THE USE OF SMARTPHONES FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM: A CASE STUDY OF ACILA-TIGER EYE PROJECT OF USING SMARTPHONES TO FIGHT CORRUPTION

BY

STEPHEN NARTEY

10637346

INTEGRITY PROCLAIMS US

THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MA COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEGREE.

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DECLARATION

I, Stephen Nartey, hereby declare that this submission is a product of my efforts and has not been presented to other universities. All references used in this study have been duly acknowledged under the supervision of Professor Audrey S. Gadzekpo.

............................................. .............................................
Stephen Nartey Professor Audrey S. Gadzekpo
(Student) (Supervisor)

Date:........................................ Date:........................................
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Agnes Abayateye, Head of News at Joy News, Elvis Kwashie as well as my course mate Eugene Brown Agyei.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God for making this work possible. To those who assisted in diverse ways, including scheduling interviews with respondents I am thankful for your support. To my supervisor, Professor Audrey Sitsofe Gadzekpo, I am very grateful for your support, guidance and patience.

A very special thank you to Dr. Gilbert Tietaaah for his suggestions and time dedicated to this work. I want to express a special appreciation to all lecturers at the Department of Communication Studies for their time and sharing their knowledge with us. Last but not the least, it was a great time with all my classmates DCSMastersclass2018 especially Eugene Adjei-Brown and Kwaku Nti for being there when it mattered the most.
ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of smartphones for investigative journalism by participants in an Africa Center for International Law and Accountability (ACILA) - Tiger Eye Project of using smartphones to fight corruption.

The study seeks to find out how investigative journalists, who participated in the special training project on investigative journalism, are using smartphones in their line of work. Existing literature has established that professionals in various fields have been using smartphones including investigative journalists in other jurisdictions like Europe and United States of America. The objective of the study was to find out what the situation pertains in Ghana.

The theoretical framework for the study was the Technological Acceptance Model. The qualitative approach was used to gather data from 10 respondents that were sampled for the study.

The study found out that respondents used smartphones in several ways including for their undercover work, which involves visual content production and writing their stories. The study also showed that the use of smartphones comes with its attendant risks and dangers to journalists. But, respondents indicated that the benefits of using smartphones for investigative journalism outweigh the challenges.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

The emergence of smartphones is changing the way and manner people interact in various spheres of life. It has provided the platform for professionals to connect with business, education, health, communication and social life (Sarwar & Soomro, 2013). The mobile device has become a significant part of social life many individuals can’t perform their roles without it (Losif, 2010). This is because over the last decade, manufacturers have been designing the mobile device to meet the needs of each class of society (Osazee-Odia, 2015). Smartphones are used interchangeably with mobile devices in this study.

Hill (2010) describes smartphones as mobile devices with special features that allow users to do more than voice calls and send text messages. In essence, smartphones are equipped to assist users to take photos, videos, send and receive emails, take notes as well as access social media sites such as Facebook, twitter, instagram among others through internet connection (Kim & Kwon, 2012).

Research has shown that the additional features and ability to experience technology in different ways on smartphones have informed why many subscribers prefer to purchase them compared to average cell phones. This trend in consumer preference has been attributed to the steady growth of smartphones in recent times (Quinn, 2009). It’s estimated that there are 1.3 billion smartphones’ users in the world, particularly in Asia and Africa. It’s however expected that 550 million mobile subscribers would switch to smartphones in the coming years (Jao, 2017). In
Ghana, for example, the mobile phone subscriber base grew from 30.2 million in November 2014 to 31.1 million as of the end of March, 2015 (NCA, 2015).

The growth in smartphones is because the mobile device has become relatively cheaper on the market. People can easily afford smartphones because it’s been designed to suit their income and other factors such as dwindling interest in the use of fixed lines. Another point is that, the technology has been improved to serve emerging economies as well (A.T. Kearney Mobile Economy Report, 2013).

Smartphones until recently was the preserve of the elite in society (Ndukwe, 2011). With the growth in smartphones, several professionals have adopted the mobile device because of the ease of use. Businessmen with interest in online trade rely on it to go about their operations. For example, such individuals are able to transact online business on their smartphones through e-commerce apps, access banking services and make payments through the same channel (Ibrahim et al, 2014). Businesses are using smartphones to better serve their client base and maximize profits (Gunnarsson, 2013).

In health, the importance of smartphones can be seen in how practitioners use it to keep records of patients, write reports, render health care to the sick in hard to reach places, schedule and monitor the condition of patients among others (Ventola, 2014). Smartphones have become a tool for improving the quality of health care by medical officials in many jurisdictions (Lee et al, 2015). In Ghana, doctors at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital have adopted smartphones and tablets in rendering health care to the teeming patients that visit the facility. The Ministry of Health has also integrated the use of smartphones into its e-Health strategy which seeks to build
a database of how such innovations could make health care easily accessible to Ghanaians (Barnor-Ahiaku, 2016).

1.0.1 Role of smartphones in journalism

In the area of communication, smartphones have provided journalists the opportunity to move around while performing their jobs. Smartphones help journalists to easily access stories from locations they are not present there (Mabweazara, 2010). Now journalists are able to write, record, edit and tell stories using their smartphones. In some newsrooms in the United States and Europe, it’s a requirement for reporters to have smartphones before they are employed (Quinn, 2010; Wenger et al, 2014). Smartphones have given birth to a new way of gathering and producing news stories. Unlike the past where newsrooms needed a crew to cover a story, smartphones have made it possible for journalists to independently report on events from a location single-handedly (Karhunen, 2017). The dual role smartphones play as a private and a specialised tool for journalists, presents new opportunities for the practice, particularly investigative journalism (Poynter.org, 2011). This however requires training and guidance to enable media practitioners understand the distinct opportunities and challenges with this innovation (Quinn, 2012).

1.0.2 Concept of Investigative Journalism

The power of investigative journalism to challenge the status quo and bring about social change cannot be overemphasized (Mustapha-Koiki & Ayedun-Aluma, 2013). In many jurisdictions, investigative journalism has been the vehicle used to topple corrupt governments, provided evidence of wrongdoing to be punished, shaped policies and set the agenda in political, economic and social issues (Forbes, 2005). However, training of investigative reporters is painstakingly
slow and time consuming. That explains the limited numbers of investigative journalists across the globe (Sullivan, 2013; Burgh, 2008).

There is no single definition of what investigative journalism is. The reason probably is because the news culture determines what the definition ought to be. That notwithstanding, investigative journalism has been defined as an original, in-depth and systematic work of a journalist that addresses societal flaws (Ansell, 2010). This definition exemplifies the key themes stated above that set what investigative journalism is from other aspects of the practice (Stetka & Ornebring, 2013). Those unique elements include the in-depth digging into the subject being investigated; the issue must be of interest to the public, investigative stories must be products of rigorous research and exclusive to the reporter (Suntai et al, 2018).

Investigative journalism goes beyond routine assignments like news conferences, corporate events, scheduled assignments, and natural disasters (Ongowo, 2013). Investigative journalism exposes the weaknesses in society and provides a voice for the powerless (Burgh, 2008). It is also seen as enterprising journalism, which relies on thorough and systematic means to shine light on wrongdoing (Sullivan, 2013). This genre of journalism can be described as the watchdog role of the media (Gilligan, 2011). Rosenstiel and Kovach (2001) see the goal of investigative journalism as a cure to abuse of power in society (Warn, 2003).

