1973) by including the 'emic' perspective thereby ensuring that the interpretation brought to bear has not one side (from the outsider's point of view).

Member checking, which involves verifying facts from interview respondents, was also done to ensure the credibility of this research as suggested by Maykut & Morehouse (1994 in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). The researcher went back to interviewees for clarifications into issues and questions they had raised earlier which did not seem too clear.

4.6 Summary

This chapter explained the methods employed in data collection and analyses and the rationale behind the selection of those particular methods. The use of a combination of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary review ensured that the data collected was comprehensive enough to help address the problem identified by this study.

Results of the analyses are presented in next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of this study in four main sections. The first section presents details on the organisation of the newsrooms including the administration, norms and staff of the newsrooms of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* The next section explains the news routines in the two newsrooms³ and the third section reveals the routine of applying professional standards in the two newsrooms. The last section presents findings on advertisement placement and how it plays within the news routines and the news of the two newsrooms.

5.2 Newsroom Organisation: *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.*

This section reveals who the audiences of the newsrooms of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* are. It then explains the organisational structure and administration of the newsrooms as well as the background and qualification of those who work in these newsrooms. The section also discusses the resources and incentives available to the two newsrooms. This is because these issues have a bearing on subsequent discussions.

5.2.1 Target Audience

Although both *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* belong to the same media company, they appeal to different audiences mainly because of their language and programming orientations. Respondents from *Adom* newsroom indicated that the typical *Adom* listener is projected to be a female between the ages of 18 and 50. She is typified as a market woman who sells tomatoes at Makola or Kaneshie market. She is considered to be a senior high school graduate and also a single parent. A sub-editor explained that market women are targeted

³ While the study is about the news routines of *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.*, most news routines take place in the *Joy* newsroom and *Adom* newsroom, which are departments of the two radio stations respectively. Hence, a lot of reference will be made to the routines of the newsrooms rather than routines of the radio stations.

because the newsroom perceives that market women love listening to radio and always have radio sets with them in the market.

The secondary target is personified as a middle-aged taxi driver who would want to listen to radio while doing his job. *Adom* newsroom prepares the news with the aim of getting information to the level of understanding of these audiences.

Aside from these target audiences, the sub-editor believes that *Adom* news has transcended the typical market women and taxi driver audiences. According to him, *Adom* news currently appeals to elites, including academics and politicians due to the element of humour employed in presentation of the *Adom* news. He further explained that people are fed-up with the so-called elite media.

On the other hand *Joy* news, according to respondents, is targeted at educated middle class people who are looking for compelling issues and analysis to listen to. They include business people, policy makers, and politicians. Unlike *Adom* news which is targeted at female audiences, *Joy* news is targeted at both genders. In terms of age, *Joy* news audiences are not much different from that of *Adom* news because a typical *Joy* news listener is projected to be around 20 years and above.

5.2.2 Organisational Structure: *Adom* Newsroom and *Joy* Newsroom

There are two news editors in the newsroom of *Adom F.M.* They are in charge of the day to day activities of the newsroom. One of them runs the morning to afternoon shift while the other runs the afternoon to evening shift. The editors facilitate the editorial meetings, assign reporters and edit news stories. In the end, these two editors take full responsibility for the newscast. There is one sub-editor whose duty is to assist the two news editors. He also steps in when the two editors are not around. This sub-editor is also in charge of weekend duties.

There are 10 reporters who are in charge of interviewing news sources, reporting, writing news stories, editing interviews and helping in news production. Some of these reporters also present the news. Also among the reporters is a national service person. There are also about 10 interns who perform the functions of reporters.

The *Joy* newsroom has a slightly different newsroom structure. The newsroom consists of a managing news editor who is in charge of managing the newsroom. He decides what role each newsroom staff should play in the newsroom. He oversees editorial meetings and eventually takes full responsibility for what news gets broadcast. There are two sub-editors responsible for the day to day activities of the news teams. One of the editors handles the morning team while the other handles the afternoon team. These two editors therefore facilitate editorial meetings, assign reporters and edit news stories. There are also four assistant editors in the newsroom, one of whom is a documentaries editor and another, a scripts editor. These assistant editors are senior journalists who have been upgraded to this level in order to help the editors in editing news stories and sometimes in facilitating editorial meetings. Assistant editors also get assigned to work on news stories. There are 20 reporters in the newsroom. Their duties are interviewing news sources, reporting, writing stories, editing interviews, and helping with production. Some of them are also news anchors and therefore present the news as well. *Joy* newsroom also uses national service personnel and interns who report and perform other functions in the newsroom.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the organogram of *Adom* and *Joy* newsrooms respectively.

Fig. 1.1 Organogram of *Adom* newsroom

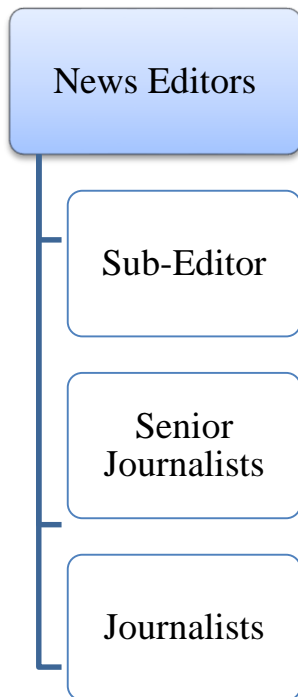
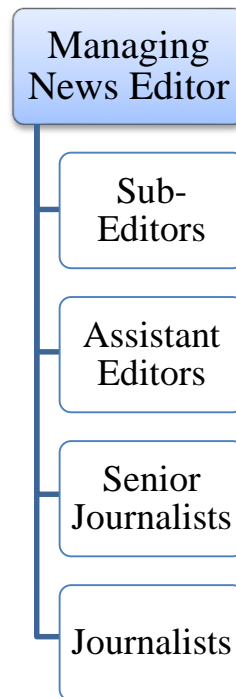


Fig. 1.2 Organogram of *Joy* newsroom



The organisational charts of *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom demonstrate that the two newsrooms have quite different organisational structures. In *Adom* newsroom there are four different ranks within which newsroom staff fall. Journalists and senior journalists report to the news editors and the sub-editor when he is the one on duty. The sub-editor in turn reports to the news editors. When the news editors are on duty, journalists in the newsroom report directly to them. In *Joy* newsroom, there are five ranks. All journalists in *Joy* newsroom report to the editors (either the assistant editors or the sub-editors) who in turn report to the managing news editor.

5.2.3 Newsroom Norms

The study found that in the newsroom of *Adom F.M.*, hierarchy is very important even though this is not the case in the newsroom of *Joy F.M.* Hierarchy is firstly manifested in the

newsroom of *Adom F.M.* in the way senior journalists are addressed by junior journalists. Names of female senior journalists are preceded with the title 'sister' while names of male senior journalists are preceded with the title 'bro'⁴, or mister. On the contrary, journalists in *Joy* newsroom relate to themselves in a more relaxed and cordial manner irrespective of their ranks and are addressed by their first names without titles.

Hierarchy is also manifested in the sitting arrangement of journalists in the newsroom of *Adom F.M.*, with certain seats reserved for senior journalists, unlike in *Joy* newsroom where seating does not reflect rank.

Again in the newsroom of *Adom F.M.*, while all journalists are required to be punctual, emphasis is placed on the punctuality of the junior journalists and interns. Infraction of this rule attracts some sanctions which can be in the form of a monetary fine or other form of punishment depending on the choice of the offender. Journalists who violate this rule are asked to choose between either paying an amount of GHC 5.00 or standing throughout editorial meetings. On two different occasions, some interns had to stand throughout editorial meetings which lasted for two hours on each occasion because they had come into the meetings late. Conversely, in *Joy* newsroom, punctuality is required of all journalists irrespective of ranks and there are no sanctions for those who flout this rule.

Newsroom staff of both *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* have been divided into two teams. In each of the two newsrooms, one group runs the morning to afternoon shift and is managed by one news editor. The other group runs the afternoon to evening shift which is managed by another news editor. In the newsroom of *Adom F.M.*, while senior journalists on the morning duty can close after the afternoon editorial meetings, interns are required to stay through until the end of the evening news before leaving the newsroom. Contrary to this practice, in the newsroom

⁴ Short form of brother

of *Joy F.M.*, all journalists have the prerogative to close at the times their teams close irrespective of their ranks in the newsroom.

As the two radio stations are on air all the time, including weekends, journalists are expected to report to work on weekends, however in the newsroom of *Adom F.M.*, only a few senior journalists report to work for weekend duties. Interns are on the other hand required to be present in the newsroom on weekends. Conversely, in the newsroom of *Joy F.M.*, a work schedule is provided at the end of the week indicating which staff members would be working during the weekends. This is done regardless of the ranks of journalists.

In *Adom* newsroom, even though journalists are given the opportunity to submit their story ideas and justify their newsworthiness, the editors have the final say on whether or not the stories would be selected as news or not. On the contrary, in the newsroom of *Joy F.M.*, all staff members get to have a say on what ideas should be considered as news or not. All journalists in the newsroom have equal opportunities to pitch story ideas during editorial meetings. Once majority of the team agrees that the story is newsworthy, it is accepted and selected to be worked upon. It is only in times of a deadlock that the managing news editor intervenes in decision-making in the *Joy* newsroom. This is, however, seldom.

5.2.4 Staff Profile

The highest educational qualification in *Adom* newsroom is an undergraduate degree in journalism and other fields and the lowest qualification is an Advanced Level certificate. On the other hand, in *Joy* newsroom, the highest qualification is a master's degree in Economics, and Communication Studies. The lowest qualification is diploma in journalism.

Six of the *Adom* newsroom staff come from varied professional backgrounds, including education, human resource, and marketing. While three of them had formal training in

journalism, three of them had not. Editors in *Adom* newsroom explained that the choice of newsroom workers was largely informed by staff's oratory abilities and proficiency level in the Akan language and not so much by education. To them, journalists in the newsroom eventually learn on the job. Two respondents explained:

We don't necessarily look at the diploma. Beyond the diploma, we put you to test to find out whether you have a talent that we can use on air (editor).

This industry is more or less talent-driven. Most of them came in because of their ability to read and write, and not as well-trained journalists from any media institution (sub-editor).

In the *Joy* newsroom however, majority (16) of the staff have some formal training in journalism, mostly from the Ghana Institute of Journalism and a few from the School of Communication Studies of the University of Ghana, as well as the African University College of Communication (AUCC).

