A SURVEY OF NEWS CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation has been the result of my own field work under the supervision of Professor K. Ansu-Kyeremeh. No part of this research work has been published in whole or in part for the award of a degree elsewhere. All authors have been duly acknowledged and all references duly cited.

As the main author of this study, I take full responsibility for any limitations that may be found in the study.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the news consumption patterns of University of Ghana students. Specifically, it was to ascertain whether the advent of the internet was discouraging students from accessing the traditional media. Also in consideration were the news sources of students and their motivations for accessing those news media. A survey was employed to gather the required data. A sample of 148 was drawn from Commonwealth Hall, Volta Hall and Legon Hall. Among the respondents, the use of online news had not diminished the use of traditional news platforms. On the contrary, the study found use patterns of students patronising or sourcing both traditional and online platforms for news. Findings also showed young people’s complementary use of traditional and online news platforms. In addition, there were patterns of both males and females relying on both the traditional and new media even though more males preferred the new media to the traditional media. Academic programme or course of study did not also affect the choice of a news medium. The sampled students accessed media based on accessibility, affordability and how convenient it was for them to use. However, as the use of online news continued to grow and young people are confronted with time constraints, future research could focus on more platform-specific functions that traditional and online news media fulfill in the daily lives of the young.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to Study

Dramatic changes in mass communication over the last decades brought transformation to the traditional (radio, television, newspapers) news sources delivery and how people accessed the news. People today, have many choices for watching, reading or listening to news. There are hundreds of channels available on cable or satellite television, hundreds of radio stations across the world, as well as myriad of newspapers. Many of the traditional media outlets now have internet websites available as well to satisfy the needs of their audiences. These changes in the media landscape have affected the way people search for, and consume news.

With the advent of the Internet, one can get an "instant happening" of the latest news, literally minutes old, on the Internet, or receive updates on their smart phones, in their email inbox or on their social network pages (Picard, 2009). One thing is certain, all the different forms of media have been successful at one point or another, or else they would not still exist. The availability of different media thus brings about a question of which news media people are consuming, if any at all, and why they will go for one medium and not the other.

There is no doubt that the Internet, social media, and smart phones have impacted the way in which individuals consume news. Traditional news outlets now have to compete with independent bloggers and social media websites (Bowman & Willis, 2003). This means that the traditional ways of consuming news or the traditional patterns of getting news from
television, radio or newspaper is fast changing. People do not have to wait till specific times or wait to sit by a television set, radio or purchase a newspaper, to be able to access news. A click of a button can help one to know what is happening across the globe, in terms of news.

In Ghana, young and old alike watch television, listen to the radio and read the newspapers. According to the Internet Usage Statistics for Africa Report 2014, the youth are the main users of the new Information and Communication Technology (ICT), especially the Internet and more advanced features of mobile phones such as text messaging, also known as short messaging service (SMS). Out of a population of over 25 million, over 5 million were active users of the internet. While internet penetration for Africa, as at 2014, was 1.7% that for Ghana was 20.1%. (www.internetworldstats.com). Media content creation, publishing, distribution and consumption via Internet-enabled digital devices have also increased with time. It is believed that the ICTs, which are based on a free market approach, have promoted new media use. According to the Internet Usage statistics for Africa (2014), the use of the Internet and its associated mobile and desktop applications is popular among Ghanaians. Also popular are multimedia content accessible via mobile devices, smartphones, tablets and computers (Internet Usage Statistics for Africa, 2014).

According to the European Commission Report (1996), a unique characteristic of the Internet is that it functions simultaneously as a medium for publishing and for communication. Unlike the traditional media, the Internet supports a variety of communication modes, that is: one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many. An Internet user may “speak” or “listen” interchangeably. At any given time, a receiver can and does become content provider. Young
people especially students are particularly interested in exploring the media options that come along with technology. College students, in particular, have become wide users of the Internet and its communication capabilities. College and university students have connected to the Internet more than the general population, according to a survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (Jones, 2002). This survey found that 86% of students were online, which is considerably higher than the 59% of the general population that connected to the Internet. Most university and college students have grown up with computers in their homes and their schools, and the Internet has almost always been a part of their world.

In view of this transformation with regards to the use of Internet by college and university students, news is becoming more personal as users take charge of the flow of news into their lives. News is becoming a shared social experience as students exchange links to stories and recommend content as a form of cultural currency in their social networks (Participatory News Consumer Report, 2010). Additionally, news is becoming a participatory activity, as students contribute their own stories and experiences and post their reactions to events on Facebook and Twitter and other online platforms.

1.1 Problem Statement

The primary mission of the news media in Ghana is to provide the public with information that helps them make informed decisions about important public or civic affairs (Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998). Newspapers, radio and television were at one time the only sources of news in Ghana until the advent of the Internet which has helped produced other sources of news. Internet use is woven into the fabric of daily life of both the young and old in recent
times. Indeed research highlighting uses of traditional and online media platforms for news consumption provides evidence for the assumption that traditional news media are losing their lustre among young adults in terms of news consumption (Elvestad & Blekesaune, 2008). Research describes 21st Century young adults as less inclined than their parents or grandparents to read the newspaper, have an interest in public affairs, or participate politically and civically (Bui and Ma, 2009). A Pew Research Center (2006) study, found that online news were widely adopted and used by various people, particularly, those who were between the ages of 18 and 35. This work sought to establish how the popularity of media technologies might have impacted news consumption patterns of University of Ghana students.

Existing research focused on the contend that increases in media use were usually accompanied by enhanced credibility perception, regardless of media type (Seo and Lim, 2008). That means that media use (or media exposure) is always related to media credibility which were the concern of most research. Research on media use focused on comparing news credibility among media channels, for example, comparing television to newspapers (Schafer, 2010; Yuan and Kosicki, 2003) without taking into account the people and how the news was consumed.

The results of these studies have been mixed, with some studies suggesting that television was the most credible medium, followed by newspapers, and radio (Ibelema and Powell, 2001). Additionally, a study by the Pew Research Center and Online News Association in 2002 found that new media was perceived to be more credible than traditional media without discussing the news information the people consumed. This raises questions about the patterns of news consumption by people in newspapers, television, radio or online news outlets and news format young Ghanaians primarily rely on as source.
This was the study’s starting point. Research showed that younger people read newspapers and watch TV news less than the older generations (Poulos, 2010). Older people have been found to be more likely to use newspapers, TV news, and magazines for information than younger people (Lauf, 2001). However, in spite of the efforts made by some research which focused on the credibility of the news without how the news is consumed from news media, this study seek to address this limited knowledge gap of news consumption pattern of students of the University of Ghana.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective was to study the news consumption pattern of students of University of Ghana. In that context, the specific objectives of the study were:

1. To find out the influence of gender on news choice.
2. To estimate the relationship between selected academic programmes and news sources of students.