Arriving at this goal sometimes comes at a great cost to investigative journalists. They are jailed, attacked or killed while doing their job (Schiffrin & Lugalambi, 2017). In Nigeria, investigative reporters have been persecuted, imprisoned and murdered for performing their duties. Those who refused to allow themselves to be corrupted by governments went into exile (Suntai, 2018).
1.0.3 Innovations in Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism is fast evolving with the introduction of new newsgathering tools into the practice. Rosentiel and Bergman (Poynter.org, 2011) argue that innovative tools such as backpack camera, secret video apps and digital audio recorders present its own advantages to investigative reporters when used in the proper manner (Wibbey, 2013). News organisations are now using smartphones to create digital editions for their readers, track their market base as well as provide a platform for their staff to work together (Barsotti, 2014). Smartphones now come with sharper cameras, wireless connections, notepad and audio recorders which journalists rely on to make their work easier. These features are user friendly and much faster (Karhunen, 2017). Such devices have changed the views of some investigative journalists’ on how to generate content, distribute and how to tell a story (Stevenson & Wright, 2015). Studies have revealed that many investigative journalists are adopting new technologies to enhance their skills (Gearing, 2014; Franklin, 2014).

1.0.4 Challenges of investigative journalism

Despite the fact that investigative journalism is an important tool for nation-building, it’s one of the disadvantaged areas in many newsrooms. The challenge the practice faces and the role it plays in bringing about institutional change is well documented (Schiffrin & Lugalambi, 2017). Investigative journalists sometimes face harassment from law enforcement agencies that compel them to disclose their sources or are sued for publishing stories that expose acts of wrongdoing. They are in some instances imprisoned for protecting sources of information (Forbes, 2005). Another challenge has been how they place their lives at risk by operating from unsuitable environment while seeking to expose a wrongdoing (Mustapha-Koiki & Ayedun-Aluma, 2013).
1.0.5 ACILA-Tiger Eye Project

In Ghana, The Africa Center for International Law and Accountability-Tiger Eye in 2016 pioneered a project of introducing investigative journalists to the use of smartphones in exposing wrongdoing. The selected journalists were new to using the mobile device in their work. The project forms the basis of this study, which is to find out how these investigative journalists are using these skills in their work and what has been the outcome of this training.

ACILA is a research and education, non-partisan, non-profit, and non-governmental organization. ACILA stands for social justice, international law, human rights and anti-corruption. Its mission is “to fight impunity for international crimes, advocate justice for victims of international crimes and use research and public education to promote African states’ adherence to international human rights, rule of law, public accountability, and compliance with regional and international instruments” (acila.org, p.1).

Tiger Eye PI, on the other hand, is a leading private investigative firm in Africa, noted for exposing corruption in the sub-region. It is run by award winning investigative journalist, Anas Aremeyaw Anas. Tiger Eye PI has a high reputation for uncovering the unknown. Its mission is to expose wrongdoing in every quarter of society. Its mantra is to “name, shame and jail” those involved in corrupt acts (tigereyepi.org, p.1).

However, there are those who have been compelled to change and accept new innovations in their line of work. Many journalists initially saw the use of smartphones for journalism to mean working independently from filming to interviewing and scripting the story using the mobile device. In other words, reporters assumed they would be overburdened with several tasks while conducting their work on smartphones (Karhunen, 2017). Sometimes these mobile technologies
produce good results, and some sometimes, bad outcomes. The use of smartphones therefore can make the newsgathering process easier for the journalist and difficult when there are technical challenges with the technology.

1.0.7 Use of smartphones as a tool to combat corruption

Corruption has been identified in Africa as one of the major systemic challenges. This is because many constitutions have been crafted in a way that protects the ruling class and affluent than the downtrodden and poor. Ghana is touted as a stable democracy. However, one of the challenges its battling with is the fight against corruption (Afrobarometer.org, 2018). Ghana ranks 78th in the corruption perception index out of 175 countries (transparency.org, 2018). There are concerns that the country risks eroding the gains chalked in good governance and development if the social cancer is not checked. Studies have shown that the influence of corrupt officials could be controlled by the efforts of non-state actors, including the media by exposing wrongdoing and abuse of power (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002; Osborne, 2002). The role of the media, particularly investigative journalism is considered as one of the effective approaches in making the menace unattractive (OECD, 2018).

Studies have found out that mobile technologies could be a major game changer in the fight against corruption (Oye, 2013). It has been described as a useful platform in mobilizing the citizenry to demand transparency and accountability from government institutions (Serrat, 2014). In Nigeria, a crowd-sourced whistle blowing system known as the Trade Routine Incident Mapping System empowered local traders to report border officials extorting monies from them through the use of mobile phones. In Ukraine, a mobile platform which allows sharing of information on international contracts and trade has helped the country to reduce revenue
leakages. Additionally, civil society groups Global Witness, Open Corporates and mysociety have used smartphones as platforms to identify and shine light on corruption (Banning-Lover, 2016). Inasmuch as mobile technologies are fundamental in exposing wrongdoing, there is the criticism that it could be misused and exploited by individuals for their self-interest. The existence of the smartphones as a platform cannot produce results in the fight against corruption, until certain conditions such ease of use and skills to use the mobile device are in place (Adam & Fazekas, 2018). In spite of these difficulties, investigative journalists are trying these new technologies in evidence gathering (Chan, 2017). It is against this backdrop that this study is exploring the opportunities and challenges of the use of smartphones by investigative journalists in Ghana.

1.1 Statement of problem

The practise of investigative journalism is almost non-existent in Ghana. This has imperatively affected the quality of work produced by investigative reporters in the country. Many of the practitioners are poorly trained and ill-equipped in using emerging technologies such as smartphones for investigative reporting (Dotse, 2009; mfwa.org, 2018). Even though the technology exists, many journalists do not have adequate training in tapping into the opportunities the mobile device presents for their work. That’s why interrogating a project like the ACILA-Tiger Eye programme that aims at equipping inexperienced investigative journalists with the requisite training in using smartphones to unearth wrongdoing is critical.

The advent of smartphones has presented journalists with new ways of doing their work, including using the device to write, record audio, take videos, and edit stories among other functions (Mabweazara, 2010; Quinn, 2010; Wenger et al, 2014; Karhunen, 2017). A few studies
have shown that smartphones as a tool can be leveraged in the fight against corruption (Oye, 2013; Banning-Lover, 2016; Adam & Fazekas, 2018; Chan, 2017). Despite the successes chalked in the use of smartphones in other areas of work, the mobile device has its peculiar challenges and opportunities for investigative journalism in many jurisdictions. In Africa, for example, many investigative journalists tend to gloss over ethical issues when using emerging technologies. In most Western countries, however, rigorous attention is paid to how information is obtained and used. That’s why it’s important to explore how investigative journalists in Ghana are using technology in their line of work.

The Technological Acceptance Model argues that, people do not necessarily use an innovation because it’s available to them, but, how it serves their needs and how easy it is to use it. This study is also interested in whether if investigative journalists are trained in the use of smartphones for their work, whether they use it and how do they deal with the challenges and opportunities the technology presents.

1.2 Research objectives

This study will examine the role smartphones play in the work of investigative journalists, assessing the potential benefits and challenges.

Specifically, this research will seek:

- To find out the extent to which investigative journalists use smartphones in fighting corruption.
- To find out how the investigative journalists are using the smartphones.
- To find out what the opportunities and challenges are when investigative journalists use smartphones.
To find out how the investigative journalists overcome the challenges they face in the use of smartphones.