In terms of the level of experience of the newsroom staff in the field of journalism, both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom have journalists with rich experience in the industry. In both newsrooms, some journalists have over a decade's experience in journalism. Some have experience from print media whilst others have their experience solely from broadcast media. Most of these journalists in the two newsrooms have worked with some other radio stations before transferring to *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.*

5.2.5 Resources

Both newsrooms have been provided with the basic equipment needed for work including desktop computers, headsets, internet modems, laptops, recorders and 24-hour internet services. Journalists are also provided with batteries, pens and writing pads with which to do their work. Vehicles are also available to transport journalists to various locations in order to gather information to write news stories. In the case when vehicles are not available,

journalists pre-finance the transportation which is later reimbursed. There is also a technical department on standby to resolve technical issues encountered in both newsrooms.

However, a common challenge in the two newsrooms is insufficiency of essential equipment needed to work in the newsroom. In *Adom* newsroom, apart from laptops which are used by senior journalists, there are six desktop computers. One is out of use and one is reserved for the news editors. Even though the person who updates the *Adom* online platform does not work all the time from the *Adom* newsroom, one of the computers has been reserved for him. This computer is locked up and cannot be accessed by anyone except him. Another desktop is mostly used by one senior journalist. Other journalists and interns therefore have to rely on the remaining two desktop computers to work on their assignments. Given the fact that interns form a greater part of the newsroom workers, this means that a lot of the newsroom workers are mostly left stranded as they have to wait for their colleagues to finish writing their stories and editing their soundbites before they can get access to those computers. Apart from slowing down the work pace, this sometimes leads to disagreements between the newsroom staff because some journalists who get the opportunity to use the computers feel their colleagues give them unnecessary pressure while those on standby also feel that their colleagues waste too much time working on their stories. Also in *Adom* newsroom most of the computer mice and headsets are out of use. This means that even when there is a computer it is not operable because of the unavailability of computer mice and headsets. This again results in delays as journalists have to wait for others to finish working on their stories before they can get mice and headsets to edit their interviews and write stories. To avoid these problems, some journalists report to work with their personal computer mice and headsets.

In *Joy* newsroom, there are only two desktop computers. These computers are very slow and so the journalists prefer to use laptops. However, the laptops are also inadequate. According to the journalists, the headsets are also inadequate.

During the period of observation in *Adom* newsroom, the technical department, which is in charge of solving this problem, explained to the journalists in *Adom* newsrooms that the mice and headsets are consistently misplaced and therefore it becomes difficult for the department to access funds from management to purchase new ones.

5.2.6 Training

Even though *Adom* newsroom used to organise in-house training, as of the time of this study, in-house training was no longer organised in *Adom* newsroom. The last training to be organised in the newsroom was during the latter part of 2014. Journalists in the newsroom explained that in those days when training was organised, linguistics experts were brought over mostly from Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) to train them on ethics and pronunciation of the names of people and towns. On some other occasions, legal teams were invited to train them on defamation and other legal matters.

According to an *Adom* news editor, in-house training is no longer organised because of financial constraints. The editor claimed that she has resorted to registering some of the journalists in the newsroom at the Poynter Institute⁵ for online training in varied topics, including how to become a better writer. A respondent also explained that some of the newsroom staff have had the opportunity to travel outside Ghana to train with international news agencies such as the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* and *Deutsche Welle (DW)*. A news editor also said that *Adom* newsroom has also resorted to mentoring to make up for the lack of in-house training. Junior journalists are, therefore, trained on the job by

⁵ A non-profit journalism institution situated in Florida

senior journalists who teach them how to approach news sources, as well as how to write news stories, and edit interviews. The senior journalists also peruse the stories written by junior journalists.

In *Joy* newsroom, in-house training is still organised for the newsroom staff. Even though the researcher did not sit in any in-house training in *Joy* newsroom, journalists from *Joy* newsroom indicated that in-house training is organised for them on every Friday. According to them, no training was organised at the time the researcher was in the newsroom mainly because the newsroom had just resumed from the Christmas and New Year break. According to them, the weekly Friday training, which usually lasts for about an hour, is given by the senior editors. However, respondents also indicated that industry experts are also invited occasionally to give them training. In addition, in-house training is also organised on a larger scale for the newsroom staff every quarter. Correspondents from other regions are invited to take part in this quarterly training. The in-house training explore varied issues such as editing, interviewing skills, investigative reporting, live reporting, news presentation, pronunciation, and story writing, amongst others.

According to respondents, apart from these training exercises the news editors also seek training opportunities for journalists from journalism websites such as the International Federation of Journalists' (IFJ) website. Respondents also said that some of the newsroom staff on occasion have had the opportunity to partake in trainings outside Ghana. The study data confirms this as one journalist travelled to Israel for a training programme during the time of observation.

5.2.7 Incentives/Motivation

This study found that management of the two newsrooms recognised the importance of incentives and had therefore in one way or another offered incentives before. However, the

study found that even though both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom belong to the same media house, treatment of journalists of the two newsrooms in terms of incentives is not the same. While journalists of *Adom* newsroom no longer receive incentives formally, journalists of *Joy* newsroom still have a formal incentives arrangement. However, managers of the two newsrooms exercise their discretion to motivate the journalists in the newsrooms.

According to respondents, journalists in *Adom* newsroom used to be given some form of incentive called 'Team Work Incentive' on a quarterly basis. This was a monetary incentive. The team was given a certain target and if it was achieved, the team was rewarded. However, due to financial constraints, staff of *Adom* newsroom no longer enjoy this incentive.

In order to make up for the lack of incentives in the *Adom* newsroom, a news editor claimed that she sometimes takes the initiative to reward newsroom staff who perform well by buying lunch for them or rewarding them with various amounts of monies. For most of the interns, who are not on the payroll of Multimedia Group Ltd., these incentives come in handy and motivate them to give out their best performance.

In *Joy* newsroom, incentives come in the form of bonuses given to journalists at the end of the year. As respondents explained, journalists are given targets for the year and if they are able to achieve the set targets, they are rewarded with certain amounts of monies. Apart from this, according to some of the respondents, the managing news editor also takes the initiative to give cash rewards to journalists who have performed well. Motivation also comes in the form of travel opportunities for journalists to build their capacity. Besides these, some journalists claimed to take motivation from other factors such as the competitive nature of the newsroom and commendations from senior journalists. One respondent noted:

Being recognised in front of your peers as being hard working can be motivational enough because no amount of money really can be enough to purchase your morale. So it's always about your superiors recognising the work that you are doing.

5.2.8 Bulletin

Both *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* used to do 24-hour transmission but have as of the time of the study reduced the hours of transmission to 20 hours a day due to an energy crisis in Ghana. For each of these two radio stations, transmission commences at 4:00 a.m. and ends at 12:00 midnight. This reduction in the hours of transmission in no way affects the hours of news transmission of each of these radio stations.

However, the study found that there is disparity in the number of hours of news broadcast between the two radio stations. An editor in *Adom* newsroom explained that this is the case because *Adom* newsroom does not have the staff strength that *Joy* newsroom has. There are two major bulletins within a day in *Adom* newsroom. These are the 12:00 p.m. and the 6:00 p.m. bulletins. These bulletins have been branded with a slogan ‘kaseɛbo is tasty’ which translates literally as ‘news is tasty’. These last for an hour each and are interlaced with some advertisements and live presenter mentions (LPMs). The news is also presented at 6:00 a.m. and this usually lasts for 20 minutes.

Joy newsroom also works on two major bulletins within a day. These are the 12:00 p.m. and the 6:00 p.m. bulletins. The 6:00 p.m. bulletin has been branded as *News Night* and the 12:00 p.m. bulletin has been branded as *Midday News*. *Midday News* and *News Night* are an hour-long and include some advertisements. Unlike at *Adom F.M.*, *Joy F.M.* gives briefs of news which last between five and ten minutes. These are given at 6:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m., and 10 p.m.

5.3 News Routines in *Adom* Newsroom and *Joy* Newsroom

Working in a newsroom involves uncertainties. This is because more often than not, newsroom workers are unable to tell when and where exactly news will come from within a day. Regardless of this, journalists do not rely on fate but rather carefully plan the news in order to ensure that they are able to produce the news consistently to meet the demands of their audiences. To achieve this goal, journalists employ some routine practices.

Adom newsroom and *Joy* newsroom have a similar news routine. The news routine in both newsrooms commences with presentation of the 6:00 a.m. bulletin. This is followed by an editorial meeting and assignment of journalists to story ideas which come up in the editorial meeting. Journalists then contact sources for information to write the news stories. After journalists have worked on the stories, they submit the stories and accompanying soundbites (edited by the journalists) to the editor on duty for editing. After editing, the stories are presented by the news anchors. Figure 1.2 illustrates the workflow in both newsrooms.

Fig. 1.3 Workflow in *Adom* and *Joy* newsrooms



5.3.1 Newsgathering

In both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom, the initial stage of newsgathering is the generation of ideas. The platform for idea generation in both newsrooms is editorial meetings. Both newsrooms organise editorial meetings after the morning and mid-day news. In *Joy* newsroom, editorial meetings are also held in the evenings after the evening news. These meetings can run into long hours of debate and can last between two and three hours. In *Adom* newsroom, editorial meetings are facilitated by the news editor on duty whilst the sub-editor on duty facilitates editorial meetings in *Joy* newsroom. In both newsrooms, the previous bulletins are also reviewed during the editorial meetings. Also, stories which have to be followed up are noted.

Both newsrooms also monitor competitor radio stations. In *Adom* newsroom, the news editor or any other member of the news team can inform the rest of the team about what s/he has heard from competitors, especially *Peace F.M.*, *Citi F.M.* and *Starr F.M.* This is a way of finding out which stories might be trending on competitor radio stations. The newsroom then follows up on such news stories when necessary. Also, one reporter from the *Adom* newsroom has been tasked to monitor *Joy* newsroom editorial meetings in order to update the rest of the team with ideas *Joy* newsroom is working on. This reporter sits in the editorial meetings of *Joy* newsroom for some time and reports to *Adom* newsroom before the end of the editorial meetings to give the update.

In *Joy* newsroom, some journalists have been tasked to monitor three major competitors (*Citi F.M.*, *Peace F.M.* and *Starr F.M.*). During the editorial meetings, these journalists update the newsroom on the news items covered by these radio stations. Apart from them, other journalists can also update the rest of the team on what other competitors are working on. Subsequently, one of the assistant editors developed a template he called ‘monitoring report’

in order to take record of what is monitored from competing radio stations on a computer. This way, the *Joy* newsroom workers get to know trending stories which might have escaped them in order to follow up on them.

