

THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS IN A DIGITAL ERA: A STUDY OF *DAILY GRAPHIC AND DAILY GUIDE*

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INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my research work carried out at the School of Communication studies, University of Ghana, Legon. No part of this study has been submitted either in whole or in part for another degree elsewhere. All references cited have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father Mr Jerry Abbey, my mother Mrs Gladys Abbey and my siblings Delphina, Nadia and Claudia Abbey.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank Jehovah God for giving me the strength and wisdom to conduct this study. I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor Audrey Gadzekpo for her time and effort in guiding me throughout the research. I would also like to acknowledge the guidance and encouragement I received from family and friends, I say thank you for your selflessness and support.

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ABSTRACT

The newspaper industry has been an integral part of the Ghanaian society for more than 190 years. Newspapers are very common to the old and youth due to its important role in connecting government with its people. However, since the inception of new media technology, the newspaper industry has been experiencing dwindling sales of hard copies; making it difficult for newspaper organization to generate enough revenue to survive in the digital space. The study used *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* as a case to examine the threats facing newspapers and some strategies newspaper organizations have employed to adjust to current technology and stay relevant.

The study found that before newspapers are sold, most of the top stories were already online. Hence, the ease with which information is accessed online make stories carried by newspapers less interesting, leaving readers with little incentive to purchase them. Using in-depth interviews, the research tackled questions from various perspectives to reach a multi-faceted conclusion.

Despite the decline in sales of newspapers, this research explained why the newspaper industry will not be a 'dying business.' The study revealed that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* have considered easy accessibility and low cost in using the Internet to gather information. Hence, the two newspapers have gone digital to reach the growing number of consumers online. The study also found that, newspapers are keeping the hardcopies interactive by printing out a Quick Response Code (QRC) that easily leads consumers to audios or videos attached to a story. Based on findings of this study, it is recommended that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* must take full advantage of Internet technologies in all phases of newspaper production as well as develop a business model that would compensate for the free readership of online news on newspaper websites.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
CHAPTER ONE:	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.1.1 The Ghanaian Newspaper Industry	3
1.1.2 Newspapers Now and the Digital Media	5
1.2 Problem Statement	7
1.3 Objectives of Study	8
1.4 Research Questions	9
1.5 Significance of the Study	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.0 Introduction	10
2.1 Theoretical Framework	10
2.2 Related Studies.....	13
2.2.1 Influence of Electronic Media on the Print Media.....	14
2.2.2 Online Newspaper and Print Newspaper Readership	16
2.2.3 Financial Implications for Newspapers	19
2.2.4 Survival Strategies of Newspaper Organizations.....	21
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	24
3.0 Introduction	24
3.1 Research Design	24
3.2 Study Population	25
3.2.1 Profile Daily Graphic	26
3.2.2 Profile Daily Guide	28
3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size	29
3.4 Data Collection Instrument	30
3.5 Data Analysis	31

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	33
4.0 Introduction	33
4.1 Threat of Digital Media	33
4.1.1 Decline in Readership	34
4.1.2 Fall in Sales	35
4.1.3 Cost of production	36
4.1.4 Changes in People’s Media Consumption	37
4.2 Strategies That Print Media Employed To Survive the Digital Era	38
4.2.1 Synergy between Print and Digital Media	38
4.2.2 Improved Graphics and Features	39
4.2.3 Commercialization and Diversification to Include Digital Media	40
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	42
5.0 Introduction	42
5.1 Discussion of Key Findings	42
5.2 Limitations of the Study	47
5.3 Recommendation	48
5.4 Conclusion	49

REFERENCE

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives the background of the study by providing details on the Ghanaian newspaper industry and the changing trends in the industry. It also discusses the problem statement, the research objectives and the research questions as well as the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

The newspaper is one of the oldest forms of mass media and has always experienced change as newer forms of mass media are introduced. Newspapers thus coexist with a variety of media like radio, television, magazines and the Internet. These media perform similar and diverse functions based on their specific characteristics (Boamah, 2018).

Newspapers have advantages and disadvantages over other competing media. Unlike other media, the newspaper provides information in hardcopy and can be kept for future reference (Everett, 2011). Another advantage newspapers have over other competing media is that newspapers are portable and this makes it easier to read at one's own pace and time. That notwithstanding, newspapers have some disadvantages which make media consumers choose competing media over them. Such disadvantages include language barrier, absence of audio and videos to complement texts, an advantage which television, radio and the Internet have. Increasingly, some people rely on the Internet for media needs due to easy accessibility (Boamah, 2018).