1.3 Research questions

The following questions will be answered in the course of the study:

- What extent does investigative journalists use smartphones?
- What are their experiences in using smartphones in investigative work?
- What challenges and opportunities does using smartphones provide for investigative journalists?
- Does the use of smartphones pose peculiar ethical dilemmas for investigative journalists and how do they navigate it?

1.4 Significance of study

There is substantial evidence of the use of smartphones by investigative journalists in countries like the United States and Europe. The mobile device has been used as a data bank for documenting and sharing information on corrupt acts for remedial action by governments. Some individuals have capitalized on smartphones as a tool to shine light on systemic problems affecting communities. There is, however, scanty information on the use of smartphones by investigative journalists in Ghana. This study seeks to find out how the mobile device is being used by investigative reporters who participated in the ACILA-Tiger Eye project and the ethical constraints they were faced with. In addition, the study will explore opportunities and challenges that come with its use by investigative reporters. This study will contribute to further studies on technology and investigative journalism in Ghana.
1.5 Organisation of study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one delved into the introduction, background to the study, statement of problem, objectives, research questions and significance of the study.

Chapter two outlined the theoretical framework, related literature and chapter summary.

Chapter three focused on the research design, population, sampling technique and procedure, sample size, data collection methods, data analysis and chapter summary.

Chapter four discussed the findings and data analysis.

Conclusion, recommendations and a summary can be found in chapter five of the study.

1.6 Chapter summary

This chapter placed the study in context by providing history, functions, uses of smartphones and why it’s important to study smartphones in investigative journalism with regard to Ghana. The background also placed into perspective how various sectors are embracing smartphones to enhance their work. The current use of the mobile device in other jurisdictions was also discussed in this chapter. The statement of problem, objectives, questions and significance was also outlined in this chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Matt Duffy (2011) points out that at the height of the Arab Spring, journalists had no choice but to rely on smartphones to gather news. The simple gadget made it possible for journalists to effectively cover a violent revolution. Rick Sanchez, the former CNN correspondent, applauded invention of smartphones stating that it is “the best piece of news equipment ever invented.” Sanchez, who was impressed with the wide range of functions of smartphones, stated “it is a computer, word processor, still and video camera, recorder, editing system, phone and satellite uplink all in one” (Duffy, 2011, p.1). Indeed, before the invention of smartphones, journalists sometimes had no choice but use large and almost intimidating equipment to do their jobs. Smartphones was the game changer helping investigative journalists to sneakily gather evidence for news.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part examines previous studies that relate to this study.

The second part presents the broad theoretical background to the study. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) will assist in conceptualizing the phenomenon and present the subject under study in a certain framework.
2.1 Related Studies

A number of studies have been done on how investigative journalists are embracing new technologies to improve their work. Gearing (2016) studied Global Investigative Journalism in a Network Society. The objective of the study was to examine how investigative journalists can rely on new technologies like smartphones to find information and new sources. In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 journalists representing leading news outlets in Australian who produced detailed case studies including investigative stories.

Gearing (2016) found that although the investigative journalists were reluctant to embrace new technologies, they capitalized on it to find new ways of engaging with the audience, news sources and build a network with colleagues and rival media outlets to produce stories that yielded significant political and social change. The findings further revealed that the investigative journalists used these new technologies to expand the scope of their work beyond domestic borders to function as an emerging global Fourth Estate, calling power to account internationally and/or globally.

In another research, Casey (2010) conducted a study into how advances in media related technology are changing journalism and the role of the journalist. The purpose of the study was to examine different ways in which technological advances have had a positive impact on journalism and the day to day activities of journalists working with online news outlets. Casey (2010) used a combination of primary and secondary research consisting of academic readings as well as interviews with relevant people among others.

Casey (2010) found out that media related technology such as mobile devices have made the job of journalists easier and improved the practise of journalism. Another findings made by the
researcher were that backpack journalism, which ties in with smartphones allow reporting of news in situations where a large news crew or a large amount of equipment may not be possible easy. This study focused on the existing situation in Ireland, but, the present study will investigate how investigative journalists are using smartphones in their day to day work in Ghana completely different from Gearing (2016) work in Australia and the Irish context.

The studies conducted by Casey (2010) and Gearing (2016) are of relevance to this present study because aside from highlighting the fact that investigative journalists are adapting to the use of new technologies to stay relevant at a time newsrooms are cutting down on cost, there is similarity in the method used in gathering data. The researchers relied on in-depth interviews in gathering data, thereby informing the instrument to use in the current study.

Analyzing 12 cases of investigative journalism in Sub-Saharan Africa, Lublinski et al (2015) examined triggering change–how investigative journalists in sub-saharan Africa contribute to solving problems in society. The study established that the four different kinds of impact investigative journalism makes is that, it gets important issues on the public agenda, it helps solve an immediate problem, it triggers structural changes and supports the uptake of science. But, Lublinski et al (2015) indicated that media houses have limited means and capacities to support investigative journalists.

In a related study, Obateru (2017) conducted research into the current state of journalism practice in Nigeria to determine how journalists are responding to the numerous professional challenges they face. The objective of the study was to find out how investigative journalists are performing against emerging global phenomena in journalism such as the impact of new technologies.
The findings of Obateru (2017) sought to explain how challenges such as poor or irregular salary, ownership influence, market and social forces influence the performance of journalists in the face of emerging new technologies.

Carson (2013) examined the challenges of print investigative journalism in the digital age. The purpose of the study was to explore whether investigative journalists could take advantage of the new opportunities smartphones present in the context of print media’s failing revenues to support this reporting genre.

In a similar work done in Ghana, Dotse (2009) found that the quality of work produced by investigative journalists was affected by threats and financial challenges. Dotse (2009) examined the state of investigative journalism in Ghana and attempted to answer the question of whether the dangerous conditions investigative journalists operate under impact their work.

The above studies conducted by Lublinski et al (2015); Obateru (2017); Dotse (2009) found challenges to do with funding facing investigative journalists in Sub-Saharan African and Ghana as well. Their studies did not state the role of new technologies such as smartphones as possible challenge or solution and yet it might be argued that technology can help bridge or address the concerns raised. Funding may also explain the presence or absence of technology to support the work of investigative journalists, this is a perspective the current seeks to explore.

Moilanen (2014) conducted a study with the aim of gaining insight into why Russian journalists specialize in investigative journalism. The researcher was minded by the fact that Russia is one of the most dangerous countries to practice investigative journalism since 1990s. The study explored the opportunities the profession has to offer, as well as the challenges the journalists were faced with when practicing this risky type of journalism. Moilanen (2014) also looked at
the technologies investigative journalists could rely on, but, did not consider the option of investigative reporters in Russian exploring the use of smartphones even though they work in one of the dangerous terrain as he stated. This current study acknowledges that risky environment could pose a challenge to the work of investigative journalists, and would explore whether smartphones could be the tool to use when operating in a risky setting.

Hamzah & Mustafa (2014) studied the Digital Readiness of Malaysian Journalists. The researchers examined the changing nature of Malaysian newsrooms and assessed the digital readiness among them in accordance with the needs of the digital media era.

Hamzah & Mustafa (2014) found out that funding for technology and training for journalists were paramount in the digital age. The research also found out that in the Malaysian media industry, majority of media organisations are ready and are provided with funding for the technology to improve the quality of media itself.