An editor's platform has also been set up so editors can share information across newsrooms. However, journalists in *Joy* newsroom at a point complained that the other editors⁶ did not post information on the platform. They felt it was not fair to be developing ideas for others while they refused to contribute, although sometimes some journalists from *Joy* newsroom seek amusing stories for *Flip-Side*⁷ from *Adom* newsroom.

Apart from original ideas generated, stories sourced from other newsrooms of Multimedia Group Ltd., and competitor radio stations, the two newsrooms as in conventional newsrooms get stories by covering events as well as beats. In both newsrooms reporters are assigned to agriculture, business, health, judicial services, parliamentary, political, and sports beats.

Adom newsroom also gets stories from listeners who call into the newsroom consistently with issues they believe the newsroom can address. As a result, the newsroom has become a channel or medium through which *Adom* listeners channel their requests to the needed authorities. Because of this, *Adom* newsroom has made a formal arrangement in the newsroom called 'wo kaseɛbo' meaning 'your news' in order to address the problems listeners present to the newsroom. With this arrangement, listeners get to submit their personal problems as well as problems within their communities for the newsroom to follow up on. Some listeners also update the newsroom with soundbites and even videos via *Facebook* and *WhatsApp*.

⁶ Apart from *Adom* and *Joy*, news stories are shared among the other stations in the Multimedia Group.

⁷ A funny news story told to end the evening news bulletin.

I. Gatekeeping Practices

The next stage in the newsgathering process is gatekeeping. In both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom, gatekeeping takes place during editorial meetings. A lot of ideas are proposed during the editorial meetings which are potentially newsworthy stories. However, in order for a news idea to make it into the news, the members of the newsroom have to justify why it is newsworthy.

In conventional newsrooms, the selection of news stories is informed by some widely accepted factors called news values or news criteria (Boyd, 1994). These include currency which deals with how new the information is; prominence which refers to how influential the people in the story are; proximity which refers to how related the information is to the audiences; relevance which refers to the importance of the information to the public and specific audiences; and timeliness which refers to how new the information is in the public domain (Schultz, 2007). The study found that news selection in the two newsrooms conforms to these conventional news values or factors. However, the study data also revealed that apart from these factors which are used to judge newsworthiness, other factors also inform decisions about newsworthiness in the two newsrooms. While these factors are unwritten in both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom, each idea proposed has to conform to these particular unwritten criteria in order to be selected as news.

In *Adom* newsroom, news selection is mainly driven by what is termed in the newsroom as 'public interest'. This means that stories have to be catchy and attractive to the public as well as advertisers to be selected as news. As a result, salacious stories, including sex-related stories, witchcraft, as well as bizarre stories are given much coverage. In the words of the sub-editor, "*if it bleeds, it sells.*" This understanding of public interest in *Adom* newsroom is different from the general understanding of the term in the field of journalism, where seeking

the public interest involves generally preventing the public from being deceived, as well as exposing crime and impropriety (Press Complaints Commission Code UK, 2012).

Consideration is also given to regional balance. Since *Adom F.M.* is in the Greater Accra region and most of the stories journalists work on are from Accra, the newsroom tries to augment this by selecting stories from the other regions in Ghana in order to reflect regional balance in the news.

Simplicity is also a key determinant factor in news selection in *Adom* newsroom not only because of audiences but also because of the news presenters who have to translate the news from English to Akan. A story which involves too many technical jargons is difficult to translate. For example, a telecommunication story which trended on *Joy F.M.* was not selected as news in *Adom* newsroom because there were too many terminologies involved. According to an *Adom* newsroom editor, technical concepts such as electro-magnetic waves and inter-connect clearing house would have been difficult to explain in Akan. The editor again pointed out that such a story would not have excited *Adom* listeners who are mostly interested in only making and receiving calls with their phones and not regulations on telecommunications companies.

News stories such as the building of a classroom block or construction of a road are development-related and are also selected because audiences consider such issues relevant.

The study found that while journalists in the *Adom* newsroom could use the criteria discussed above to justify the newsworthiness of ideas, in the end the news editors proved to have the final say in the selection process. Hence, even when ideas have been justified as newsworthy the editors have the power to ignore them.

The study also found that unlike ideas generated by the journalists, stories submitted to *Adom* newsroom by listeners are mostly followed up without much debate. This is because such stories are considered to be relevant to audiences.

In the *Joy* newsroom, the criteria for news selection are quite different. While *Adom* newsroom also gives consideration to the magnitude of the issue at hand, in *Joy* newsroom the magnitude of an issue and the impact it can make on society is a major consideration in news selection. Emphasis is, therefore, placed on the magnitude of the issue at hand and the impact the story will make on society. For this reason, stories about personal problems submitted to the newsroom by listeners are mostly not considered newsworthy unless such problems are seen to affect society at large. For example, a listener called to complain that some policemen had beaten up and unlawfully seized monies from his business partners who had just arrived in Ghana. The listener wanted *Joy* newsroom to follow up and work on the story. However, the newsroom asked the listener to report the matter to the police because it was a personal issue; it had no larger relevance. A sub-editor explained that, “If it affects a lot of people in the country that is the major story you should be looking out for in the bulletin. So what appeals to the people and its far reaching implications.”

Controversy is also an important factor in news selection in *Joy* newsroom. A respondent believes that some point of conflict in the news keeps their listeners glued to *Joy* news. According to him, “when there’s a point of conflict, there’s some controversy, people will sit up and listen.”

The study also found that in the process of news selection in both newsrooms, the two newsrooms pass on stories amongst themselves when they feel they are better suited to the news orientation of the other. Therefore there were two instances while this researcher was observing when *Adom* newsroom passed stories on to *Joy* newsroom because they were

judged more suitable to them. An example is a story on SIM-Box fraud. The researcher, however, did not observe *Joy* newsroom reciprocating this act.

II. Assignment of Reporters

After ideas have been generated, and some ideas have been selected reporters are assigned to work on them. In both newsrooms, there is no assignment book in which story ideas and names of assigned journalists are recorded. Rather journalists are asked to write the accepted story ideas on a white board in both newsrooms. After the editorial meetings in both newsrooms, the news editors on duty assign journalists to the story ideas by writing their names against the ideas written on the board. According to editors from both newsrooms, reporters are assigned based on their levels of competency in particular fields.

Depending on the stories they are working on, journalists in both newsrooms either call the needed sources to have a recorded interview with them or go out of the newsroom to gather the news. It is worth noting, however, that in *Adom* newsroom journalists mostly rely on recorded interviews conducted in the recording booths in the newsroom, to write their stories. Journalists seldom go out to their beats to gather information. As a result, the *Adom* newsroom sometimes relies on some of the beats reporters from the *Joy* newsroom to give updates on important issues on their beats. For example, on the 21st January 2015, during the mid-day news a reporter from *Joy* newsroom was present in the *Adom F.M.* studio to give a live report about a trending court case. The *Adom* newsroom also relies heavily on vox pops, which is a technique used in conventional newsrooms to collect public opinion on issues in the news. An editor in *Adom* newsroom explained that this is done so that the opinions of the ordinary people will be heard. In *Joy* newsroom however, apart from recorded interviews, journalists often visit their beats to gather information. Vox pop is also employed in *Joy* news but not as much as it is in *Adom* news.

III. Sources of Information

A basic necessity in the newsgathering process is information. Hence, after journalists have been assigned, they look for sources of information. Sources of information in both newsrooms could be documentary or human sources (experts, government officials, and the general public). However, even when documentary sources such as research findings are used, human sources are called in order to probe into the findings. It is worth noting that in *Adom* newsroom, independent sources are most preferable to agencies and institutions. The news editor explained: “We are tired of officialdom shaping our news. We normally want ordinary people to shape the stories, to tell us what they want.” Following this, listeners who call into the newsroom to give story ideas sometimes become sources of information.

Adom newsroom has a contact list on some of the computers for use by all reporters. This comprises the names, ranks and contact numbers of the sources. The journalists also compile their own contact lists and if a journalist does not have a source’s contact, s/he would sometimes ask other journalists instead of referring to the master contact list on the computers. In *Joy* newsroom, there is no general list on the computers for all to use. Journalists rely on their own contact lists. If a journalist does not have a source’s contact, s/he makes inquiries from other journalists.

After information has been gathered, the next procedure in the production is to process the information. As happens in conventional news processing, in both newsrooms, journalists edit interviews and write news stories out of them which are submitted to the editor on duty (sub-editor in the case of *Joy* newsroom) for editing. The editors also re-edit the soundbites when necessary. Editors then determine the order in which stories are to be presented during the bulletin.

Both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom package the news in a softcopy format. Therefore the news presenters read from desktops in the studio and their laptops or even tablets. *Adom* news is also packaged in the English language just as *Joy* news. Hence, in both newsrooms, the stories are written in the English language.

5.3.2 Delivery

News delivery is strikingly different in the two newsrooms, starting from how presenters⁸ introduce themselves to their listeners. The use of Western names is not accepted in the *Adom* newsroom. Therefore *Adom* newsroom staff, including the presenters, brand themselves with their indigenous names⁹ and sometimes appellations such as ‘*nwanwani*’ meaning ‘wonderful’. This according to a news editor is just a way of reflecting their cultural identities. In contrast to this practice, journalists of *Joy* newsroom can use any name, whether Western or indigenous.

In terms of content, *Adom* news is written in English and delivered in Akan unlike *Joy* news which is written and delivered in English. News is translated on air spontaneously from English to Akan. Due to this, presenters in *Adom* newsroom have devised various techniques to deliver the news which is at variance with the conventional way of news delivery employed in the *Joy* newsroom. One presenter explained that he would start the translation by giving the background to the story which might not necessarily be written in the news story:

So for instance if former first lady has been rumoured to be dead you don’t just go straight and say former first lady has died; the English stations will do that but with the Twi set up, you first of all have to start and build from maybe is there any precedence? Has any big person in society been rumoured to be dead? So you start from that.

⁸ Journalists who present the news are from this point on identified as presenters or news readers to distinguish them from those who only report the news and are hereafter referred to as reporters.

⁹ Aside from Western names, most Ghanaians have indigenous names which are usually reserved for use in informal contexts.