1.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in an attempt to establish the defined relationships between the identified variables.

People also consume news based on their gender. The Reuters Institute Report (2014), found that across all the countries studied (Finland, the US, UK, France, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Spain and Brazil), 72% of men access news several times a day, compared with just 59% of
women. Gender thus has a role to play in news consumption. Surveys have found and exhibited patterns of use that differ between men and women (Bennett & Bennett, 1989; Bimber, 2000; Davis & Owen, 1998).

**H1.** Males were more likely to choose online media as a preferred news source.

Clark (2010), found in his study on news consumption of university students in the US that, students consume news based on their courses of study. Clark (2010) found out that, students who study journalism as a course consumed news more than students in other departments of the University of Nebraska.

**H2.** The academic programme a student offers would likely affect his/her news consumption.

**1.4 Justification of the Study**

The world is in the middle of a continuing World Wide Web (Internet) revolution which started strongly in the 1960s when television, radio and newspapers became the widely used media of communication and news consumption. People used the Internet as one of source of news since its introduction in the mid-1990s. The major change is seen in the younger populations who were raised with the Internet and preferred the Internet environment (Howe, 2006). It is therefore important to carry out this study in an era of these news media. In particular, the study attempted to identify patterns of how the news were consumed. It can be argued that the timing of this research is quite appropriate in an era where governments are making Internet accessible to all public universities. Students now perceive that they are closer to distant news events than
ever before. Generally, media technology developments have made possible adequate and timely processing and dissemination of information. The result is that media audiences can now follow events moment by moment (IREX, 2006).

The study identified the news source preference of students and the motivation for the use of these sources. It will help fill a research gap as well as serve as a reference material for students in future research.

1.5 Operational Definitions/Definition of Terms

*News:* News is information or events that recently happened in the world, which are considered interesting enough to be distributed to the public through different media outlets.

*News Media:* News media refers to source where news can be accessed. These are the newspaper, radio, television and the Internet.

*New media:* New media refers to the Internet.

*Traditional media:* Based on this study, traditional media are television, radio and newspapers.

*Pattern:* A repeated occurrence of behaviour or action. In this study, what was observed for patterns were the choice and use of a medium.

*News consumption:* Based on this study, news consumption is a measure of respondents’ choice of a news source and attention given to that choice.
1.7 Summary

This chapter explained the background and further stated the problem of the study. The specific objectives were to find out news media consumption patterns of the students and to find out if difference in gender reflects in the choice of a particular news source. It was also to differentiate between selected academic programmes of students and news media consumption. Hypotheses to examine these assumptions were formulated and tested. The chapter also brought to the fore the justification of the study and finally, operationalization of the terms for the study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on how people consume news. The chapter looks at works that have been done on how people are choosing and accessing the different types of media available and the theoretical framework underlining the study.

This chapter presents relevant literature on classification of new media and news media in Ghana. It also presents literature on the role of the national media commission of Ghana. It further reviews literature on the uses and gratification theory and how technology affects traditional media. It also presents literature on students and news consumption.

2.1 Classifications of News Media

A simple way to classify the mass media is to group them under print and electronic media. The print media are such mass media as books, newspaper and magazine, whose basis is the printed word. Electronic media, on the other hand, comprise all the mass media which rely on the electronic power to get their messages to their audience which include radio and television, recordings, movies, internet and the explosion of digital communication technology in the 20th and 21st century (Bittner, 1980)

In 2000, a classification by (McQuail 1987) called the (7) seven mass media became popular. They are: 1. Newspaper, 2. Recording, 3. Cinema, 4. Radio, 5. Television, 6. Internet and
7. Mobile phone. Each mass media has its own content types, its own creative artist and technicians. Example, internet includes website, blogs and podcasts built on top of the general distribution network. The 6th and 7th are often collectively called “digital media”, the 4th and 5th radio and television as broadcast media and some argued that video games have developed into a distinct mass from media. However, modern cell phones are no longer a single used device, but are rather equipped with internet access and capable of connecting to the web which itself is a mass medium. According to McQuail (1987), the media have a mediating role between objective social reality and personnel experience.

2.2 News media in Ghana

Regarding news media in Ghana, it is said to have begun in the colonial era dating as far back as 1822 when Ghana was called the Gold Coast. The then British governor Sir Charles McCarthy who was overseeing the country, then a colony to the British established the Royal Gold Coast Gazette as an official paper for government, but in a matter of two years, this paper ceased publication entertainment, relaxation, information and new product for news consumption (Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998). Today there are several print papers (newspapers) such as the Daily Graphic, a daily, and the weekend Mirror, a weekly and other private newspaper.

Radio is another news media used in Ghana. Apart from Radio Ghana there were other private radio stations known as FM stations in all the 10 regions of the country. Their daily programmes were almost similar including the broadcast of hourly news; talk shows, intermittent playing of music and commercials amongst others. A good number of the stations
transmitted in the vernacular (the local languages) with the rest of them doing their broadcast in English.

Television was introduced in Ghana in 1965 as part of the services and operations of GBC. At the time, it could not cover the whole nation, the farthest it could cover was the middle belt namely, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions of Ghana (Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari 1998). Today it has expanded to cover the entire nation. Additionally there are other Private television stations that did free-on-air broadcast; they include TV3, Metro TV, TV Africa, Net 2 TV, Viasat 1, Crystal TV among others.

Apart from the newspaper, radio and TV, the Internet was another fast growing news media in Ghana. The growth of new media in Ghana depended largely on the growth of communication technology including the growth of mobile internet. The growth of broadband and mobile internet has brought the internet closer to many and fewer people need now go to any café to surf the net (BiztechAfrica.com). In times past, one could not access the internet in Ghana without visiting an internet café. This had changed with most mobile connected to the internet. According to the Measuring the Information Society 2012 report, between 2010 and 2012, Internet usage moved up from 10 to 12 percent. Mobile broadband penetration surged from seven per cent in 2010 to 23 percent in 2011. Currently, Ghana has over 5 million Internet users, representing 20.1% of the population (Internetworldstats.com). 60 percent of the population owned mobile phones, while 29 percent owned phones with Internet connectivity (Calandro & Wang, 2013). Today, mobile handsets come equipped with fast 4G internet that allows consumers connect instantly onto the Internet. Mobile Networks in Ghana like MTN also offered services that allow text messages to be transformed into Facebook posts. These services allow
journalists to source, edit, publish, and receive comments almost instantaneously while on location. (Deo-Silas, 2013). Media consumers could thus access news directly and instantaneously on social media. New media platforms were then integrated into news cycle of most media houses. Media organizations like TV3, Joy FM, Daily Guide newspaper just to name a few actively engaged their audience on social media platforms. They added segments in their news for comments and suggestions from their social media pages. In some instances news anchors urge audiences in locations where news stories are unfolding to help keep them updated on new developments. This gradually changed news presentation on the traditional outlets.