Gearing (2014) researched into how investigative journalists can join the network society by moving online, collaborating with other reporters and media outlets across regions and national borders.

One of the findings of the study was that new technologies such as smartphones enhanced journalists’ reach with news sources which are considered an important resource for practitioners.

In another research, Karlsen (2010) explored how journalists' working conditions are changing in developing countries in Africa due to the growth in information communication technologies (ICTs). The study placed special focus on news journalists' who use mobile devices because the rate of mobile penetration in Africa.
Karlsen (2010) found out that Kenyan news journalists use mobile technology in several ways in their work, including setting up interview appointments by calling their sources, conducting telephone interviews, recording interviews using the mobile phones particularly in conflict-sensitive reporting.

In a related work, Fink (2014) conducted a study on data driven sourcing: how journalists use digital search tools to decide what news is. He examined the efforts of journalists to expand their pool of potential sources beyond a group of people often called the usual suspects. He also explored how journalists used these tools in three stages of the reporting process: finding sources, verifying sources, and managing sources.

Fink (2014) found out that journalists used these tools not to find new sources, but to follow and research sources they had already identified by name or location.

The research done by Hamzah & Mustafa (2014); Gearing (2014); Karlsen (2010); Fink (2014) are important to the current study because the findings suggest the opportunities investigative journalists in Ghana can take advantage of from using smartphones in their line of work particularly in a digital age.

Gromik (2013) studied the use of cell phone video recording feature by Japanese undergraduate learners. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of using the video recording feature regularly to enhance oral performance in the target language.

Through the construction of videos, students learnt how to operate the technology to produce suitable visual resources. The study found out that the cell phones provided students the opportunity to produce videos anytime and anywhere.
In his work, Watson (2011) studied the mobile phone: the communication drum of Papua New Guinea. He examined how this new technology changes people’s lives, social structures and relationships.

The study found out that the introduction of mobile telecommunications has generally been viewed positively, although several negative concerns have strongly been expressed.

Difficulties have arisen with respect to the cost of owning and operating a handset, as well as financial and logistical challenges when recharging handset batteries.

In a related study, Bundt (2010) studied smartphones and their users: are they overwhelmed by the smartness of these devices. The work focused on what role smartphones play within the users’ communication practices.

The risk of relying too much on the mobile device was one of the findings the researcher identified. As a consequence, Bundt (2010) indicated that there is a possibility of a user feeling stressed or lost when the device fails, because the battery is empty or there is no network.

Earlier studies conducted on smartphones usage had pointed to its usefulness for those that use it, but, Groarke (2014); Gromik (2013); Watson (2011); Bundt (2010) drew attention to the fact that, as much as smartphones have its benefits, it is important to note that, it has associated challenges. These findings are pertinent to the current study because it gives insights into what challenges investigative journalists could face in the Ghanaian context of their day to day usage of smartphones, and it’s a perspective the study would be mindful of.
Chari (2013) investigated new communication technologies and journalism ethics in Zimbabwe: practices and malpractices. The purpose of the study was to examine the ethical challenges faced by Zimbabwean journalism practitioners when using cellular phones in their operations.

Chari (2013) discovered the impact of new media technologies on journalism and suggested that cellular phones be viewed as enhancers as well as obstacles to ethical journalism.

This study is important to the current study because it is important to explore the ethical dilemmas investigative journalists could be faced with as a challenge in their use of smartphones particularly in Ghana.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Technological advancement has changed journalism, but embracing such a change does not always come easy. Users of any new technology would have to go through different phases to understand the technology before they accept it. It is therefore critical to link this study to the Technology Acceptance Model propounded by Fred Davis in his doctoral thesis (Davis, 1985).

2.1.2 Technology Acceptance Model

Davis’ theory originated from the need to understand the adoption of information systems and what informs people’s behaviour towards new technologies in the 1970s. Studies on user’s behaviour towards information systems failed to provide a framework to explain why people accept or reject technologies. Davis built on the work of Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) who proposed the Theory of Reasoned Action. The assumption behind the Theory of Reasoned Action is that a person will have a favourable perception towards technology based on his beliefs, attitude and subjective norm about the use of the innovation (Chuttur, 2009).
suggests that an individual’s beliefs can affect the way they perceive a new technology which in turn affects their intentions. The Technology Acceptance Model, however, assumes that users’ behaviour are informed based on how important a new technology serves the needs of people and how easy it is to use it (Davis, 1989). This implies that an individual’s behaviour is influenced based on how useful and important a new technology serves their needs. In other words, favourable or unfavourable perception about an innovation is influenced by desired benefits and how easy or difficult it is when applying it in a given situation. The theory is grounded in two constructs – Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEU).

2.1.3 Attributes of technology acceptance model

The Technology Acceptance Model explains that users will accept or reject a system based on the belief that it will help them to deliver on a given task (perceived usefulness) and also how easy or difficult the system proves while usage can affect users’ behaviour (perceived ease of use). The theorist used these two key attributes in understanding the factors that influence users’ behaviour towards information systems. The Technology Acceptance Model attempts to explain the thought processes leading to the acceptance or rejection of an innovation under a given situation (Davis, 1985). Therefore, before an investigative journalist adopts or rejects a smartphone as a tool of usage in their work, he/she may make some considerations. The model has been used in several studies to predict user acceptance of new technologies and has proven reliable in its results (Davis, 1996). The theory is able to explain how an innovation may receive a favourable or an unfavourable reaction from users (Davis et al., 1989).
2.1.4 Criticisms and limitations of model

Though the Technology Acceptance Model has been widely used to predict the success or failure of new innovations among users, some researchers hold criticisms of it. One of the criticisms of the Technology Acceptance Model identified was that participants found it difficult to understand the measurement scale items for perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use when it’s used together. The suggestion is that, researchers hoping to use the model must apply the original scale used by the theorist (Chuttur, 2009). While many studies have endorsed the model as accurate in predicting users’ behaviour with regard to acceptance or rejection of information systems, the Technology Acceptance Model doesn’t help in explaining the motive behind the repeated use of a new technology. The theorist is of the view that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are relative to the user’s beliefs of the information systems (Davis, 1989).

Studies on new technologies, mostly use Technology Acceptance Model approach framework to study adoption and use of an innovation such smartphones (Keng-Boon & Wei-Ban, 2016; Joo & Sang, 2013; Sek et al, 2010; Habbal, 2017; Chang & Huang, 2018; Dzukey, 2015; Sarfoah, 2017). Since it’s evident the Technology Acceptance Model has proven to be a useful theoretical framework in studying the use of smartphones as shown in previous academic research, the present study also finds the TAM approach effective to understanding the use of smartphones in investigative journalism.

2.1.5 Application of model to study

This chapter established the theoretical basis for the study, which examines the use of smartphones for investigative journalism by journalists who participated in a special training project. The Technology Acceptance Model argued that people’s decisions about new
technologies are influenced by how useful and easy it is to use an innovation. This position meets the intent of this study to construct an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of investigative journalists in the use of smartphones. The theorist is of the view that these aspects would be realized if smartphones are adopted by investigative journalists in the context of this study and applied to their work. This means that when the innovation is presented to investigative journalists, it’s expected that they will make certain decisions before accepting the technology (Davis, 1989).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods of data collection and analysis that were used for this study. The sample size, the sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis are discussed in this section. The study was qualitative in nature. The selection of this approach was informed by the research problem of the study, which is to find out the use of smartphones by investigative journalists who were selected to participate in an ACILA-Tiger Eye Project of using smartphones to expose corruption in Accra.