He demonstrated how such a story would pan out:

ɔmanfoɔ bekae a nansayi ntam ebetɔɔ dwa huhuuhu se Alhaji Aliu Mahama afiri mu. Ekowiee no na ennye nokore; akyiri yi ansa na ɔbeba abefi mu. Ghanafoɔ ano a edi nkyene di mako se ehye ase bo wo awuto na woankasa amfa ho a ebewie no na woafi mu. Naano Yawada dea ebetɔɔ dwa ewo *Facebook* ene *WhatsApp* ne ade nyinaa di adanseɛ se ɔmanpanyin dada Kufuor ne yere afi mu nanso Adom kaseɛ atu ho anamon ne mpanyimfo akɔtwetwe nkɔmmɔ. Yekoduru ho no, nokwasem ni yeahu maame no ankasa ne no akasa; ɔte ase.

This translates:

If people will recall, it was rumoured recently that Alhaji Aliu Mahama had passed on but this eventually proved untrue. He only passed on later. When Ghanaians start speculating your death and you do not refute it, you end up dying. Just last Thursday it was circulated on *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* that the wife of Former President Kufuor had passed on but checks by *Adom* news shows that the woman is alive.

Another presenter said she would also start the translation process by saying something quite unrelated to the news story while reading the story to herself. She would then translate the story when she has understood it.

The editors and reporters agreed that spontaneous translation gives a lot of discretion to the news presenters but they also trusted the presenters to be able to set boundaries for themselves. According to one of the editors, this is the reason why the presenters are trained before they are allowed to go live on air. A presenter also indicated that their involvement in editorial meetings also helps to broaden their understanding about the issues at stake so they can easily translate.

Although presenters are ideally supposed to read ahead of live transmission of the news, the presenters in *Adom* newsroom have little time and so some do not do this before presenting the news live on air. Subsequently in translation, they improvise ways of understanding the stories as have been mentioned earlier. Hence, some respondents agreed that spontaneous translation tends to be problematic and as a result is not the best practice. One reporter

admitted that there had been times when sources had called her to complain about having been taken out of context or misquoted due to the way news readers rendered the stories she had written.

Another reporter related:

I don't want to mention names but we do have some of the readers at times when the person is reading your story and if you're home or you are in the newsroom or you are in the studio, at times you can sometimes get angry because the way the presenters do present the news on air with exaggeration and stuff... I mean there are certain things you don't write in the news or in the story but they say.

Despite these problems which come with spontaneous translation, respondents were not in support of engaging the services of translators to translate the news before it is read on air. This is because they think that such a practice will increase the cost of production and also take away the excitement from the news.

In *Joy* newsroom, the news is written and read in English. However, *Joy* news is not presented without some level of spontaneity. Even though the news stories are written and read in English, presenters get to ask spontaneous questions during on-air interviews.

Joy news presenters also have some level of discretion in the news presentation as presenters do not have to read the news verbatim and are allowed to modify their scripts. A presenter explained that she sometimes substitute some words with other words she finds more comfortable. Apart from this, presenters also get to exercise discretion during live interviews. So in the end the news presenters engage in just more than reading. A sub-editor explained that, "It's not just about reading, you must have a certain level of sophistication to be able to address issues as and when they come."

Respondents felt that the amount of discretion given to the *Joy* news presenters is rather needed. According to one news presenter, discretion enables the presenters to connect with

listeners. He also said it makes the news stories lively so that presenters do not sound mechanical in reading the news. Respondents also believed that the presenters' discretion in no way affects the news transmission. According to an assistant editor, this is because presenters are carefully selected: "You see the kind of people who also go on air. You need to have a certain qualification."

However, the presenters of *Joy* newsroom pointed out that the level of discretion and spontaneity that comes with reading the news can sometimes result in circumlocutions, exaggerations, deviations, and abuse of discretion. To prevent this, they indicated that they try to understand the issue at stake before going live on air. They also listen to interviewees when conducting live interviews. They also indicated that being part of the whole news production process prepares them towards the news presentation. Presenters also mentioned reading around the subject for more information as a very helpful activity. One presenter also opined that having a stable state of mind helps in delivering the news well.

At the end of the news presentation, the performance of presenters is reviewed in *Joy* newsroom unlike in *Adom* newsroom where there is no such performance review of presenters. During editorial meetings, *Joy* news presenters eventually answer for why they took certain decisions or not. For example, if a *Joy* news presenter decides to ask a question repetitively during a live interview, s/he will have to answer to the rest of the news team why that was done. When necessary, *Joy* news presenters are corrected by the rest of the news team and are reprimanded by the managing news editor. It was realised that this helps to keep *Joy* news presenters in check so they do not abuse discretion.

I. The Use of Literary Devices in News Presentation

Literary devices are forms of constructions employed to add special effects to narrations. *Adom* news presenters, unlike *Joy* news presenters, rely heavily on literary devices to present

the news. Predominantly used literary devices in the newsroom are humour, proverbs and exaggeration.

Humour is one of the literary devices greatly employed in the delivery of *Adom* news. Presenters crack jokes, make funny remarks, amongst others as a kind of commentary on the news items they present in order to evoke laughter. According to respondents from *Adom* newsroom, humour is employed in order to meet the emotional and psychological needs of listeners, who are mostly tired and stressed out and therefore require news that is interesting. Contrary to this, *Joy* news in general does not employ literary devices but uses humour occasionally in a segment of the evening news called *Flip Side* where a funny news story is told to end the news bulletin.

Aside from humour, *Adom* news is also presented with a lot of proverbs. Presenters, therefore, intersperse the narration with as many proverbs as possible. Respondents explained that the use of proverbs conforms to Akan tradition and is a matter of necessity as *Adom* news is packaged and presented to reflect the Ghanaian and for that matter African tradition within which the newsroom operates. According to a news presenter, in the Ghanaian and African tradition as a whole when a king gives information to a linguist, he does not repeat exactly what the king has said but he (the linguist) infuses the information with proverbs. According to the presenter, the job of the Akan news presenter is similar to that of a linguist because the linguist has the discretion to add or subtract from the information the king gives. The use of proverbs in the news is, therefore, not strange but rather follows the customs and traditions of the Akan people. A respondent said, “Akans just like the Nigerians use proverbs to spice their language.”

Respondents again explained that the use of proverbs shows mastery over the Akan language for which reason listeners can trust them to be able to deliver the news efficiently to them in

the Akan language. A respondent said, “In Akan when you use a proverb, it places you on a certain level; that you have deep thoughts.” Another explanation given for the use of proverbs is that they help to summarise longer narrations.

Exaggeration is another form of literary device used in presentation of the *Adom* news. With this, presenters give embellished and sometimes non-factual descriptions of events and issues in the news. In a demonstration, a presenter displayed a typical example of exaggeration in the news:

Bere a abaayewa no akuntun nemu repra no, abaamuwaa no hwεε no, senea ne to εsifa abobɔ. Ogyinaa hɔ na ɔhwε aa na ɔmemenee ntasuo. εhɔɔ a na ne baama sɔrεε. εnam so ma ɔkaa ɔbaa no tim hɔ a ɔne no dae.

This translates: The boy observed the girl’s buttocks with great desire as she bent down to sweep. He gulped as he continued to admire her, and then had an erection. Subsequently, he forcibly had sex with her.

Presenters felt that exaggeration and for that matter embellishment is an important element which helps them in translating the news from English to Akan. A presenter explained, “We need to embellish because we need to paint a mental picture. Sometimes, yes the script will say, a 13 year old girl has been raped but since this is not TV, I have to paint a picture.”

Other literary devices such as anecdotes, euphemisms amongst others are used in the presentation of *Adom* news as well. Songs are also used to punctuate the news occasionally. For example on the 30th January 2015, a presenter sang the following indigenous Akan song during the mid-day news:

Aseda nka Onyame
Nyame a ɔne yεn wɔ hɔ
Ne neama εye a ɔye

εε nwanwa

Ne neama εε nhyira

Ne nyinaa fi Awurade ho

Aseda afore a εε wɔmfa ma no

Even though mispronunciation is not a literary device, it has become a key linguistic technique employed in presentation of the *Adom* news. According to respondents, mispronunciation of English words is employed deliberately in the *Adom* news because the presenters want to identify with their listeners. A respondent gave an example where a presenter said ‘ebora’ instead of ‘ebola’¹⁰ in order to identify with listeners who are most likely to say ‘ebora’ rather than ‘ebola’.

Due to the use of these literary devices and other linguistic techniques, *Adom* news is rendered informal. According to one respondent, this boiled down to the fact that Akan news presenters do not read but rather narrate the news. He said, “We do news telling; we tell the news because our scripts are in English and then we have to do the reading in Twi.”

While reasons were given by respondents for the use of specific literary devices, the study found that the overarching reason for using these literary devices in the news is competition. Respondents expressed the fear that if these devices are not employed, rival Akan radio stations which make use of literary devices in their news presentations will attract more audiences and advertisements.

Respondents believed that these literary devices such as exaggeration in no way affect the actual message delivered in the *Adom* news. A respondent noted that, “If you say that Kwame

¹⁰ Ebola viral disease

is coming, it's Kwame is coming. You can add the embellishment but it shouldn't change the fact that Kwame is coming.”

5.4 The Routine of Applying Regulations

The journalism profession as any other profession requires some form of regulation in order to ensure that journalists in the performance of their duties respect the rights of individuals and societal norms. In order to achieve this, the media themselves, together with the Government of Ghana, have instituted regulatory bodies to guide the profession. The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association of Ghana (GIBA), and the National Media Commission (NMC) are the three most prominent. The GJA has written code of ethics to guide general journalistic practice while GIBA has written guidelines to guide the conduct of its members during elections. The NMC has also written guidelines for local language broadcasting. Apart from these external guidelines, news organisations also have internal codes (newsroom policies) which are written by the news organisations to guide the day to day practices of newsrooms. The following findings were made as regards the routine application of these guidelines:

5.4.1 Newsroom Policies

Both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom have written newsroom policies. However, these policies are not available in the newsrooms but are kept with the administration department. The researcher was upon request denied access to these policies and therefore cannot tell the details of the policies.

The study found that apart from the editors and a news presenter, the rest of the respondents in *Adom* newsroom did not know about their newsroom policies. The few who had read it

indicated it conforms to the ethos of the journalism profession and therefore not at all difficult to abide by. However, they felt the policy leaves some grey areas because it is not explicit on some issues such as balancing advertisers' interest with that of their audiences. According to them, this leaves journalists in ethical dilemmas which are resolved only through experience. For example, when journalists are confronted with stories which implicate their advertisers they are faced with a dilemma about how to balance the advertiser's interest with the interest of listeners who have the right to information.