2.3 The Role of the National Media Commission of Ghana

The National Media Commission (NMC) was set up on July 7, 1993 by an act of Parliament (Act 449) in pursuant to Chapter 12 of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The NMC was established to promote free independent and responsible media so as to sustain democracy and national development. Towards this goal, the NMC is committed to the following:

1. Maintaining its independence from political influence.

2. Ensuring that the state-owned media are independent from governmental control.

3. Raising professional standards among media practitioners and ensuring fairness to the public.

4. Protecting journalists from harassment and penalties arising out of their editorial opinions and content.

5. Encouraging the media to play their role of holding people in authority accountable to the people and protecting their individual rights (Profile of the National Media Commission 1993).
In view of the above the NMC has put together a number of documents as guidelines for media houses and their operatives. These documents include Broadcasting Standards, Print Media Guidelines, and Guidelines for Political Reporting. From time to time, the NMC calls media practitioners to book for irresponsible publications or broadcasts.

2.4 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Kerlinger (1986) defines a theory as an asset of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomenon by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting a phenomenon. The theory that will guide this research is the uses and gratifications theory. The uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is an audience centered theory that seeks to understand why and how people actively seek specific media to satisfy their needs. Before the uses and gratifications theory, most of the earlier theories were on the effects of media on people. UGT diverges from these media effect theories that state what media do to people and rather focuses on what people are doing with the media. The driving question of UGT is: Why do people use media and what do they use them for?

UGT currently gives communication scholars a perspective through which a number of ideas and theories about media choice, consumption, and even impact can be viewed. In the early 1940s, researchers began seeing patterns under the perspective of the uses and gratifications theory in radio listeners. Lasswell (1948), introduced a four-functional interpretation of the media on a macro-sociological level. Media served the functions of surveillance, correlation, entertainment and cultural transmission for both society and individuals. The uses and
gratification theory was further developed from a number of research conducted by fellow theorists.

Schramm (1954), developed the fraction of selection, a formula for determining which form of mass media an individual would select. The formula helped to decide the amount of gratification an individual would expect to gain from the medium over how much effort they had to make to achieve gratification.

Blumer & McQuail (1969) studied the 1964 election in the United Kingdom by examining people's motives for watching certain political programs on television. By categorizing the audience's motives for viewing a certain program, they aimed to classify viewers according to their needs in order to understand any potential mass-media effects. The audience motivations they were able to identify helped lay the groundwork for their research in 1972 and eventually uses and gratifications theory.

The advent of the internet also brought in its wake the need to conduct research in that regard. Modern applications of uses and gratifications research include the internet use. The internet provides a new and deep field for exploring UGT. It was found to have three main categories of gratifications: content gratification, process gratification, and social gratification.

The uses and gratifications theory is still helpful when finding out the relationship between people and the media. To a large extent, some people genuinely have reasons for using the media and it is basically because of a particular need. The plurality of the media in recent times has also given audiences a variety to choose from making the theory relevant. How can we explain why people are stuck to a particular media and not the other at a particular time? This can be a clear indication that there is a need for the choice. There are those who genuinely have no choice when it comes to the media they use but to a large extent,
people decide where they want to go when it comes to media choice. UGT researchers are developing the theory to be more predictive and explanatory since those are some of the criticisms of the theory. They are doing this by connecting the needs, goals, benefits, and consequences of media consumption and use along with individual factors.

This theory is relevant to this study because the uses to which people put media content (news in this case) and the gratifications they get from it are likely to affect their choice of a particular source. The aspect of the theory that informed my hypotheses is that people choose media for particular reasons. This study will find out if those reasons include one’s gender and one’s programme of study.

2.5 Technology affects Traditional media

Technology continues to change the way of life of people including their media use. There are many news sources currently including newspapers, radio, television, magazines and the internet. Technological advancement has affected these news sources over the last decades and has accounted for dramatic changes in mass communication, news delivery and news consumption. New technologies can lead to new types of media and the ability to use a given form of media is related to the ability to use its related technology. (Participatory News Consumer, 2010). The advent of relatively inexpensive, personal media technologies including blogging, podcasting and internet video allow the average literate person to do what was previously restricted to media companies, which includes producing media content. According to Reuters Institute (2014), the transformation of the news landscape has already taken a heavy toll on print news sources, particularly newspapers.
But there are now signs that television news – which so far has held onto its audience through the rise of the internet – also is increasingly vulnerable, as it may be losing its hold on the next generation of news consumers. According to the report, the data provide further evidence of a new wave of disruption and change in digital news. In particular, mobile and social consumption is reaching a new level of intensity, the different behaviours of young and old becoming more pronounced, and new kinds of journalistic organisation emerging.

The use of smartphones and tablets continue to increase with fewer people using their computers for news. According to the Reuters report, more than a third of online news users across all countries (39%) use 2 or more digital devices each week for news and a fifth (20%) currently use their mobile phone as a primary access point. This means that people now have many options and most people will rather combine some of the available platforms to achieve maximum results. This also brings about a question of what will become of the traditional platforms overtime.

Smart phones, tablets, among others, are making it more convenient for people to access news in a different ways instead of the traditional television, radio and newspapers. Many of those traditional sources are therefore adapting their modes of news presentation and packaging to meet the needs of their customers. Many of the internet sources people are now consuming are websites that are generated by the traditional media.

According to Reuters Institute (2014), most people are accessing news more frequently than ever before. In the five countries (UK, US, France, Germany, and Denmark) the report was tracking since 2012, the number accessing news several times a day has risen from an average of 53% to 62%, with the biggest uplift between 2012 and 2013. The report found that
across all the countries (UK, Germany, Italy, Denmark, and the US), 72% of men access news several times a day, compared with just 59% of women.

Overall the report found that country difference is less significant than generational ones when it comes to platform preference. In every country (apart from Japan) young people preferred online news, while older groups felt more comfortable with the traditional platforms they had grown up with. These changes seemed to be related to the growth of new devices – such as mobile and tablets – which are extending the range of access points. The more devices we have, it seems, the more frequently we consume.

According to the Pew Research Center (2010), news is being transformed in several directions due to the new tools and affordances of technology. News is becoming more personal as users customize their experience and take charge of the flow of news into their lives. News is becoming a shared social experience as people exchange links to stories and recommend content as a form of cultural currency in their social networks (Participatory News Consumer, 2010). Additionally, news is becoming a participatory activity, as people contribute their own stories and experiences and post their reactions to events using platforms such as Face book and Twitter.