3.1 Type of Study

In designing a study, the best suited framework that enables the researcher to understand the situation in a given context and provides answers to the questions being sought is what is considered (Walliman, 2011). The qualitative approach, employing the purposive sampling method, was applied in, to this study.

The qualitative approach helps people to assign meaning to everyday happenings around them. It also places the perspectives and experiences of people in a context (Creswell, 2014). Scholars such as Hammarberg & et al (2015) recommend qualitative approach in studies exploring experiences, opinions, attitudes and beliefs.

Face-to-face in-depth interviews with selected investigative journalists were conducted to determine their experiences with the use of smartphones for investigative journalism. An interview guide was used to gather data from the respondents. This approach was employed for
data collection because it’s an effective technique in eliciting information from respondents in an informal approach (Turner, 2010). The interview guide was again selected because many researchers have relied on it for collecting data from respondents with certain knowledge in a field or experience due to its flexibility to probe further when seeking information (Berry, 1999). Furthermore, it allows the researcher to remain focused in view of the fact that he/she is guided by a checklist of questions (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

3.2 Population and Sample

A sample is a portion of a population. The selection of a sample is usually determined by project purpose, project complexity, amount of error tolerated, time constraints, financial constraints and existing literature in the area of study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2010). The present study considered constraints such as the few investigative journalists available in the country, limited time and existing literature for opting for a purposive sample. Purposive sampling technique was used in this study. This non-probability sampling is based on sound judgment of the researcher and the willingness to cooperate on the part of respondents who have knowledge or expertise in the area of interest (Etikan, 2016).

The study purposively sampled investigative journalists who the researcher had knowledge they had participated in an ACILA-Tiger Eye project on using smartphones to expose corruption three years ago. These investigative journalists were inexperienced when the project supervisors selected them for the training programme. They were provided with two weeks training from 3rd to 16th March, 2016 (myjoyonline.com, 2016). The study, therefore seeks to find out how they are using these skills in their work and what has been the outcome of this training. Ten out of a population of 18 investigative journalists were sampled for this study. These 18 reporters
participated in the ACILA-Tiger Eye project in 2016. This number was selected because the qualitative approach deals with small sample rather than more numbers. More so, this study does not seek to generalize its findings, hence, the decision to interview ten respondents.

The respondents were contacted for interviews at either their workplaces or the location they provided. The respondents were briefed on the objective of the study and assured that whatever information they provided will be treated with confidentiality. Their consent was sought before the interview session began.

3.3 Data collection procedure

A semi-structured interview guide was developed and used for the study. A semi-structured interview is an interviewing technique that allows the interviewer flexibility when gathering data. The interviewer usually has a general idea of the subject and what he/she intends to achieve, but allows the interviewee to set the agenda by asking probing questions (Jong & Jung, 2015). The researcher used an interview guide to gather information from the respondents.

Interview guides are useful when conducting semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews. Interview guides are usually expected to last for one hour or one-half hours with a guide involving at least five or six open-ended questions with the objective of gathering information from the respondents. According to Patton’s six guides to developing an interview guide, there is the suggestion that the questions should centre on experiences, opinions, feelings, sensory impressions, knowledge and demographic data (Knight, 2013). The interview guide of the present study factored in the experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge of the respondents in designing the questions. Nine questions were developed to seek information from the respondents on the extent to which they have been using smartphones, the potential benefits and
challenges and how they navigated through those difficulties. Follow-up questions were asked to probe further on the responses given.

The interview guide will be developed along the research questions this study seeks to answer. The protocol of the interview guide will also include asking detailed questions, but in a conversational manner. The guide will be piloted among a sample of five interviewees to ensure the reliability of the technique (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

The ten investigative journalists selected for this study were organised and interviewed separately. They were met based on the scheduled time at their disposal for data collection. They will be visited at their offices or suited location as well.

The researcher spent at least 20 minutes interviewing each of the respondents. The interviews took place from October to November 2018. Eight of the respondents were interviewed at their workplaces while the remaining two were interviewed at a location convenient for them. The interviews were recorded after permission was sought from the start of the each session. Notes were taken as a backup to audio recordings that were made.

3.3.1 Ethical considerations

The consent of the respondents was sought during the data collection process. This was done with strict adherence to ethical standards. These ethical considerations included seeking the permission of respondents before the start of the interview. The objective of the study, which is for academic purposes, was explained to them and they were promised strict confidentiality.
3.4 Data analysis and presentation

Data collected was transcribed for description and analysis. A thematic analysis was conducted on the transcripts of information gathered from respondents. Thematic analysis is a technique of analyzing data to establish a linkage between concepts, classifying as well describing the themes (Enochsson, 2005).

The researcher while analyzing the themes played the audio recordings repeatedly to help in determining the linkages between the concepts. Findings of the study were analyzed per themes to determine whether it answers the research questions.

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented information on the research design (descriptive), methodology (qualitative), the research population and the rationale behind it, sampling technique (purposive sampling) and sample size as well as the method of data presentation and analysis (thematic analysis).
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The study explored the use of smartphones for investigative journalism and focused on the opportunities and challenges of investigative journalists who had participated in an ACILA-Tiger Eye project in Accra.

The responses from the in-depth interviews with the respondents formed the basis for analysis of this research. Respondents shared their knowledge of the use of smartphones in investigative journalism and how the mobile device supported their work. They also shared their experiences, including the dangers they encountered while using smartphones in their work. The respondents also shared the challenges they encountered and how they dealt with it.

4.0.1 Demographic information

Ten respondents were interviewed for this study. These respondents are investigative journalists who had participated in an ACILA-Tiger Eye project of using smartphones to expose corruption. The following are codes for each respondent: R 1 (Respondent 1), R 2 (Respondent 2), R 3 (Respondent 3), R 4 (Respondent 4), R 5 (Respondent 5), R 6 (Respondent 6), R 7 (Respondent 7), R 8 (Respondent 8), R 9(Respondent 9), and R 10 (Respondent 10).

The respondents who participated in the study were six males and four females. They were between the ages of 20 and 25 years. All respondents had attained university education. Seven of
them had journalism education from the Ghana Institute of Journalism while three had their training from the African University College of Communication.

4.1 Main Findings

4.1.0 Introduction

Smartphones have been found to have a number of uses. The in-depth interviews with respondents for this study revealed that, smartphones’ use comes with its own opportunities and attendant challenges. The study would be discussing these findings as shared by the respondents below.

4.1.1 Uses of smartphones

The study identified five main uses of smartphones namely capturing videos, recording audios, writing stories, producing visual content and for undercover work exposing police and customs officials in Tema and Accra. The following uses are explained in details below.

Smartphones for capturing videos

The camera is one of the features of the smartphones. The respondents used highly sophisticated camera apps like background video, FilmMicPro, Cinema FV-5 among others. The study found that respondents used the cameras on their smartphones to capture the content they used for their stories. The cameras were the intermediaries between the investigative journalists and this form of news gathering. R7 explained:

Some smartphones have sharp cameras, you can record such incidents on the phone, and I mean it’s pretty good; you can do all what you intend doing on the
phone. And it’s something that, you don’t have to spend much time on…(R 7, October 23, 2018).