In the *Joy* newsroom, even though some respondents claimed that journalists in the *Joy* newsroom are briefed on their newsroom policy once they start working in the newsroom, some respondents seemed to be unaware of the policy. Only the editors were familiar with the policy and they expressed the view that the newsroom policy is better than the GJA Code of Ethics because it is more detailed and therefore able to take care of the grey areas left by the GJA Code of Ethics such as decisions on what qualifies to be news. A respondent explained:

Much as the GJA Code of Ethics gives us a guide for all we do in the newsroom, I think it [newsroom policy] gives us a more direct link when it comes to what we do on the radio and it also helps us in decision-making on stories we do and stories we leave for other stations to do.

5.4.2 GJA Code of Ethics

The GJA Code of Ethics was written in 1994 to guide journalists in Ghana in their practices. The guidelines explore issues such as right to true information, social responsibility, professional integrity, plagiarism, respect for privacy and human dignity, respect for national and ethnic values, protection of sources, suppression of news, rejoinders, dealing with victims of sexual assault, minors and distressed sources.

The study found that in the course of their news production, *Adom* newsroom flouts some of these guidelines unlike *Joy* newsroom which makes conscious efforts to adhere to these

professional guidelines. The following similar incidences which happened in the two newsrooms at different times demonstrate this:

An *Adom* reporter recorded the private conversation of two individuals in a salon she had visited without their consent and the soundbite was accepted and used in the news. When a similar thing happened in *Joy* newsroom, there was a different reaction. A journalist once recorded a news source secretly when he went on an assignment. However, when he returned from the assignment, the soundbite was rejected. The managing news editor explained that the reporter ought to have sought permission from the news source before recording him and that the journalist had no right to secretly record him since there was no criminality involved in the issue the journalist was reporting on and the source had not even refused to be recorded in the first place.

On the other hand, the sub-editor of *Adom* newsroom felt there was nothing wrong with this practice. He revealed that there had been times when he had also recorded conversations in public buses without the consent of the people in the bus. He found no problem with this because to him no persons were implicated in those audio recordings. Article 5 of the GJA Code of Ethics stipulates that journalists should respect people's privacy. Such intrusion into people's private lives is justified only when the information gathered is in the public interest (Article 5, Section 2, GJA Code of Ethics), which was not the case in both instances.

Apart from this incidence, the study found further breach of the GJA Code of Ethics in other forms in *Adom* newsroom. According to a news presenter, in a rape case the presenter will try to "go into the mind of the guys" in order to create an understanding about what might have informed the alledged rapist to commit such an offense. According to him, in such a situation, the presenter would for example say, "The boy observed the girl's buttocks with great desire

as she bent down to sweep. He gulped as he continued to admire her, and then had an erection. Subsequently, he forcibly had sex with her.”

This demonstrates a clear case in which facts, comments and conjecture are mixed together and presented to listeners as news. This practice is in direct contravention of Article 11 of the GJA Code of Ethics which advises that a distinction should be made clearly between facts, guesses and comments.

The study found that the Code of Ethics was not visible in the two newsrooms. However, some of the respondents from *Adom* newsroom indicated their familiarity with the GJA Code of Ethics. In *Joy* newsroom, all respondents indicated their familiarity with the Code of Ethics. Respondents from both newsrooms indicated that the GJA Code of Ethics is too scanty and does not give detailed instructions regarding everyday newsroom practices such as newsgathering. A result of this is that the code cannot be applicable to every issue which come up in the newsroom thereby leaving journalists to exercise their own discretion in their practices. They also expressed the view that the guidelines are dated and therefore need to be reviewed to meet modern demands. This is because the code was written in an era when social media was not prominent in media practice in Ghana. Given the fact that the internet and social media are currently used predominantly in mainstream media, there is the need for the guidelines to be reviewed in order to give instructions concerning the use of the internet and social media in the practice of journalism in the country. A respondent from *Joy* newsroom explained:

The GJA Code of Ethics I think is in need of some review. It was drafted when the internet wasn't a dominant factor within media circles and when it was drafted it was primarily print and then radio was just starting. So some of the things that it talks of are exclusive to print, radio and television.

Despite the concerns expressed about the GJA guidelines, other respondents from *Joy* newsroom expressed a contrary view as they considered the guidelines to be very practicable and helpful in their day to day practices. One sub-editor shared: “We’ve actually had real life instances where we needed to apply these ethical principles.”

5.4.3 GIBA’s Code of Conduct

The Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association of Ghana (GIBA) has written a Code of Conduct to guide the practice of its members during elections. The Code of Conduct include instructions on ensuring adequate planning of election reportage, setting up a system for monitoring election campaign coverage, voter education, as well as avoiding hate, incitement and insulting speech.

The study found that unlike the GJA Code of Ethics and the NMC Guidelines on Local Language Broadcasting, the GIBA Code of Conduct is not easily accessible. The Code of Conduct was neither available on the internet nor in well-patronised communication studies libraries, including the library of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana. The code was also not visible in the two newsrooms. The researcher had to send an introductory letter from her department to GIBA before she was able to get a copy of the Code of Conduct to review.

The study data also revealed that the respondents from both *Joy* newsroom and *Adom* newsroom did not have knowledge about the GIBA guidelines. The study found that these guidelines were written specifically for election reportage and therefore they do not have much bearing on the news routines observed in the newsrooms of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* This is because the period of observation did not fall within an election period in Ghana.

5.4.4 NMC's Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting

The guidelines for local language broadcasting were written by the National Media Commission (NMC). It instructs that the core values and ethics of journalism including accuracy, objectivity, and fairness amongst others must be promoted by local language broadcasters just as it is in the English language broadcast. It also gives directions on how local language news should be gathered, processed and presented. The study found that many of the NMC guidelines are flouted in the *Adom* newsroom.

Firstly, Section 2.3.5 of NMC's local language broadcasting guidelines stipulates that, "as far as is practicable, local language news must be gathered and presented in the language intended for broadcasting." However, the practice in *Adom* newsroom is rather the contrary as the news is gathered in English and presented in local language.

Also Section 2.3.2 states that, "spontaneous presentation or translation of news is not permitted in broadcasting." However, *Adom* newsroom engages in spontaneous translation of the news on air as has been discussed earlier.

Again Section 2.3.5 states that, "proverbs, anecdotes and other linguistics devices that have the potential to embellish news stories are not permitted in local language news." Against this guideline, *Adom* news is interlaced with anecdotes, exaggerations, proverbs, anecdotes and other linguistic devices.

Article 2.6 of the local language broadcasting guidelines also suggests that, "local language news translators must endeavour to obtain very good dictionaries for both the source language and the target language." However, neither an Akan nor English language dictionary was found in the newsroom.

The study found that the NMC Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting was not visible in the *Adom* newsroom. Only the editors from *Adom* newsroom were familiar with NMC's guidelines on local language broadcasting. The few who were familiar with the guidelines explained that there is a disconnection between what they prescribe and the actual practice on the ground mainly because the local language radio stations were not consulted before the guidelines were written. Most respondents, therefore, pointed out that there is no way the news can be presented without the use of literary devices such as proverbs as prescribed in the guidelines because literary devices form part of the Akan language and the culture of the Akan and their use prove the oratory skill of the speaker.

5.4.5 Personal Guidelines

Apart from the internal and external guidelines discussed, individual journalists as other professionals are also guided by their personal principles. The study found that most respondents from both newsrooms took their personal guidelines from the ethos of the profession which they learnt in journalism school. They, therefore, mentioned being guided by accuracy, balance, fairness and truthfulness. Some respondents also mentioned that they make sure that they do not accept monies in order to suppress information. All these conform to the GJA Code of Ethics.

5.5 The Routine of Advertisement Placement and its Influence on Routines and News

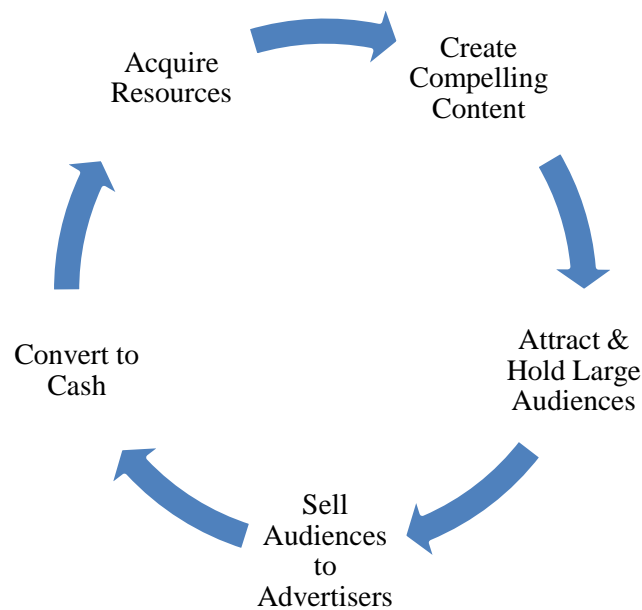
The study found the influence of advertisers on the routines of both newsrooms in two main forms; timing and content. In terms of time, the study found that advertisers are able to purchase some amount of time in the *Adom* news and *Joy* news and hence they determine the amount of time within which the news of both radio stations is broadcast. An assistant editor

in *Joy* newsroom noted, “Because they’re paying, first of all they determine how much news time you get. So *News Night*, we don’t always have one hour. The more adverts there are, the less time we get.”

According to another respondent in *Joy* newsroom, there are several instances where *News Night* was not broadcast at all because advertisers had paid for the entire airtime to broadcast their events.

In terms of advertisers’ influence on the news content, the study found that in both newsrooms the news content is selected to attract audiences and eventually advertisers. An editor in *Adom* newsroom explained that the news is planned with advertisers in mind. The influence of advertisers on the news content in both newsrooms is better illustrated by a diagram posted on the walls of *Joy* newsroom:

Fig. 1.4 Multimedia Group Limited, Value Chain



Source: Multimedia Group Limited

This diagram illustrates how both newsrooms ensure that their news content is compelling enough so as to attract and retain large audiences who are in turn sold to advertisers. It is worth noting though that the cycle does not end with generation of income but rather ends with resourcing the newsrooms. Arguably, this is to ensure that both newsrooms are well equipped to create content attractive enough to audiences and eventually advertisers. This cycle ensures the survival of both newsrooms and emphasises how much advertisers indirectly influence the news content in both newsrooms.

Also, as explained by an editor in *Adom* newsroom, the interest of the advertiser is also considered when stories have to be done on them. Respondents from *Joy* newsroom reiterated that if an advertiser who brings in millions of dollars has an issue, the newsroom treads with caution in doing such a story.