With the help of social media tools, the Internet is fast changing the way people consume their news. This activity was previously limited to reading the newspaper or listening to a news bulletin on radio, or watching it on TV. Today audiences can get an "instant happening" of the latest news, literally minutes old, on the Internet, or receive updates on their smart phones, in their email inbox or on their social network pages (Picard, 2009).
2.6 Students and news consumption

There are some scholarly works on how this new experience is impacting on news delivery and consumption especially among the youth. Clark (2010), studied the news consumption habits of students at the University of Nebraska. He wanted to find out if the level of tertiary education of a student, gender or the academic programme they offered determined how they consumed news. The study found that students in higher levels (400) consumed news more than those in the lower level (100). A student’s subject of study was also found to influence the way he/she consumed news. Students of journalism for instance, consumed news the most in the university. The study also found that college students consumed news from online rather than traditional media.

Althaus &Tewksbury (2001), examined the patterns of internet and traditional news media use in a networked community in the US. Drawing from a survey of 520 undergraduate students at a large public university, they tried to find out how students consumed news. The research took a different approach to the new media substituting the old media question by examining news consumption patterns within an unusual but theoretically important group of people: students of a fully networked university community. The patterns of media use in this university’s student population did not generalize to patterns of news consumption that might be found in a broader cross section of American society.

The study believed that the media use patterns found in this networked community are of great theoretical interest to the media replacement question. Because on-line users in this population were not self-selected, and because on-line technologies were part of life in that community, news consumption choices were already based on criteria that became more important in the networked society years to come. Their study found that members of the
networked community used the World Wide Web mainly as a source of entertainment and only secondarily as a source of news. Thus entertainment rather than news contents lose audience members to the Web. The study found out that online news consumption pattern of people is fast changing. Students that were surveyed consumed their entertainment news online.

Cauwenberge et al (2010), also tried to understand students news media consumption in a European high-media environment. Their study analysed the role of uses and gratifications motivations in driving time spent with television news, newspapers, and online news sites. They found that students’ news consumption was driven by the need for diversion especially television news, which young people also watched to escape from their daily routine or to be entertained. The research then concluded that traditional and online news platforms, although serving some needs that were mutually exclusive, overall were being consulted in search of the same gratification, respectively, information/surveillance and diversion gratification. The use of online news was not found to diminish the use of traditional news platforms. On the contrary, young people complemented the use of the traditional with online news platforms.

According to Drok & Schwartz (2009), a 2008 survey among 1,000 young people (15-29 years) in the Netherlands, however found television as the medium people spent time on mostly for news (a daily average of 36 minutes). But in line with American survey findings, online news sites tend to be the news platforms with the highest increase in use: half of the respondents said their use of online sites for news had increased over years (Drok & Schwartz, 2009). Such shifts from traditional to online media platforms among news consumers can be better understood when taking into account recent technological evolution resulting in today’s high-tech environment, and youngsters’ changing lifestyles. Although young people do
consider it important to keep up with current events, they tend to find the ways in which traditional media offer these events hardly appealing (Costera Meijer, 2007; Raeymakers, 2003; Beekhoven & Van Wel 1998; Huang, 2009). For them, news is not an end in itself but a means for experiencing the world around them that is, monitoring their environment, giving meaning to their lives, identifying personal values for truth, getting a sense of belonging and for conversation and inspiration (Cauwenberge et al., 2010).

Growing up in the “DotNet” generation (Zukin, 2006) with news made accessible through an array of offline and online media platforms, people have become news grazers, combining different platforms and multiple online news sources and selecting the bits of news they deem necessary to gratify their needs. The increase in the use of digital news platforms illustrates the demand for self-selected, custom-made information, with each individual deciding what news or information should be made available at what moment in time (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Costera Meijer, 2007; Huang, 2009). This new orientation towards news reflects the hasty lifestyle of the young, combining education, jobs, social networking and hobbies within a limited time frame (Costera Meijer, 2007; Huang, 2009). These are emerging online news consumption patterns by which people participate more in the news they consume.

Overall, research provides evidence on the relationship between traditional and online news media use, however, some tend to suggest that the internet so far has supplemented rather than substituted traditional media for news use (De Waal, Schönbach & Lauf, 2005; Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000; Dutta-Bergman, 2004; Flavian & Gurrea, 2009; Diddi & LaRose, 2006). Nevertheless, as stated before, for some audience groups, especially the younger ones,
new media seem to gratify their needs more, thereby gradually taking over functions of the traditional.

2.7 Summary

This chapter was composed of two major areas. First was the theoretical framework, which provided the theoretical basis for the study. The uses and gratifications theory was used for this particular study. The uses and gratifications theory explained how people use media and the satisfaction they derive from their media use. The chapter looked at how uses and gratification was used in other studies. The second area covered in this chapter is the literature review. The literature review looked at different studies that relate to this particular study. This means that the study was placed into the framework of previous related research. In this way, readers were exposed to the points of agreement and disagreement among previous studies and this present study.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Studies on news consumption patterns tend to use the quantitative approach to data collection and analysis where questionnaires are administered to respondents. This study adopted the quantitative approach. Wimmer & Dominick (2005) define quantitative research as an approach which requires that the variables under consideration be measured. This form of research is concerned with how often a variable is present and generally uses numbers to communicate this amount. Quantitative research has certain advantages. One is that the use of numbers allows greater precision in reporting results.

The boundaries between the quantitative and the qualitative methods are those things that differentiate one from the other. When critically reviewing scientific research, the questions asked, and the answers given, will differ depending upon whether the research is quantitative or qualitative. Qualitative research involves several methods of data collection, such as focus group discussions, field observation, in-depth interviews, and case studies. Quantitative involves how often a variable is present and generally uses numbers to communicate this amount. It includes telephone surveys, mail surveys, and internet surveys, among others. According to Berg (2007), survey refers to both interviews and written questionnaire used to gather data for quantitative analysis.
3.1 Sampling

The survey method involves the use of probability sampling to obtain a sample that is representative of the entire population. Wimmer and Dominick (2005), stated that a sample that is representative of the population is adequate for testing purposes because it allows results to be generalised. The choice of this technique was based on its ability to provide an opportunity for the researcher to interact with the respondent. The survey method was adopted for this study since it allowed the researcher to study a population by interviewing a portion of the population. Students were selected from three specific halls and questionnaires were administered to them.