**Smartphones for recording audios**

The voice or audio recorder is also another inbuilt feature of smartphones. The study showed that the respondents used the phone’s internal microphone to secretly record and generate evidence bothering on wrongdoing. The respondents found the use of the audio recorders easier and safer to use in their line of work. They used voice recorders like Voice Recorder Pro and PCM Recorder.

**Smartphones as a reporter’s notebook**

The study found that the respondents used smartphones for writing their stories and making notes of important information collected in the line of work. The research also found out that respondents used the smartphones to develop their stories while working in the field. The messaging app made it easier for the investigative journalists to process information and share it with their respective newsrooms. R6 stated that:

> It worked for me, it was my first time, I hadn't used anything like that before in my line of work. So for me being able to do many things like writing my stories on the smartphones was helpful (R 6, October 23, 2018).

**Smartphones for producing visual content**

The study showed that respondents used smartphones as an editing system where they trimmed videos, imbedded audios and put together their visual story. They used sophisticated apps like
FilmMicPro, Storehouse, and Kinemaster among others to work on their visual content. The research showed that using smartphones for visual content production saved time and cost.

**Smartphones for undercover work**

The study found out that smartphones could be used to surreptitiously gather evidence for their stories. Respondents indicated that its handiness, made it easier to use in filming acts of wrongdoing. The research also showed that because, the smartphones came across as an everyday device used by everyone, it did not arouse suspicion when respondents concealed it properly during their investigative works.

The study also found out that, the more respondents used the smartphones for evidence gathering for their stories the more familiar they became used to it. To one of the respondents, he investigated how police officers extorted monies from motorists on the Kasoa highway using a smartphone to record and expose the corrupt officials. He stated:

> I realized that in Kasoa, you usually have the police disturbing drivers in terms of taking bribes from them. So I decided to use my phone to capture what has been happening on the highway. I was able to strategise, set up at a distance enough to film them and I was able to get something (R 1, October 20, 2018).

**4.1.2 Challenges in using smartphones**

The study found out that respondents faced technical challenges in the use of smartphones for their work. Videos that were being recorded were truncated because some of the respondents did not activate their flight mode, which meant that incoming calls disrupted the filming process. In
other words, these respondents neglected to take into account the glitches that come with using smartphones for investigative journalism. This poor preparation affected the quality of work. The study also found out that the size of the smartphones was a challenge for the respondents. In order to do their work effectively, the respondents would have to use a smaller mobile device. R10 said:

I was filming a scene of a port official taking bribe from an importer, but the size of the phone exposed what I was doing. I noticed that the environment was not conducive for me so I just stopped and went to hide somewhere. Sometimes you are torn between protecting yourself and being a bit radical. You have to use your discretion so you don't fall into danger (R 10, November 5, 2018).

R5 also stated:

I think there was a time that I was recording and I didn't know that there was not enough space on my memory card so it became clear that the smartphone wasn’t recording what I was filming. Aside from that, there were times that when the smartphone was in my pocket, and it was not well positioned, and wasn’t capturing the particular event I wanted to film. So those are a few challenges I encountered...(R 5, October 21, 2018).

4.1.3 Risks and dangers of using smartphones

The research found out that the use of smartphones for investigative journalism has its associated risks which include being attacked, manhandled, detained or abused by police officers.
The study established that respondents faced life threatening dangers while using smartphones in capturing corrupt practices. The respondents faced these risks because they attempted to get closer to the action.

The study also found out that the use of smartphones exposed respondents to abuses and attacks. A respondent who was found filming police officials taking bribes from motorists in Accra for instance, was detained for hours and had his smartphone seized. The research showed that, respondents who are inexperienced in using smartphones for such investigative works stand the risk of being caught and manhandled. R3 said:

…my phone was taken away from me and I was asked to follow the officer to the police station around the area. Upon getting there, I was asked to unlock my phone and warned that failure to do so would mean I will be locked up. They however placed me behind the counter and made to unlock the phone. They went through my photos and videos and realized that I had taken shots which would have implicated them had it gone out (R 3, October 21, 2018).

R7 also recalled how she had to stop following a story because of the dangers she was exposed to:

It did put the fear in me so I did not go to the port the following day after I was attacked by those five men. So on the day of submission, I submitted the old video that I gathered on the day of the incident. I was really scared (R 7, November 2, 2018).
The research also showed that respondents had the fear of being discovered while using smartphones for investigative journalism. This was because anytime they took out their smartphones to film acts of wrongdoing, they felt someone might get suspicious and they will end up being caught. As R8 puts it:

It is not that rosy because if you want to take coverage of people who are engaged in a corrupt activity, they become very suspicious, so you have to position the phone in a way that will not make them concentrate on you…(R 8, November 3, 2018).

The study identified a general feeling of fear among respondents, while using smartphones to expose wrongdoings. R5 stated:

All the time, I thought the type of camera I was using might expose me. If it’s not well positioned, people would be able to tell they are being recorded committing a crime or not. That’s what brought about the fear (R 5, October 21, 2018).

4.1.4. Using smartphones to overcome risks

The research showed that respondents used software applications as a way of overcoming danger while using the mobile device in their line of work. These apps enabled them to hide images and videos when they were caught.

The study also found out using several apps like a background video recorder, hidden video recorder, and hidden spy video camera among others was one of the ways of overcoming the risks associated with the use of smartphones for investigative journalism. These apps provided a
safety net for the respondents because of the diversion it created when they were accosted. R10 explained:

…per my device, I just made sure that I run three apps and the other two were just cover up so that I could quickly defend myself and say this is what I'm doing and not what you think (R 10, November 5, 2018).

R2 also added:

It was efficient using the smartphones because of how we were able to hide the video …either than that we would have been easily caught. But, the fact that we used an app that had some features that enabled us to hide the video, it made it easy for us to just get out of that place (R 2, October 23, 2018).

In spite of the associated risks, respondents were of the view that the smartphone was an effective device when used well. This was because it captured considerable acts of wrongdoing for their investigative works. R7 recalled how it saved her from being attacked:

It was quite challenging because it got to a time some customs officers at the port realized that I was videoing them and one of them got the courage to come ask me who I was videoing, but because I was using an app called the background video recorder, I just told them that I was sending a voice note to someone on my phone. But for that background video recording app, I do not know what I would have done. It was quite risky I must say(R 7, October 23, 2018).
4.1.5. Ethical breaches in using smartphones

The study found out that respondents run the risk of breaching ethical codes in the use of smartphones for investigative journalism. The study also showed that, all the respondents had significant knowledge of the Ghana Journalists Association, GJA Code of Ethics and were aware of the implications of flouting it. Some of the respondents conceded that they violated people’s right to privacy by not asking permission before filming them. They however argued that investigative journalism is largely fuelled by public interest considerations, and hence, their obligation is to their audience and not the person committing an illegality. They stated that, although they did not gather evidence by “straight forward, honest means” when using the smartphones, they were acting in the interest of the public. They stated that it would be impossible and absurd to seek permission from a police officer or a customs officer who is taking bribes. R10 stated:

Sometimes, you just feel that someone will spot you and collect the phone, particularly in one instance that I was filming a police officer taking a bribe from a commercial driver. I shot the action for while, but I realized the environment was not conducive so I stopped and went to hide somewhere. In such situations, you are torn between following the rules to protect yourself and being a bit radical by using your discretion, well so you don't fall into danger (R 10, November 5, 2018).