This proves to be one of the dilemmas in the newsrooms because in such a situation, the newsroom is torn between its obligation to give the public information and its obligation to protect the advertisers' interest. A sub-editor in *Joy* newsroom explained:

If for example there is an entity that supports our organisation in terms of commercials or adverts and there is a story to be done that involves them, we run by the editor and management because there are likely implications of running that story. But if it is true and it's a fact nothing stands in our way we just have to find a way of writing that story so that it doesn't affect their sensibilities. But if it's accurate and it's a fact we put it out there, we don't let that relationship stand in our way.

Apart from advertisers' influence on the time and content of the news in both newsrooms, in *Adom* newsroom the influence of advertisers comes through even in the choice of people who work in the newsroom. For example in selecting presenters, journalists who are very oratory and can bring much excitement into the news to attract audiences and advertisers are preferable. This is related by a news editor: "Beyond the diploma, we put you to test to find

out whether you have a talent that we can use on air to educate the public, something that we can also offer to the advertisers and make money.”

Hence, advertisers’ influence on the routines of both newsrooms cannot be downplayed. A statement by a respondent from *Joy* newsroom underscores this: “They [advertisers] are more powerful than the managing news editor.”

However, it is worth mentioning that advertisers’ influence seemed to be more conspicuous in *Adom* newsroom where there is always talk about pursuing stories which will attract a greater audience share and advertisers eventually. Advertisers influence is therefore evident in the type of stories which get selected and the manner in which the news is delivered (salacious stories as discussed earlier). This gives an indication that advertisers have a greater influence on the gatekeeping or news selection process, and the news delivery process of *Adom* newsroom *more than Joy* newsroom.

5.6 Summary

This chapter presented findings obtained about the news routines of *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.* The findings was firstly characterised by the way in which the newsrooms of the two radio stations are organised in order to give an insight into the entities whose routines the study explored. The chapter also shed light on the kind of people who work in the two newsrooms. This chapter then zoomed in on the main routines in the two newsrooms: newsgathering, gatekeeping, and presentation. The chapter further explored the routine of applying regulations in the two newsrooms. Finally, the chapter explained the routine of advertisement placement and how it plays within the news routines described. It was realised that, while advertisers have an influence on the routines and subsequently news of both *Adom F.M.* and

Joy F.M., they (advertisers) have a far greater influence on the routines of *Adom F.M.* than *Joy F.M.* This influence is mainly on the gatekeeping, and the news delivery processes in *Adom* newsroom.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the news routines of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* and the possible influence the routines could have on their news. This chapter discusses the key findings which emerged from this study in relation to the research questions, the theories underpinning this research and relevant literature. The chapter finally discusses other important findings which are not necessarily related to the research questions. This study was interested in interrogating these research questions:

1. What is the nature of newsgathering, processing and delivery of both local language and English language news?
2. What similarities or differences exist between the news routines of both stations?
3. What accounts for the differences if any, in the news routines of both stations?
4. To what extent do the two stations adhere to professional guidelines and in-house editorial policies on professional standards?

6.2 The Nature of Newsgathering, Processing and Delivery in *Adom* Newsroom and *Joy* Newsroom

Newsgathering in both newsrooms conform to conventional newsroom practices. In both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom, ideas are generated during editorial meetings. Journalists are then assigned to work on news stories in order to present to editors. In conformity with conventional newsroom practices, journalists are also attached to various beats, such as the parliamentary beat, which become reliable news sources (Fishman, 1980).

This demonstrates that in the process of newsgathering, both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom plan the news even ahead of occurrences, thereby giving evidence to the social organisation of newswork perspective of the Sociology of News Production (SNP) which posits that news tends to be planned because it is organised in a beats system. In the same way, processing of the news in both newsrooms conforms to conventional newsroom practices whereby journalists submit news stories and soundbites to editors for editing.

However, news delivery in *Adom* newsroom tends to be unconventional as against news delivery in *Joy* newsroom which tends to be conventional. In *Adom* newsroom, the news is orally narrated unlike in *Joy* newsroom where the news is read. This is because *Adom* news is translated from English to Akan in a spontaneous manner. Furthermore, *Adom* news is also presented with literary devices making it even more unconventional.

This demonstrates that while newsgathering, processing and delivery of the English language news is conventional, newsgathering, processing and delivery of the local language news is somewhat unconventional. The unconventional nature of some practices in *Adom* newsroom is similar to that of *The Evening News* where Hammond (2004) identified unconventional practices. This demonstrates how some newsrooms modify conventional routine practices to suit their particular needs.

6.3 Similarities and Differences Identified in the News Routines of *Adom Newsroom* and *Joy Newsroom*

Most of the news routines employed in *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom are similar with only a few nuances. Similarities were found in newsgathering of both newsrooms; both newsrooms begin the newsgathering process with idea generation. The two newsrooms tend

to be very innovative in generating story ideas during editorial meetings. This is in contrast to the practice Nylund (2013) found in the *Hufvudstadsbladet* newsroom where there was less innovation in idea generation during editorial meetings.

Both newsrooms are also confronted with an overload of information. News story ideas proposed, therefore, have to go through gatekeeping processes in order for some to be selected from among the lot. This is reflective of the theory of gatekeeping which posits that in newsrooms information has to be sorted into only a few and that news passes through gates before getting to audiences (Shoemaker et. al., 2001).

Furthermore as indicated by the theory of news selection, the study found that selection of news stories in both newsrooms is informed by a certain criteria predicated from how each of these newsrooms understand who their audience is. In both newsrooms, these criteria are unwritten but journalists are conscious about them and therefore tend to justify the newsworthiness of stories with them.

Similarities were also found in the news processing of both newsrooms. In both newsrooms, processing begins with the journalists who edit news stories together with soundbites which they eventually submit to editors for final editing. In both newsrooms, editors arrange the stories in the order in which they are to be presented during the bulletins. Also, both newsrooms package the news in a softcopy format. Moreover in both newsrooms, the news is packaged in the English language.

Aside from these similarities, some differences were also identified between the routines of the two newsrooms. In both newsrooms, the criteria for news selection were found to be quite different. In *Adom* newsroom, ‘public interest’¹¹, regional balance and simplicity are primary factors considered in story selection. In *Joy* newsroom, magnitude and controversy are the

¹¹ Catchy stories

major factors considered in the news selection process. The factor of simplicity employed in *Adom* newsroom is consistent with the unambiguity factor identified by the theory of news selections which posits that issues which are easier to understand are more likely to be selected than those which require interpretation. In *Joy* newsroom the magnitude factor used conforms to the threshold factor of the theory of news selection which posits that events which happen on a large scale are more likely to be selected. This shows that some aspects of the assumptions of the theory of news selection are relevant in both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom. However, this finding also proves that the criteria for news selection in the two newsrooms are not restricted to the 12 factors identified by the theory of news selection. This is because apart from the factors which are consistent with those identified by the theory of news selection, the other factors (controversy, regional balance, and ‘public interest’) do not conform to those identified by the theory of news selection.

In consonance with the assumption of SNP that news routines have an impact on the news, the different criteria used in news selection were found to result in differences in news content of the two newsrooms. *Adom* news content mostly comprises salacious and bizarre stories unlike *Joy* news which, to a large extent comprises stories that have the ability to make an impact in society.

News selection was also found to be more individualised in *Adom* newsroom than in *Joy* newsroom. In *Adom* newsroom although journalists contribute to the process of news selection, the final decision-making lies with the news editors. This finding lends credence to McQuail’s (2005) critique of the theory of gatekeeping that an individual (the gatekeeper) has control over the news content. However, in *Joy* newsroom, decision-making is left for the majority proving that just as Shoemaker et. al. (2001) contended, gatekeeping in newsrooms is not always individualised because the process involves many more forces such as other journalists.

The study also found that, audiences contribute to the news selection process of *Adom* newsroom far more than in *Joy* newsroom. Hence, in *Adom* newsroom, a special arrangement has been made so that the newsroom can make room for the stories submitted by audiences through phone calls and social media in its news. This practice in *Adom* newsroom corroborates the networked journalism theory which posits that in contemporary times, journalists produce the news in collaboration with audiences who generate content for the media by the means of technology. This again demonstrates the possibility of audience influences in the gatekeeping process as projected by the theory of gatekeeping (Shoemaker et. al., 2001).

Key differences were further identified in the news delivery of the two newsrooms. Firstly, *Adom* news presentation is a spontaneous translation into Akan the news written in English. *Joy* news, on the other hand, is presented in English from scripts written in English. Secondly, *Adom* news is presented with literary devices such as allegories, anecdotes, exaggerations, humour, proverbs, amongst others. Respondents' explanation that the use of literary devices in the news stems from the Akan language and culture provides evidence for the culturological perspective of SNP, which posits that the culture in which newsrooms are situated contribute to shaping the news. These linguistic elements of the Akan culture, therefore, influence the manner in which the news is presented. Hence, *Adom* news is totally informal while *Joy* news is formal. This illustrates how news routines shape the final news product in both newsrooms and thereby provides evidence that news routines have an influence on the news as suggested by SNP. This is a bit contrasting to the result of Eliasoph's (1988) study, which rather downplayed the role of news routines in shaping the final newscast. Hence, contrary to Eliasoph's (1988) view, this study rather proves that the role of news routines in shaping the news is not minimal, and confirms Shoemaker et. al.'s (2001) finding that news routines influence the news rather immensely. Therefore, the news

routines adopted by *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom contributes immensely to the differences in their newscasts.

6.4 Factors Which Account for the Differences in the News Routines of Both Stations

Given that both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom belong to the same media company and that most of their news routines are similar, this study explored reasons behind the differences in the news routines identified in the two newsrooms.