3.11 Population and Sample size

The Universe of the study was the population of the students in the chosen residence halls. Students of the University of Ghana were the population of this study. Students for the study were undergraduates at different levels of academic pursuit. Undergraduate students were used because of their homogeneity as a group on campus (Waller 1999). For the purpose of this study, sample was taken among undergraduate students resident on campus. Selection was restricted to residential students because of accessibility for questionnaire administration. The total population of the University of Ghana 2011/2012 academic year was 38,562 (University of Ghana Basic Statistics, 2012). The sample size was 148 from the population for the study.
3.12 Sampling Procedure

The sampling design used for the study was systematic sampling with random beginning. The data was collected at three out of the six traditional halls namely; Volta Hall, Commonwealth Hall and Legon Hall. The sampling frame was the list of students in these halls. The rationale for deciding to use resident students of the University of Ghana as subjects and to collect the data in these halls was mainly because of their accessibility to the researcher, and the students’ homogeneity as a group (Waller et al.2005). These three halls were chosen to represent the types of halls on campus which are female hall, male hall and mixed halls. Hall population for Commonwealth was 421, Volta Hall was 382 and Legon Hall was 454 and the total number of students on the list for the three Halls was 1257. The sample size for the study was 148. In order, to get the sampling interval, the total number was divided by the sample size. Thus, 1257 was divided by 148. The result, 8.493, was converted to the nearest whole number, eight, which became the sampling interval. To ensure randomness, random beginning was used to determine the starting point on each of these three halls. The starting point was determined by selecting a random number between one and eight. These numbers were written on pieces of papers and tossed in a box. Three was randomly picked and therefore, the data collection started from the third name as the first name on the list at each hall, followed by every eighth student. The questionnaires were administered to students in their various rooms and the process took three weeks starting from the last week in February and ending on the second week in March, 2014. Some of the questionnaires were filled same day upon meeting the selected students. The researcher returned to rooms that the randomly selected students were not met the subsequent days and this enabled them fill their questionnaires. The
questionnaires were not filled in the presence of the researcher but were collected right after completion.

### 3.13 Sample characteristics

The male students were more than the female students who took part in the study. Males were 50.0% while females were 48.0%. When it came to the courses the respondents were offering, more than half the respondents (54.1%) offered courses in humanities. More than one out of five (25.0%) respondents did science programmes. Less than one out of five (9.5%) offered agriculture while more than one out of ten (10.0%) offered engineering and Less than one out of ten respondents (1.4%) were at others.

**Table 1: Programme of Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sciences</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data was collected with a questionnaire which was administered to sampled respondents of the three halls. The instrument was a structured questionnaire made up of twenty open and closed-ended questions. The questionnaire had 20 questions which required students’ opinion of news consumption. The questions were closed-ended and included questions on demographics.
The closed-ended questions were used because they provide greater uniformity of responses and are more easily processed (Wimmer & Dominick 2000). Students’ news source was measured by the questions: “What is your main (ONE) source of news”? using “1) Television 2) Radio 3) Newspaper 4) Online 5) Other (specify)” to obtain the answer. Students’ news accessibility was measured by the questions: “Which of the following is easily accessible to you”? using “1) Television 2) Radio 3) Newspaper 4) Online 5)” to obtain the answer. Students’ average time spent each day on news, measured by the questions: “On the average, how much time do you spent each day”? using “15mins, 16-29 mins, 30-59mins, 1hour or more and Don’t usually go online for news” to obtain the answer.

There were other hosts of questions on demographics that were designed to achieve the objectives of the study and were listed in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-administered to selected respondents in all the selected halls. Respondents answered some of the questionnaire on the spot. Those who could not do so immediately were given time to answer them for the questionnaire to be collected later. Secondary data was also collected by reviewing books, journals, annual reports, thesis and the Internet.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis was done by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive analysis was used to estimate the respondents’ sources and access to news media. Simple frequency tables were used to analyse the respondents’ news consumption with respect to radio, newspaper, television and online news. To test the study hypotheses, cross tabulations and Chi-Square tests were run to establish any possible relationship between gender and the
respondents’ preferred news source and between programme of study and preferred news source.

3.4 Summary

This chapter described the demographic characteristics of respondents, how the sample size was obtained, how the survey method was used to collect data and analysis was also dealt with for the study. In the next chapter, the findings that came out are presented.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data. The results covered the demographics data and the main issues bordering on the main sources of news for respondents, their preference and why their preference, among several others. The results are presented in summary tables and figures with narrative interpretations and explanations.

4.1 Accessing news

The study asked respondents how often they search for news on news media. Most of the respondents searched for news daily which was revealed in Figure 1. Figure1. showed that close to seven out of ten (68.2%) often searched for news daily, more than one out of five (23.6%) also said they accessed news weekly. This finding is also consistent with the findings on daily usage of news media of college students which found out to be that 71% of college students accessed news media daily (Pempek et al., 2009). Less than one percent (0.7%) said monthly and less than one out of ten (7.4%) said they accessed news anytime they felt like and not at any particular time. This showed a pattern of more than half of the respondents (68.2%) seeing news as very important, so they accessed it every day.
4.2 Availability of news platforms and how news is consumed

The findings from Table 2 show that the main source of news for almost half (49.3%) of the respondents was online. Other sources of news were television, radio and newspaper. As observed, more than one out of five (24.3%) of respondents said television was their main source of news. More than one out of five (23.0%) said radio and less than one out of ten (3.4%) said newspaper. Clearly, there was a pattern of online platform use (49.3%) as the preferred source of news. This finding is consistent with study that stated that the Internet is the most frequent way that news is consumed among the youth (Rhodes, 2010). According to the Internet Usage Statistics for Africa 2014 report, the youth are the main users of the new ICTs, especially the internet. Even though newspapers could be easily accessed on campus, less students (3.4%) read newspapers and this could be due to the fact that newspaper outlets now have online portals, where news could be accessed without purchasing newspapers.
Table 2: Availability of news platform and how news is consumed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Most easily accessible medium

The findings from Table 3 show that close to half of the respondents (45.9%) chose online news as the easily accessible to them. Less than three out of ten (29.1%) chose radio as the most easily accessible medium while less than one out of five (19.6%) selected television as the most easily accessible medium. Less than one out of ten (5.4%) chose newspaper as the most easily accessible medium.

In spite of the perception that newspapers are easily accessible to students since it was sold at vantage points on campus, there was a pattern of fewer students who chose newspapers as an easily accessible medium. It is not surprisingly that most of the respondents chose online news as the easily accessible due to the internet penetration on campus.

Table 3: Most easily accessible medium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Length of time spent on online news in a day

Figure 3 in appendix 2 presents length of time spent for online news in a day. More than two out of five (41.2%) respondents spent 15 minutes a day in getting news online and less than one out of five (17.6%) spent an hour or more online in getting news each day. Less than one out of five (16.2%) also spent 16 to 29 minute online accessing news whiles another one out of five percent (12.2%) spent between 30 minutes to 59 minutes searching for news online. More than one out of ten (12.8%) respondents said they never searched for news online.

Most of the respondents (41.2%) spent at least 15 minutes online every day and this goes to prove the younger generation’s interest in the internet. There was a pattern whereby even those who chose the traditional media as their main source of news sometimes went online for news. This proved the supplementary role that the internet platforms played in terms of news for some of the respondents.