R9 also explained:

For a typical investigative work that usually entails secret recording, there is this thin line between ethics and what an investigative journalist should do to get
information. It is not so clear and for me, I rely on my conscience to determine the right thing to do. So that's what I mean by using your discretion for the public good (R 9, November 3, 2018).

The study found out that the respondents breached article 14 and 17 of the GJA code of ethics. Article 14 and 17 of the GJA code of ethics stipulate that a journalist must “obtain information, videos, data, photographs and illustrations only by honest, straightforward, fair and open means—unless otherwise tampered by public interest considerations as well as respect for individual’s rights to privacy and human dignity” (gjaghana.org, 2009 p.1). The excuse the respondents provided for the breaches is that one cannot seek permission to film someone engaged in wrongdoing. R7 explained that the wrongdoer will not grant such permission:

In journalism, the ethical thing to do before you interview someone or film happenings at an institution, you seek a formal permission before you proceed. But, this is not the case when I use smartphones for videoing wrong acts. I do not give the people prior notice so it’s kind of against my ethics as a journalist (R 7, October 23, 2018).

R8 also stated:

You know that it is against our laws to take pictures of anyone without a prior notice to them, but if it is in the interest of the people of Ghana or people, you have no reason to do that because it runs contrary to the GJA Code of Ethics (R 8, November 3, 2018).
The research showed that the code of ethics does not cover the use of new technology in investigative journalism. Respondents argued that, the ethics in its current state, does not recognize the use of smartphones as tool for gathering evidence. They raised the question of how one can be in breach of the ethics if the framers of the code did not include it. They called for revision of the GJA Code of Ethics adding, there should be a provision that covers embracing new technologies by investigative journalists in their line of work. R8 said:

I think we should apply the same ethics irrespective of the gadgets or device used in gathering and disseminating information. But, framers of the code of ethics must consider revising the rules to cover the use of emerging new technologies (R 8, November 3, 2018).

4.2 Summary of key findings

The use of smartphones appears to have become an integral part in exposing corruption. The study found out that journalists consider mobile device’s multi-purpose function as fundamental in evidence gathering for investigative journalism. This perhaps explains why the respondents recommend the use of smartphones as the first toolkit for beginners. However, it has inherent risks. Once a user pays attention to the dangers associated with using smartphones in the field, the safety can be guaranteed to a certain degree. But, in instances where such precautions are ignored, the investigative journalist exposes him/herself to avoidable risks.
The dependence on secret apps like a background video recorder, hidden video recorder, hidden spy video camera to guarantee safety while using smartphones, was one of the high points that featured strongly in the study. This saved many of the respondents from being arrested or the possibility of being manhandled.

The question of whether ethics must apply to the use of smartphones for investigative journalism was a dilemma for some of the respondents. Journalistic ethics were exercised on the basis of discretion.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Discussion

This study was undertaken to explore how investigative journalists who had participated in an ACILA-Tiger Eye project were using smartphones in their line of work. It also sought to explore the opportunities and challenges the investigative journalists came across in the use of smartphones for their works.

The ethical issues regarding the use of smartphones by investigative journalists were also examined. It also discusses the findings with regard to the theoretical framework, guiding the current research. This chapter also discusses the limitations faced, recommendations for future studies and conclusions.

In order to make the findings of this study meaningful, the research questions were also reviewed. The first research question was to determine the extent to which investigative journalists are using smartphones? The second research question was to determine the challenges and opportunities the use of smartphones provide for them. Thirdly, the study sought to find out whether the use of smartphones poses peculiar ethical dilemmas for them.

5.0.1 RQ 1-What extent does investigative journalists using smartphones?

On the question of how investigative journalists use smartphones in their line of work, two main issues came out. Firstly, the investigative journalists used the smartphones as a tool for evidence gathering especially for their undercover work. The respondents modified the smartphones, from a device they initially used to make voice calls, surf the internet, and send text messages etc, to a tool that enhances investigative work. The mobile device came in handy and easy to use as the
respondents indicated they didn’t require much assistance to use. They were only given expert advice by seasoned investigative journalists brought in to supervise the ACILA-Tiger Eye project on which smartphone applications they needed to use to make their work more effective and safer.

As observed by Osazee-Odia (2016), the in-built features of smartphones like cameras, wireless connection, and recorders make the life of various users easier and gives them the fulfillment they expect. It is evident from the findings that the smartphones did not only serve as an evidence gathering tool, but, also provided the respondents with the convenience of working independently on the data they gathered such as scripting what they had captured on the field, editing the videos and producing the work on the smartphones. It eliminated the cumbersome process usually associated with working with bulky computers in the traditional newsroom. Stevenson & Wright (2016) argues that the familiarity of smartphones apps has an added advantage of users dealing with the fear of new technology, and crafting new approaches of gathering stories. This is a signal of how the multipurpose function of smartphones helped the respondents from the start of their investigative work to finishing the final product after experimenting with the new technology. The respondents in this study did not only use the smartphones when they went on the field to gather data, but, they relied further on the mobile device to store, write their script, edit and produce their stories. The smartphones helped them to achieve the set objective of filming acts of wrongdoing. In other words, they were able to deliver on their task because of the use of the smartphones. Sarwar & Soomro (2013) argue that reliance on smartphones create micro cultures. The findings of the study showed that respondents relied on their smartphones on every story they did signifying an acceptance of the mobile device.
This was influenced by the perceived usefulness they attached to it after using the device. For example, one of the respondents indicated that, he has been using his smartphone to perform similar tasks assigned to him adding, he feels confident using it. When asked whether they would recommend the use of the smartphones to other investigative journalists, all the respondents responded in the affirmative.

The Technology Acceptance Model (1989) suggests that that the behaviour or decisions people make with regard to new technologies is dependent on how useful and easy they are able to use it. In line with this theory, the study found out that the respondents used smartphones for many journalistic activities including capturing videos, producing visual content and writing their stories.

This study also conforms to Casey (2010) research conducted in Ireland, which established that media related technology such as mobile devices have made the job of journalists easier in the gathering evidence for their stories. In the current study it emerged that, after respondents had mastered the use of the highly sophisticated cameras inbuilt into the smartphones, they simply turned on the apps with little effort and the mobile device filmed the acts of wrongdoing. The study found out that the respondents initially lacked the expertise to properly frame and capture scenes they wanted with the smartphones. Other difficulties cited by the respondents were technical glitches as a result of their inexperience in using smartphones for investigative journalism. The study found out that, although respondents encountered difficulties, they still found mobile phones as a useful tool and continued to still rely on them to deliver similar tasks. This supports Davies (1989) argument that if users of new technology find it useful, but, they face some challenges while using it, they will make a decision by weighing the benefits against the difficulties experienced.
This perhaps explains why the respondents, despite the external factors that inhibited their use of the smart phones, still opted for it because of the perceived usefulness.