The study found that differences identified in the news selection of both *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom is mainly because in *Adom* newsroom emphasis is placed on audiences while in *Joy* newsroom emphasis is placed on making an impact on society. Hence, *Adom* news selection is driven primarily by the desire to meet audiences' need for an exciting news bulletin. The newsroom as a result consciously selects salacious content which audiences find interesting. This is the reason why *Adom* news is branded with the slogan, 'kaseɛbo is tasty' to indicate how 'sweet' and interesting *Adom* news is. This is done in the bid to attract and retain large audiences who will in turn attract advertisers. In effect, this highlights the influence of external forces such as the audience and advertisers in the gatekeeping process just as Shoemaker & Reese (1996) argued. This in effect provides evidence for the political economy of news perspective of SNP which indicates that politically powerful agencies such as advertisers are able to influence the news construction. Advertisers are able to influence the news construction and subsequently the news because of economic reasons; news channels make money out of selling advertising space to advertisers. Eliasoph's (1988) study also mentions economic factors as one of the forces which shape the news. This finding of emphasis on audiences and advertisers in *Adom* newsroom and their influence on the news is, therefore, consistent with Eliasoph's (1988) finding and proves that several years after

Eliasoph's (1988) study, economic factors still have an influence on the news construction and the news itself. Conversely, *Joy* newsroom is driven by the need to make an impact on society with its news stories and therefore select content which has the potential to make an impact on society. *Adom* newsrooms' placement of priority on audiences is reflected in February 2015 audience share ratings which showed that *Adom F.M.* had more listenership than *Joy F.M.* (Ipsos, 2015) even though the latter had been in existence five years earlier than *Adom F.M.*, which started operations in 2000.

Closely related to this factor is competition. Apart from *Adom F.M.* which broadcasts in Akan, there are other radio stations which also broadcast in Akan. *Adom* newsroom shows much concern about losing audiences to competing Akan radio stations such as *Peace F.M.*, which uses a similar format in presenting the news. This constant fear of losing audiences to competing Akan radio stations compels *Adom* newsroom to select news content which will not only attract but retain audiences. This proves what the theory of gatekeeping posits that advertisers' preference for large audiences makes the news media compete with each other by selecting news content to attract large audiences (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). While *Joy* newsroom is very competitive, the newsroom is not too much concerned about competition because the station has carved a niche for itself as a credible and reliable news source (www.multimediaghana.com).

Key differences found in the delivery of both newsrooms can be attributed to the fact that *Adom* news is not translated from English to Akan before being read on air. Hence, unlike *Joy* news which is read in English from English scripts, *Adom* news is read in Akan from English scripts. This results in spontaneous translation in *Adom* newsroom because it is at the point of presentation that *Adom* news is spontaneously translated into Akan. This means that presenters quickly have to improvise some means of translating the news most of which have been earlier discussed. In effect, spontaneous translation on air leaves *Adom* news presenters

with so much discretion which is unaccounted for thereby leading to abuse of discretion. The result of this is that the news is presented with literary devices and mispronunciations.

Then again unlike in *Joy* newsroom, there is so much emphasis in *Adom* newsroom on presenting the news to satisfy the emotional and psychological needs of audiences. Respondents, therefore, reiterated the fact that listeners are stressed out and are in need of news which is entertaining and relaxing. *Adom* news is therefore presented with literary devices such as humour in order to achieve this.

Finally, the fear of losing audiences and advertisers to competitors again plays an instrumental role in the differences found in the presentation of *Adom* news. Some respondents expressed the fear that if *Adom* news is not presented with literary devices and gimmicks, the station would lose its audiences and advertisers to competitor Akan radio stations such as *Peace F.M.* While *Joy* newsroom is also competitive, there is a sense of security rather than fear in the newsroom.

So ultimately, external forces including audiences, competitors, and advertisers account for the reason why news routines in *Adom* newsroom differ from that of *Joy* newsroom, which in turn result in differences in their newscast. This point confirms the political economy of news perspective of SNP, which posits that the politically powerful in society such as advertisers have an influence on the news.

6.5 The Routine of Application of Professional Standards

The study found that *Joy* newsroom adheres to professional standards more than *Adom* newsroom which defies some of the professional standards. This is because *Adom* newsroom

flouts both the GJA Code of Ethics and the NMC Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting during its news production process.

This can be firstly attributed to the fact that some individual journalists of the *Adom* newsroom are not familiar with these guidelines. Given the fact that some of the journalists in the newsroom do not have any formal training in journalism and in-house trainings which would have dealt with this knowledge gap have so far been halted in *Adom* newsroom as of the time of this study, this is not unexpected. As a result, most journalists of *Adom* newsroom do not know when they have even flouted the guidelines.

Furthermore, even the journalists in *Adom* newsroom who are familiar with the guidelines show indifference towards the guidelines. Responses gathered from *Adom* newsroom show that the journalists in *Adom* newsroom have written off the GJA Code of Ethics because they find it as rather out-dated and inapplicable to current newsroom practices. Meanwhile in *Joy* newsroom, although some of the respondents also thought that the GJA Code of Ethics are out-dated the guidelines have not been completely written off as some find them relevant to current newsroom practices.

Responses of journalists in *Adom* newsroom concerning the NMC guidelines on local language broadcasting also show journalists in *Adom* newsroom feel the NMC guidelines are unrealistic because they fail to give consideration to the culture associated with the local language which is used to broadcast the *Adom* news. The journalists in the newsroom felt the newsroom is operating within a culture and therefore have to abide by the cultural norms of that culture in news production and delivery. This proves the culturological perspective of SNP which states that culture contributes to shaping the news.

Apart from the knowledge and attitudes of the journalists in the newsroom, the study also found that *Adom* newsroom itself gives less prominence to professional standards.

Meanwhile, *Joy* newsroom gives prominence to professional standards just as Avorgbedor (2009) found in *Radio Ghana* newsroom. As a result, *Adom* newsroom as an organisation shows a lack of commitment in enforcing the professional standards dictated by the two guidelines as against *Joy* newsroom which makes conscious efforts to prevent violation of the guidelines. In the example of the secret recording mentioned earlier, whilst both journalists of the two newsrooms had flouted a journalistic standard, *Adom* newsroom aided its journalist whilst *Joy* newsroom rather prevented the journalist from flouting the standards of the profession. This finding supports Eliasoph's (1988) argument that the news is also shaped by organisational factors. This is because the posture of the two newsrooms on the guidelines discussed influences how journalists apply it to their newsgathering and presentation processes, which subsequently influences the news.

At the end of the day, adherence or non-adherence to professional standards has an influence on the final newscast of both radio stations. *Joy* newsroom's adherence to professional standards makes *Joy* news a higher standard of news than *Adom* news, which is prepared without much adherence to professional standards.

6.6 Discussion of Other Findings

Aside from findings which were made in connection to the research questions, there were other interesting findings which do not necessarily conform to the research questions of the study. This section discusses these findings.

6.6.1 Cultural Norms in *Adom* newsroom

The study found that generally, Ghanaian cultural norms permeate the practices in *Adom* newsroom unlike in *Joy* newsroom. This is demonstrated in the sitting arrangement of

journalists in the newsroom in which case seats are reserved for senior journalists. This is reflective of the Ghanaian culture where seats are secured for seniors before seats are made available for juniors in order to show respect.

Cultural norms are also demonstrated in the way in which sanctions are meted out to journalists in the newsroom of *Adom F.M.* Sanctions are a major way in which the Ghanaian culture attempts to discipline people who do not abide by rules. More importantly, the fact that sanctions are reserved for junior staff of the newsroom illustrates how in the Ghanaian culture, juniors are held accountable for their shortcomings while seniors are not.

Cultural norms are also seen in *Adom* newsroom in terms of the way the junior staff address senior staff. In Ghana, juniors address senior females with the title 'sister' and senior males with the title 'bro'¹². Again, this is in order to show respect.

Furthermore, the *Adom* news editors' exercise of veto power in the news selection process is indicative of the Ghanaian culture in which seniors have the ultimate power in decision-making.

Finally, the use of solely indigenous names and appellations in the *Adom* newsroom projects the Ghanaian culture. In Ghana, almost everybody has a day name which is given depending on the day one is born and the gender of the person. Apart from day names, Western names and their surnames, most Ghanaians also have indigenous names which they use as a way of identifying with their roots. These indigenous names come with appellations which signify specific qualities. For example, the indigenous Akan feminine name 'Akyaa' comes with the appellation 'Asiakwan', which means one who makes straight paths.

Some of these cultural norms found in the day to day activities of the journalists in the *Adom* newsroom have an influence on the news. For instance, the news editors' ultimate power over

¹² Short form of brother

news selection determines the stories that are delivered to audiences. Cultural norms and their influence on *Adom* news demonstrate that *Adom* news is influenced by the culture in which the newsroom is situated as espoused by the culturological perspective of SNP.

6.6.2 Internal Influences on the News

Apart from routines and external factors which shape the news of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.*, the study found that internal influences also contributed to shaping the news. Internal influences such as newsroom policies and training exercises contributed to shaping the news of both radio stations. The newsroom policies – written and unwritten principles underpinning the work of the newsrooms – guide the journalists in the course of newsgathering and presentation. Hence, as discussed earlier, the posture taken by *Adom* newsroom and *Joy* newsroom on issues such as how to apply regulations end up influencing newsgathering and presentation in the two newsrooms. Eventually, these influenced the news of the two radio stations.

In many organisations, training programmes are organised for employees in order to improve their skills and subsequently ensure the organisation's competitiveness. Trainings can either be done within the organisation (in-house) or outside the organisation. The advantage that comes with in-house training is that the organisation develops the training programme itself and is therefore able to design the programmes to meet the specific needs of employees. The study found that while in-house training is not organised for the newsroom workers of *Adom F.M.*, in-house training is organised consistently for newsroom staff of *Joy F.M.* As a result, *Joy* newsroom workers are better equipped for the news production process than *Adom* newsroom staff. This eventually has an influence on the approach of journalists towards news production and the news itself. As has been earlier discussed, most *Adom* newsroom staff are unaware of professional standards guiding the practice of journalism. As a result, a lot of

journalists from *Adom* newsroom flout professional standards in the process of news production, resulting in news which is of a lower standard. This again proves that organisational factors also have a tendency to influence the news just as Eliasoph (1988) found in her study.

6.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings which came out of this study in relation to the theories underpinning this work. Also in discussing these findings, the chapter sought to answer the four research questions of the study. The goal of the study was to explore the similarities and differences in the news routines of *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.* and how these influenced differences in the newscast of the two radio stations. Based on the findings, and the theories underpinning this work, the research went further to describe how the differences identified in news selection and news presentation contribute to differences in the final newscast of *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This study explored the news routines of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* and the role the routines play in contributing to differences in their newscast. It discovered that the two newsrooms have many routines in common. However, some key differences were also found between the news routines of the two newsrooms, which in turn shape the final news output. This chapter summarises key findings of the study and then makes a recommendation based on the findings.

7.2 Summary of Major Findings

The study found similarities in the news routines of both *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* It also found some key differences between the news routines of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* Among such differences is news selection in the two newsrooms. *Adom* newsroom primarily selects news stories which will attract more audiences while *Joy* newsroom primarily selects news stories which will make an impact on society. These differences in selection were found to result in differences in news content of the two newsrooms.