4.5 Ways of accessing online news

Figure 8 in appendix 2 shows ways of accessing online news. More than half of the respondents (58.8%) preferred using their phones to access news online. More than one out of five (20.9%) used their tablets for online news. More than one out of ten (14.9%) preferred the desktop for online news while less than one out of ten (5.4%) used notepad in accessing online news. Technology has affected all spheres of life, the days of accessing internet only on a desktop is gradually fading. Most of the respondents (58.8%) showed patterns where they chose phones as source of online news. According to Reuters report 2014, the use of smartphones and tablets continue to increase with fewer people using their computers for news. According to the report, more than a third of online news users across all countries
(39%) use 2 or more digital devices each week for news and a fifth (20%) currently use their mobile phone as a primary access point. This means that people now have many options and most people would rather choose the most convenient platform to achieve maximum results. Respondents therefore mostly used their phones more to access news.

4.6 Reasons for choosing specific gadgets for news online

Table 14 in appendix 1 presents reasons for choosing specific gadgets for news online. In choosing what to use in accessing news online, more than half of the respondents (50.7%) considered gadgets they can easily carry around. More than three out of ten (35.1%) considered accessibility while more than one out of ten (11.5%) chose affordability as something they always considered. Others present 2.7%. The pattern here was accessibility to a particular gadget for news and how convenient it was to be carried around playing important roles in a particular choice. When it came to accessing news online, respondents considered accessibility, convenience and affordability of gadgets to use to get the news.

4.7 First choice news source

Almost half of the respondents (43.2%) chose online first for news. Respondents stated social media platforms as a very fast way of getting news hence their choice of internet based platforms. More than one out of five (23.0%) chose television news as a first choice. Almost three out of ten (28.4%) went for news on the radio as a first choice. Newspaper and others recorded 4.7% and 0.7 respectively. Less number of students chose newspapers as a first choice. This showed a pattern of most of the respondents technologically inclined and would rather access news online. Television had the second largest number of respondents maybe
because all the Halls have television sets dedicated to students. Interestingly, radio which was thought to be the most easily accessible since almost all mobile phones have radio came after online and television.

4.8 Reasons for using a particular medium

Figure 2 in appendix 2 shows reasons for accessing a news source. In choosing a particular medium, the largest proportions of the respondents said convenience (37.8%) and access to the particular medium (36.5%) were the main reasons for their choice. In addition, speed (14.9%) and interactivity (10.1%) were other reasons why respondents would use a particular medium for news while 0.7% were others. Surprisingly, speed and interactivity were minimal considerations when it came to the choice of a news source. Most of the respondents accessed news on platforms that are available and convenient for them.

4.9 Time spent watching television, listening to radio and reading newspapers

Most of the respondents spent at least 15 minutes a day accessing news on their main source. This showed the importance most of the respondents gave to news. Time spent on television, radio and reading of newspapers were simultaneously present in Table 6 and 7 in appendix 1 as well as Figure 4 in appendix 2. No matter how busy the respondents were, at least 15 minutes of their time in a day was spent on news. Interestingly, close to half of the respondents (47.3%) spent 15 minutes on newspapers daily but most of them said they read the newspapers online. This means that some students have abandoned the hardcopy newspapers for the soft copies of the same newspapers. More than one out of ten (12.2%) spent 16 to 29 minutes reading newspaper daily. Between 30 to 59 minutes was spent on newspapers daily
by more than one out ten (11.5%) of the respondents. One out of ten (10.1%) spent an hour or more on newspapers while less than one out of five (18.9%) never accessed newspapers.

4.10 Most accurate medium

Figure 10 in appendix 2 presents most accurate medium for news consumption. More than half the respondents (52.0%) chose television as the most accurate in news presentation. More than one out of five (20.9%) chose online as the most accurate in news presentation. More than one out of ten (14.9%) chose newspaper as accurate in news presentation while less than one out of five (12.2%) chose radio as the most accurate in news presentation. Even though fewer number of students chose newspapers as their main source of news in this study, more than one out of ten (14.9%) thought newspapers were accurate in news presentation. The number of respondents that chose online sources as their preferred choice was more than the number that actually thought that online media is accurate. This showed a pattern of students who accessed news online but most of them thought the news was not always accurate.

4.11 Usage of social media platforms

In Figure 6 in appendix 2 more than three out of five (61.5%) of the respondents used the social networking site Facebook regularly. More than one out of five (25.0%) accessed Facebook sometimes with less than one out of ten (8.8%) hardly ever using Facebook. Less than one out of ten (4.7%) never used the networking site Facebook.
In Table 10 in appendix 1 more than three out of ten (35.1%) of the respondents never used social networking site Google plus. More than one out of five (23.6%) regularly used Google plus and less than three out of ten (26.4%) sometimes used Google plus. More than one out of ten (14.9%) hardly used social networking site Google plus.

In Table 11 in appendix 1 more than half of the respondents (54.7%) had never used social networking site LinkedIn. Less than one out of five (18.2%) hardly ever used LinkedIn while more than one out of ten (16.2%) regularly used LinkedIn. More than one out of ten (10.8%) sometimes used the social networking site LinkedIn. There was a pattern of most of the respondents using social media platforms but they preferred Facebook to LinkedIn and Google plus. Most of them found Facebook more fun that the other two social networking sites.

4.12 News on social media

In Figure 7 in appendix 2 more than half of the respondents (51.4%) regularly accessed news on social media. More than three out of ten (32.4%) sometimes accessed news on social media. Less than one out of ten (6.8%) hardly ever used social media for news while less than one out of ten (9.5%) never used social media for news. Less than one out of five (25.7%) shared news on social media regularly. More than two out of five (41.2%) sometimes shared news on social media while less than one out of five (18.9%) never shared news on social media. More than one out of ten (14.2%) hardly ever shared news on social media.

Even though most of the respondents regularly accessed social media, there was a pattern of less number of them actually used it for news purposes. This goes to prove that people preferred social media for entertainment purposes, networking purposes but not for news.
4.13 Summary

This chapter presented the result of the data analysis. Results covering the issues of news source preference of respondents, gender of respondents, the most easily accessible source, programme of study and the reasons behind their choice of a particular source. The results were explained and linked to the objectives of this study. The hypotheses of this study were also tested. Some of the results are presented in tables and figures with brief interpretations and explanations.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the study as well as findings. It also brings to the fore limitations of the study and finally makes recommendations that would advance further studies. This work focused on news consumption patterns of University of Ghana students. It was to also find out if difference in gender reflected in the choice of a particular news source. This study also set out to estimate the relationship between the type of programme a student is pursuing and his/her preferred news source.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study showed a pattern where students still used the traditional media for news in spite of speculations that the new (online) media had taken over from the old (traditional). Online, television and radio were the most preferred source for the students. The reasons given included accessibility and credibility. Interestingly, while most of the respondents chose online as their main source of news, few of them thought online news as credible. There was also a pattern of a gradual shift from reading hard copy newspapers to newspapers online. Even though respondents were active seekers of news online, they sometimes compliment it with news on the traditional media. This study did not support Marshal McLuhan’s (1964) assertion that the evolution of new technology influences audience shift totally from one medium to the other.
Radio which was the easiest accessible and cheapest ranked alongside television which was more expensive. Even though most of the student chose online as their main source of news, there was a pattern of they sometimes checking news on the traditional outlets since most of them chose the traditional platforms as more reliable and accurate. Even newspapers that many believed were gradually fading out were accessed by some respondents.