5.0.2 RQ 2- What challenges and opportunities does using smartphones provide for investigative journalists?

The respondents identified two distinct opportunities and challenges associated with the use of smartphones for investigative works. The study found out that the respondents used smartphones in several ways. One of the main opportunities is that, the smartphones were fundamental to the success of respondents in gathering of evidence for all their stories. This is consistent with Karlsen (2010) views that the smartphones have influenced the work of journalists positively since its emergence. However, the use of smartphones also presented challenges, including risks and dangers to the respondents in their line of work. As observed by Wahl-Jorgensen (2016) the emergence of technologies such as smartphones present a degree of risk to journalists. It is evident that from the findings of this study, some respondents were attacked and manhandled after they were caught using smartphones in collecting evidence. The study established that risk cannot be ruled out of the picture when using smartphones in exposing wrongdoing. This finding, however differed from (Aljazeera, 2012) position that it’s safer using a smartphone in a dangerous terrain than a traditional camera. This position runs contrary to the views expressed in in-depth interviews with respondents who indicated that investigative journalists who underestimate the dangers associated with the use of smartphones for investigative journalism, risk being attacked. Wahl-Jorgensen (2016) concludes these threats stands to discourage investigative journalists from carrying out their watchdog role.
Scott (2016) argues that the size of a smartphone could attract attacks on journalists. The use of the smartphones in the line of duty could bring its user a bad experience if it’s mistaken as an odd-looking device. Consistent with the research conducted by Scott (2016), the study found out that the size of a mobile device could in itself present challenges to respondents when using smartphones for investigative works. Some respondents indicated how such challenges affected the output of their work.

The study also established that, smartphones on the other hand, can offer some degree of protection to a user while investigating a story on the field. The respondents were aware that if they used applications like the background video recorder which shields the image of the subject being filmed, it will guarantee their safety in using smartphones for their work. These applications at the disposal of the investigative journalist become a defence mechanism. The respondents were also able to produce videos anywhere and anytime with the smartphones. Watson (2011) argues that mobile devices eliminate barriers investigative journalists face while working in a hostile environment and ensure their safety through using the right apps.

5.0.3 RQ 3 Does the use of smartphone poses peculiar ethical dilemmas for investigative journalist and how do they navigate it?

Noor (2017) argues that journalists that use smartphones for doing stories hardly respect media ethics. This perhaps explains why the use of smartphones presents an ethical dilemma for many investigative journalists. As noted by Maciá-Barber (2014) the introduction of smartphones’ use into journalistic practise, has brought about ethical abuses.

Though these ethical breaches may not be widespread, it presents a challenge that must be addressed. This is reflected in the findings of this study because though respondents indicated that they are aware of the code of ethics for journalists, they were uncertain which one applies to the use of smartphones. The
key question here is, at what point in time does the smartphone change from being a private communication device to a tool of evidence gathering without breaching rights to privacy? Díaz-Campo & Segado-Boj (2015) argue that moral guidelines are moral guidelines whether the tools of newsgathering are old or new. This is consistent with the argument by the respondents that if investigative journalists are working in the interest of the public, then the device used for gathering evidence should not really matter. Some of the respondents, however were of the view that a clear line must be drawn by revising the code of ethics to determine when using smartphones for investigative journalism breaches privacy. There is an ethical dilemma the respondents were faced with as they couldn’t point out a particular code of ethics laid down by the Ghana Journalists Association which regulates the use of mobile phones.

There was another ethical dilemma of whether using smartphones for investigative journalism represents “fair and straightforward means of gathering information?” The argument raised by some of the respondents was that because they are investigating a wrongdoing, they cannot obtain the information by straightforward means as stipulated in the GJA’s handbook. Others argued that, pretending you are making or receiving voice call and filming a subject with the mobile device amounted to deception. The respondents were therefore divided on what was ethically sound when using smartphones for evidence gathering as an investigative journalist. This agrees with Chari (2013) work in Zimbabwe which argues that journalistic ethics cannot be challenged only by technology, but, new ways in which journalism is being practiced in modern times. He adds that the framers of media ethics should go beyond looking at how emerging technologies are influencing journalistic values, but, the practice as well.
5.2 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of this study is that, it focused on only 10 respondents. The respondents were selected from a media training and therefore, they may not be reflective of the population of investigative journalists in the country. There are few well known investigative journalists and there is no easy way of identifying some of the lesser known ones in the country because they are not in an organised network and there is no database on them. This makes it impossible to generalize the findings.

Another limitation of this study is that, the respondents are new to investigative journalism and therefore may not have as much experience to share as compared to more seasoned ones. Time was also another limitation to finding more respondents to engage for the current study.

A major limitation was finding relevant literature. This hampered the researcher’s ability to draw on, and relate findings of the current study. This research provides literature on investigative journalists using smartphones to gather evidence.

5.3 Recommendations for further studies

Based on the findings discussed above, it is recommended that future studies should be conducted to widen the scope of the research to include more investigative journalists especially established and seasoned ones. This will offer more diverse perspective to guide investigative journalists when using smartphones for their work.

Finally, future studies should consider conducting surveys to solicit the views of what media consumers feel about the use of smartphones for investigative journalism and the ethical breaches that it raises.
5.4 Conclusion

This research explored the use of smartphones for investigative journalism with a focus on its opportunities and challenges as shared by practitioners. The study used the Technological Acceptance Model as the theoretical framework. The study was qualitative and included the use of in-depth interviews to arrive at the objective of the study.

The findings of the study showed that smartphones presented investigative journalists with an opportunity of working without difficulty using the device. Smartphones have moved beyond their primary function of making voice calls and messaging to a significant mobile device that can be used by investigative journalists in their work of exposing wrongdoing. The mobile device provides some degree of cover which ordinarily gadgets like the camera wouldn’t be sufficient to use. In other words, investigative journalists are exploring and taking advantage of the functional purpose of smartphones including capturing of videos, recording audios, writing stories etc to make their work easier.

That notwithstanding, the findings also revealed that the use of smartphones for investigative journalism comes with its attendant risks. The study showed investigative journalists can manage these associated hazards by being surreptitious in how they use smartphones to gather evidence. The handiness of the mobile device and everyday use by ordinary people can help investigative journalists to capture wrongdoing with smartphones without arousing the suspicion of the perpetrators. It’s essential, however, for users to proceed cautiously when using smartphones as a tool of evidence gathering. This is because the use of smartphones for investigative works does not offer absolute cover. For instance, users can be manhandled or their mobile device can be confiscated or destroyed when caught. This can invariably place the life of the investigative
journalist at risk. This study established that these experiences can be a challenge to the idea of using smartphones for investigative journalism.

The findings also revealed that respondents faced an ethical dilemma of breaching the privacy of people when using smartphones for investigative journalism. In as much the population for this study was aware of the code of ethics governing the practise of journalism; there was uncertainty over whether there were ethical violations in using the mobile device. Ethical issues such invasion of privacy or using the appropriate means of gathering information became a dilemma the study established.

Though this study may not be generalizable, it provided some insights into how investigative journalists were using smartphones in their line of work. The findings showed that smartphones can be an effective tool for investigative journalists in exposing corruption. The study provided evidence on investigative journalism and its link to the use of technology in exposing wrongdoing. It also sheds light on some of the opportunities, challenges and ethical constraints the practitioners encountered.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

I am Stephen Nartey, a Masters student from the Department of Communication Studies of the University of Ghana. I am conducting research on the use of smartphones for investigative journalism. I will be most grateful if you will answer the questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and will be used only for academic purposes.

Your participation will be appreciated.

1. Have you used smartphones in your day to day work as an investigative journalist?

2. What did you use the smartphones for?

3. What difficulties did you experience in using it to perform the task you set out to do?

4. How did the use of smartphones improve your work?

5. How did the smartphones enable you to achieve your task?

6. How effective is it to use smartphones as an investigative journalist?

7. What ethics guided your use of smartphones to undertake your work?

8. What specific aspect of the code of ethics for journalists do you think arises when using smartphones in your investigative work?

9. Would you recommend its use by other investigative journalists? Explain why…