Key differences were also identified in the news delivery of both newsrooms. *Adom* news is spontaneously translated from English to Akan on air and is interspersed with literary devices. *Joy* news on the other hand is written and presented in English without the use of literary devices. These differences result in the informality of *Adom* news and the formality of *Joy* news.

This study also found that in the course of news production, *Adom* newsroom unlike *Joy* newsroom sometimes in the bid to accommodate culture tends to flout quite a number of the professional standards of journalism, such as accuracy by using proverbs and exaggeration in the news. Therefore, in the news production process, *Joy* newsroom is more professional than *Adom* newsroom. The result of this is that *Joy* news is of a higher standard than *Adom* news even though they both belong to the same media company and are held to the same norms and standards. Whilst respondents from *Adom* newsroom assigned various reasons for why this is the case, the underlying factor is that the newsroom holds on to some of these unprofessional practices in order to attract and retain large audiences which in turn attract advertisers.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of this study was lack of adequate literature on news routines. While some studies have delved into specific news routines, only a few studies have so far focused on the entire news routines of a news channel. As a result, most of the literature reviewed were on specific news routines such as gatekeeping, news selection, and news meetings.

Also the fact that the researcher was not given access to the written newsroom policies of the two radio stations proved to be a limitation. As a result the researcher was unable to review the document and could therefore not tell exactly what the two radio stations stand for in terms of policy and how that might contribute to the way they go about their news routines, and subsequently how that might shape their news.

7.4 Conclusions

This study has demonstrated the complexities involved in the news production processes of *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.* The study shed light on the news routines of the two radio stations and the role of those news routines in shaping their news. Even though Eliasoph (1988) contends that the role of news routines in shaping the news is minimal, this study has shown that in the case of *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.*, news routines play an important role in shaping the final newscast.

However, in consonance with Eliasoph's (1988) study, this study has also proven that the news is influenced by other factors, aside from news routines. While news routines in the two newsrooms shape the news resulting in differences in the final news output of both *Joy F.M.* and *Adom F.M.*, underlying factors such as culture together with internal factors such as training, and external forces such as audiences and advertisers also contribute to shaping the news in the two newsrooms. Therefore, in line with modern perspective about news production (Hanitzch & Hoxha 2014; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996), the study concludes that local and English language news is influenced by a multiplicity of factors which result in differences.

Aside from news routines and their influence on the news, the study also showed that media regulators (GJA, NMC) and local language newsrooms operate from different points of view. While media regulators expect local language newsrooms to operate from a universal point of view by adhering to universally accepted journalistic standards, *Adom* newsroom for instance, operates from a cultural point of view and is therefore influenced by the Akan culture. Hence, culture is prioritised above universally accepted standards of newsgathering and presentation, thereby proving that for journalists in *Adom* newsroom, culture is more

important than universally accepted standards of journalism practice. This shows that even though the world is globalised, cultural nuances remain germane in news production.

7.5 Recommendations

This study has provided insight into the news routines of *Adom F.M.* and *Joy F.M.* and the role these routines together with other internal and external factors such as audiences and advertisers play in shaping the news of the two cases examined. The study recommends that the journalists in the two radio stations are involved in discussions on how best to improve upon practices in the newsrooms to ensure that the news transmitted to audiences is not compromised by these factors. This exercise must not be left for media regulators alone to do. Both the media regulators and the news media must take responsibility to ensure best practices in newsrooms in the course of newsgathering, processing, and delivery.

This study has also provided empirical evidence that there is compromise of professional journalistic standards in the news production processes of *Adom* newsroom. The study has also revealed a lack of commitment on the part of *Adom* newsroom to abide by the professional standards due to apathy towards both GJA and NMC regulations. To ensure that that newsrooms abide by professional standards, the need for a collaboration between media regulators and the news media cannot be overstated. However, the study has proven that media regulators (GJA, NMC) and local language newsrooms operate from different points of view. Even though regulators expect journalists working with local language radio stations to operate with universally accepted journalistic standards in newsgathering, processing, and presentation, journalists in *Adom* newsroom operate from a cultural point of view. As a result, *Adom* newsroom, places premium on culture and therefore try to accommodate it in the news. In order for local language radio stations and media regulators to come into an agreement

about the best ways in which to approach newsgathering, processing, and presentation, there is the need to bridge the knowledge gap between media regulators and local language radio stations. It is recommended that media regulators get to the field and try to understand the way local language newsrooms operate and the premise behind their practices. It is again recommended that media regulators also make efforts to understand the cultural elements employed by local language newsrooms in news production and delivery in order to be able to offer culturally-sensitive regulations to local language radio stations.

The study has as well revealed that aside from routines, the organisation and for that matter internal factors have an influence on the news. The study, therefore, demonstrated that the posture taken by the two newsrooms on how to approach newsgathering, processing, delivery and the application of regulations end up influencing the routines of the newsrooms. For instance, the manner in which regulations are applied in the two newsrooms is informed by the stance of the two newsrooms on regulations. While *Joy* newsroom makes conscious efforts to ensure that journalists in the newsroom would adhere to professional guidelines, *Adom* newsroom does not. In the end, journalists in *Joy* newsroom are more adherent to regulations than journalists in *Adom* newsroom in their news production process. This in turn influences the final output of the news of the two stations. Given this, it is recommended that news organisations take a good and firm stance on how to gather, process and present the news, as well as how to apply regulations in the course of news production. Both upcoming and existing news networks should develop newsroom policies which spell out best practices to be adopted by journalists in newsrooms.

In the same vein, training by the organisation has the capacity to influence the manner in which journalists approach newsgathering, selection, and presentation. This in turn shapes the news. It is, therefore, recommended that media owners and managers invest in training journalists who work in the various newsrooms across the country, especially those who work

in local language newsrooms. This will go a long way in reshaping some of the practices in the local language newsrooms and subsequently contribute to improving the standard of news of local language radio stations.

The study has additionally revealed that unlike the GJA Code of Ethics and the NMC Guidelines on Local Language Broadcasting, the GIBA Code of Conduct is not easily accessible for which reason respondents do not know about the existence of the guidelines. It is recommended that GIBA makes its guidelines available on the internet for its members and the general public to access. Also, since GIBA does not have guidelines on general newsroom practices, it is recommended that GIBA develops guidelines on general newsroom practices for its members.

Finally, even though this study has unravelled the complexities which exist behind the news production in the newsrooms of *Adom F.M* and *Joy F.M.*, this is a case study. As a result, newsroom practices identified in *Joy* newsroom and *Adom* newsroom cannot be generalised as the practices of other radio newsrooms in Ghana but it is indicative of the news cultures in Ghanaian newsrooms and therefore some of the issues raised can inform about news production. It is recommended that in the future, other studies be conducted to investigate the news routines of other radio stations in Ghana (both local and English language newsrooms) in order to help give a broader perspective about the routines employed in radio newsrooms in Ghana.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. EDITORS

1. How many reporters do you have in the newsroom?
2. How many editors are there in the newsroom?
3. Generally, what is the educational background of your staff?
4. Where were they trained as journalists?
5. How long have they worked as journalists?
6. How long have they worked with you?
7. Please describe the organisational structure of the newsroom.
8. Do you have a newsroom policy?
9. Is it written?
10. What is it?
11. What do you think about it?
12. Are you familiar with GJA, GIBA and NMC guidelines?
13. What are your views on these guidelines?
14. Is it easy or difficult to abide by professional standards?
15. Have you read it?
16. What do you think about it?
17. Aside from these, what guides your job as a media practitioner?
18. Who makes the final editorial decisions?
19. How is newsgathering organised?
 - How are people assigned to cover news?
 - How is news selected to be broadcast?
 - Who has ultimate responsibility for what goes out?
20. What resources are available to reporters in the newsroom to aid in news gathering, news reporting and editing?
21. How are ethical decisions arrived at?
22. What determines which stories are selected and which ones are rejected or ignored?
23. Do you share stories with other people in the Multimedia Group?
24. What makes an Adom/Joy story?
25. Who are your primary audiences?
26. Who are your secondary audiences?
27. How much influence do advertisers have on the content of the news?
28. How are the staff of Adom/Joy newsroom incentivized to be competitive?
29. Is the newsroom staff given trainings?
30. How often?
31. What is the rationale behind the use of local names in the Adom newsroom?
32. Why is the news written in English and not in Twi?
33. Would you advocate for translators?

34. Is it not rather challenging to read English and translate to Twi whilst on air?
35. Does this not give too much discretion to the reader?
36. How does that affect what gets broadcast?

B. NEWS READERS

1. Please tell me about your educational background.
2. Have you received formal training in journalism?
3. If yes, from which institution?
4. How long have you worked as a journalist?
5. How long have you worked with Multimedia Group?
6. How long have you been a news reader?
7. How do you prepare before reading the news?
8. Do you have a newsroom policy?
9. Is it written?
10. What is it?
11. What do you think about it?
12. Are you familiar with GJA, GIBA, NMC guidelines?
13. What are your views on these guidelines?
14. Is it easy or difficult to abide by professional standards?
15. Aside from these, what guides your job as a media practitioner?
16. What resources are available to reporters in the newsroom to aid in news gathering, news reporting and editing?
17. How are you incentivized to be competitive?
18. Are you given on-the-job training?
19. How often?
20. Since the news is written in English, how do you manage to translate into Twi whilst on air?
21. Is that not rather challenging?
22. Does that not leave too much room for over-elaboration?
 - Doesn't the level of discretion you have as a reader leave room for over-elaboration?
23. Will you advocate for translators?

C. REPORTERS

1. Please tell me about your educational background.
2. Have you received formal training in journalism?
3. If yes, from which institution?
4. How long have you worked as a journalist?
5. How long have you worked with Multimedia Group?
6. Do you have a newsroom policy?

7. Is it written?
8. What is it?
9. What do you think about it?
10. Are you familiar with GJA, GIBA, NMC guidelines?
11. What are your views on these guidelines?
12. Is it easy or difficult to abide by professional standards?
13. Aside from these, what guides your job as a media practitioner?
14. What resources are available to reporters in the newsroom to aid in news gathering, news reporting and editing?
15. How are you incentivized to be competitive?
16. Are you given trainings?
17. How often?
18. How do you feel about how the news you write is rendered on air?
19. Do you think the readers over-elaborate the news stories you write?
20. Will you advocate for translators?

D. MARKETING DEPARTMENT

1. How is news marketed as a commercial product?
2. How do you get to know your audience share?
3. How much influence do advertisers have on the content of the news?