The findings showed a pattern of young people’s complementary use of traditional and online news platforms. There were patterns of both males and females relying on both the traditional and new media even though more males preferred the new media to the traditional media. Academic programme or course of study did not also affect the choice of a news medium. The sampled students accessed media based on accessibility, affordability and how convenient it was for respondents to use.

5.2 Hypothesis testing

Research has shown that people sometimes consumed news based on their gender. The Reuters Institute Report (2014) found that across all the countries studied for their report, 72% of men accessed news several times a day, compared with just 59% of women. Other surveys have also found and exhibited patterns of use that differed between men and women (Bennett & Bennett, 1989; Bimber, 2000; Davis & Owen, 1998). In this research, an attempt was made to test for relationships first between variable versus variable. Two hypotheses were tested to see if relationship exists. If you examine the data gathered as already found in other works, there appear to be a relationship. Hypothesis is thus tested as follows
H₁. Males are more likely to choose online media as a preferred news source

The reason, as stated earlier in the introductory chapter was that some studies had shown males choose their news media source differently from females. Surveys have found and exhibited patterns of use that differ between men and women (Bennett & Bennett, 1989; Bimber, 2000; Davis & Owen, 1998)

The null hypothesis is:

H₀. Males are not likely to choose online media as a preferred news source

The level of significance for this test was also set at 0.05

Table 4: Gender and Preferred news source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Media Type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42 57.5%</td>
<td>73 100/0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33 44.0%</td>
<td>75 100/0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75 50.7%</td>
<td>148 100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 2.711    df = 1    p = 0.100

The findings from Table 4 show that more than half (57.5%) of females preferred traditional (Television, Radio, Newspapers) source of news whiles less than half (44.0%) of males said they preferred traditional. Consistent with this, fewer women preferred new media compared to men. While less than half of females (42.5%) preferred the new media, more than half of
males (56.0%) said they preferred new media (Online). Testing for that relationship using the null hypothesis

\( H_0 \): Males are not likely to choose online media as a preferred news source

The table has a chi-square value of 2.711 with degree of freedom of 1 and an accompanying probability of 0.100. The probability accompanying the chi square value is 0.100 and this is greater than level of significance of 0.05 set for the study. This means we accept the null hypothesis which says

\( H_0 \): Males are not likely to choose online media as a preferred news source.

In other words the data in this study does not seem to support the research hypothesis that Males were more likely to choose online media as a preferred news source.

5.3 Programme of study and Preferred News source

Clark (2010), found in his study on news consumption of university students that, students consume news based on their courses of study. Clark (2010) found out that, students who study journalism as a course consumed news more than students in other departments of the University of Nebraska. The second hypothesis therefore seeks to find out if there is a relationship between academic programmes of students and their news media sources.

Hypothesis two is therefore tested as follows.

\( H_2 \): The academic programme a student offers is likely to affect his/her news consumption
The null hypothesis is

$H_0$. The academic programme a student offers is not likely to affect his/her news consumption.

The level of significance for this test was also set at 0.05.

**Table 5: Programme of study and Preferred News consumption**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Media Type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>New Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 8.04$ \hspace{1cm} df = 8 \hspace{1cm} \rho = 0.90$

The findings show that more than seven out of ten (71.4%) of Agric students said they preferred traditional media and less than three out of ten (28.6%) said they preferred the online. For the Engineering students, more than three out five (66.7%) preferred traditional and more than three out of ten (33.3%) preferred online. The distribution indicates a relationship between the programme of study and news media consumption.

Programme of study as a factor in news consumption preference is illustrated on the Chi-square test associated with the cross tabulation Table 5. It is obvious from Table 5 that the programmes studied do not seem related statistically to the preferred media source. This is
because the chi-square value of 8.04 with degree of freedom of 8 produced a probability of 0.90 which is greater than the significance level 0.05 set for the test for the study. The null hypothesis is thus accepted. The research hypothesis that “the programme a student offers is likely to affect his/her news consumption” is accordingly not supported by the data collected for this study.

Therefore $H_1$ is rejected by the data collected.

5.4 Limitations

The usage of questionnaire as a data collection tool was a limiting factor as it was not adequate to reveal more about the consumption patterns of the students. A combination of a survey questionnaire and an in-depth interview or focus group discussions would have achieved much result. A triangulation method should have been the ideal method to use.

The study did not include diploma and non-resident students. It focused mainly on the resident undergraduate students. This was due to the fact that resident undergraduate students were readily available. The inclusion non-residents among the respondents would have offered a broader perspective into the different classes of University of Ghana students.

Due to time constraints, the sample size selected was small. Considering the population of the University of Ghana, a larger sample size should have been the ideal situation.
5.5 Recommendation

From the data gathered, it was observed that most of the students preferred television, radio and the online platform for news. Few students accessed the hard copies of the newspapers; they preferred the soft copies instead. It is being recommended that students are encouraged to develop reading newspapers as it is more detailed in terms of content of the news item. Newspaper outfits should have online presence since it appeared to be a sure way to make students read newspapers. Print media houses should consider daily available updated newspaper posting online. Content accessibility and affordability played an important role in the selection of news source. It is therefore recommended that media practitioners should be circumspect in their reportage.

The study did not include diploma and non-resident students. It focused mainly on the resident undergraduate. This was due to the fact that the resident undergraduates were readily available. The inclusion of non-residents among the respondents would have offered a broader perspective into the different classes of University of Ghana students. It is therefore recommended that future study may also be extended to graduates and non-residential students.

Future research can attempt to ascertain if students who rely heavily on social media for news are informed on current events reported in the traditional media. In addition, real-time direct comparisons between trending news topics on social media and what traditional news outlets are reporting should be studied.
5.6 Conclusion

News consumption was previously limited to reading the newspapers or listening to a news bulletin on radio, or watching it on television. With the advent of the Internet one can get an “instant happening” of the latest news, literally minutes old on the Internet or receive updates on their smart phones, in their email inbox or on their social network pages (Picard 2009). This means that the traditional ways of consuming news or the traditional patterns of getting news from television, radio or newspaper is fast changing. In Ghana young and old alike watch television, listen to the radio and read the newspapers and the use of the Internet and its associated mobile and desktop applications is very popular among Ghanaians. College and university students have connected to the Internet more than the general population, according to a survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (Jones, 2002).

This work is an audience research study which was to survey news consumption pattern of students of the University of Ghana. The Specific objectives of the study were to find out the news consumption patterns of students, find out if difference in gender reflects in the choice of a particular news source and differentiate between selected programmes of students and their news consumption.

It was also to learn reasons for their choice of a particular news media: the study was underpinned by the uses and gratifications theory. The uses and gratifications theory was the underlining theory since it basically deals with what people are doing with media. The uses and gratifications theory deals with the media people are accessing and their motivations for doing so. Furthermore the study also reviewed relevant literature on the classification of news media, news media in Ghana, the role of the National Media Commission of Ghana, technology affects traditional media and students and news consumption.
The sampling design used for the study was systematic sampling with random beginning. The data was collected at three halls namely: Volta Hall, Commonwealth Hall and Legon hall. The sampling frame was the list of students in these halls. A self-administered questionnaire was used as the measuring instrument. The sample size for the study was 148. The data was then analysed with the SPSS. Descriptive analyses were used to estimate the respondents’ sources and access to news media. Simple frequency tables were used to analyse the respondents’ news consumption with respect to radio, newspaper, television and online news. To test the study hypotheses, Chi-Square tests were run. The study found out that majority of the respondents accessed news daily. Even though the online platform was the widely used for accessing news, students sometimes combined the traditional and online news platforms to achieve maximum results.

The study found out that the important things to the students were the accessibility, affordability, reliability of a particular news media. Even though the data collected did not support the hypotheses, the uses and gratifications theory is relevant to this study. This is because the uses to which people put media content (news in this case) and the gratifications they get from it affect their choice of a particular source. The aspect of the theory that informed the hypotheses was that people choose media for particular reasons. This study found out that those reasons do not include one’s gender and programme of study. From the study, accessibility, speed, convenience and interactivity have added up to why people will choose a particular medium. Respondents thus did not necessarily choose particular medium because of their gender or programme of study.
In conclusion, the established patterns included respondents searching for news daily and this largely was on the medium that was most accessible to them. Another pattern was respondents consistently spending at least 15 minutes accessing news on their main source daily. More students consistently used the online platforms to search for news. This they did mostly with their mobile phones. The reasons were that phones were easy to carry around compared to other gadget that can be used to access the internet. There was a pattern of most of the respondents choosing a particular medium because it was convenient for them. In terms of accuracy, television was rated the most accurate. Respondents regularly used social media platforms too in search for news. Even though most of the respondents regularly accessed social media, there was a pattern of less number of them actually using it for news purposes. This goes to prove that people preferred social media for entertainment purposes and networking purposes.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table 6: Time spent each day listening to news on the radio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-29mins</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59mins</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1hour or more</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't usually</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Time spent each day reading the newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-29mins</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-59mins</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1hour and more</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't usually</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Do you access news updates on your phone?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dont access phone news</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Usage of social networking sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Google plus usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11: LinkedIn usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly ever</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Sharing news on social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hardly ever</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Watching of news podcast on the internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly ever</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14: Reasons for the choosing specific gadgets for news online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for choice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Most easily accessible medium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessible medium</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online news</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2 - SUPPLEMENTARY CHARTS

Figure 2: Reasons for using a particular medium
Figure 3: Time spent online getting news in a day

Figure 4: Time spent each day watching news on Television
Figure 5: First choice news source

![Bar chart showing first choice news source]

Figure 6: Use of social networking site Facebook

![Bar chart showing use of Facebook]

Regularly: 25
Sometimes: 8.8
Never: 4.7
Figure 7: Access news on social media

![Pie chart showing access to news on social media]

- Regularly: 6.8%
- Sometimes: 32.4%
- Hardly ever: 51.4%
- Never: 9.5%

Figure 8: Ways of accessing online news

![Bar chart showing ways of accessing online news]

- Phone: 20.9%
- Tablet: 5.4%
- Notepad: 14.9%
- Desktop: 58.8%
Figure 9: Most reliable news source

![Bar chart showing the reliability of news sources with different criteria.](chart1)

Figure 10: Most accurate medium

![Pie chart showing the accuracy of different media sources.](chart2)
APPENDIX 3 - QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is being carried out by Akpene Ama Avor, a student of the School of Communication Studies for academic purposes. You are assured that no one will know you participated in this study and for that matter the answers you provide. You may please call Prof. K. Ansu-Kyeremeh on 0208158155, if in doubt. Thanks for your co-operation.

SECTION A: MEDIA HABITS

1. Do you ever access news?
   1. Yes
   2. No (terminate)

2. How often do you search for news?
   1) Daily
   2) Weekly
   3) Monthly
   4) Other (specify)…..

3. What is your main (ONE) source of news?
   1) Television
   2) Radio
   3) Newspaper
   4) Online
   5) Other (specify)…….

4. Why do you choose a particular medium and not the other?
   1) Speed
   2) Interactivity
   3) Access
   4) Convenience
   5) Other (specify)…….
5. On the average, how much time do you spend each day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>15mins</th>
<th>16-29mins</th>
<th>30-59mins</th>
<th>1 hour or more</th>
<th>Don’t usually go</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting news</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to news</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching news on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Where do first turn to for news?
   1) Television
   2) Radio
   3) Newspaper
   4) Internet
   5) Other

7. Do you access news updates on your phone? 1)Yes
   2) No
   3) Don’t access phone news
   4) Other.............
8. Do you use social networking sites?
   1) Regularly
   2) Sometimes
   3) Hardly ever
   4) Never

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Plus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How often, if ever, do you:
   1) Regularly
   2) Sometimes
   3) Hardly ever
   4) Never

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check news on social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share news on social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch news podcast on the internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. In searching for news online, which one of these will you prefer to use?
    1) Phone
    2) Tablet
    3) Notepad
    4) Desktop
    5) Others (specify)

11. Why do you prefer your choice above?
    1) Accessibility
    2) Affordability
    3) Mobile (easy to carry around)
    4) Other (specify) .............
12. Which one of the four sources to you is the most reliable?
   1) Radio
   2) Newspaper
   3) Television
   4) Online news

13. Give reasons for your answer above (12)
   1) It comes with pictures
   2) It is timely
   3) Easily accessible
   4) Other (specify)....................

14. Which one of the following sources do you find most accurate in news presentation.
   1) Radio
   2) Newspaper
   3) Television
   4) Online news

15. Which of the following is the easily accessible to you?
   1) Radio
   2) Newspaper
   3) Television
   4) Online news
SECTION B: DEMOGRAPHICS

16. Gender: 1) Female  2) Male

17. Age: 1) 18-24  2) 25-34  3) 35-44  4) above 44

18. Hall of Residence

  1) Akufo
  2) Mensah Sarbah
  3) Commonwealth
  4) Volta
  5) Legon

19. Programme of study

  1) Agriculture
  2) Engineering
  3) Humanities
  4) Sciences
  5) Other(specify)

20. Please circle your level:

  1) 100
  2) 200
  3) 300
  4) 400
  5) Post graduate
BIBLIOGRAPHY


www. Internetworldstats.com