Newspaper production and advance technology has dramatically changed the nature of news. Globally, advertising revenue for newspapers has dwindled as advertisers seek greater visibility and reach for their messages on the Internet (Oyokunyi, Ita, Ekeanyanwu, Tobeckukwu, Aniebo &Samson, 2017). Some newspaper organization have laid off staff, or reintroduce the identity of the newspaper by migrating from the physical print form to the digital space. Currently, the Internet has changed the nature of news delivery and its practices raising questions as to the true identity of a journalist as a professional (Oyokunyi et. al, 2017).

As the situation continues to be an “ongoing crisis”, the newspaper industry keeps witnessing economics of decline in many parts of the world including big economic countries such as United States and Nigeria. Kurpius, Metzgar, and Rowley (2010) noted that the traditional print media in the United States are shrinking and gradually causing economic crisis. Curran (2010) provides further facts to back up the economic recession in the print media industry stressing that the movement of advertisement to the Internet, has led to a rising number of newspaper closures. Ukonu, Ani, and Ndubisi (2013) also found that the Nigerian print media industry has suffered a major setback with the emergence of digital forms of news dissemination. Ekeanyanwu (2013) added that the shift from hard copy newspapers to the Internet has become very worrisome especially in Nigeria where newspapers play significant roles in the socio-political development of the nation

Despite the economics of decline, the rise of the Internet has enormously impacted the situation as it led to the “hemorrhaging of paid jobs in journalism” (Curran, 2010). This draws attention from primary concern of journalism to financial sustainability. In Nigeria for instance, the commercialization of news has become inevitable for the same reason of financial sustainability (Ekeanyanwu, Tobeckukwu, Batta, Herbert, Oyokunyi &Ita, 2017).

In recent times, newspapers are facing challenges due to the advent of the Internet and the digital age (Bresinger, Gullan, & Chakars, 2014). As a result of access to “free news” online and a reduction in sales of newspapers, newspapers seem to be on the verge of extinction (Ahiabenu, 2015). There is therefore, an increasing concern about the future of the newspaper industry among managers, editors and academics. Currently, over 50 percent of the world’s total population are mobile phone users sending over 8.7 trillion text messages annually with a chunk of the messages being news stories (Ahiabenu, 2015).

Doyle (2013) argued that there is a swift spread of digital technology and Internet usage in the United Kingdom. These new technologies have spurred the transformation in many industries including the newspaper industry; thus the idea ‘creative destruction’ as coined by Schumpeter, an Austrian economist. Traditional print titles or newspapers have suffered extensive losses in readership and revenues to the point where some have undergone or faced the prospect of closure (Hume, 2012). Nevertheless, scholars such as Fenez and Van der (2009) argue that the move from print or hardcopy newspapers to electronic media is a good stride, with the possibility of achieving sustainability. Fenez and Van der’s (2009) argument is as a result of their idea that the Internet helps to reduce forest resources that are invested in the production of newspapers.

1.1.1 The Ghanaian newspaper industry

Newspapers in Ghana have played key roles in political discourse, national identity, culture and national development. Emerging in the 19th century, newspapers have given voice to popular campaigns for independence struggles, national solidarity, and democracy throughout the twentieth century, establishing a distinguished history of political activism for Ghanaian media (Amadu, Mohammed. A, Alhassan & Mohammed, F. 2018).

The first newspaper published in Ghana was *The Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer*, from 1822 to 1825 by Sir Charles MacCarthy, governor of the British Gold Coast settlement (Gadzekpo, 2007). It provided information to European merchants and civil servants in the colony, helped promote literacy rates and also encouraged rural development among the local population. The appropriation of print media production by local African elites began in the mid-19th century with the publication of *The Accra Herald* by Charles Bannerman. *The Accra Herald* started as a hand-written newspaper and it marked the genesis of African-owned and edited newspapers in the Gold Coast. A press that was not beholden to the state but managed by private indigenous entrepreneurs (Gadzekpo, 2008). After 16 years of survival, other indigenous newspapers such as the *Gold Coast Times*, *Western Echo*, *Gold Coast Assize*, *Gold Coast News*, *Gold Coast Aborigines*, *Gold Coast Chronicle*, *Gold Coast People*, *Gold Coast Independent*, and *Gold Coast Express* emerged (Gadzekpo, 2008).

Early newspapers in Ghana, were privately-owned until 1958 when Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister of Ghana introduced the first state-owned newspaper which was *Ghanaian Times*. Eventually, the newspaper scene became state dominated. In 1992, Rawlings lifted the newspaper licensing law, allowing for the re-emergence of the private press in the early 1990s. Newspapers such as *The Independent*, *The Ghanaian Chronicle*, *The Free Press*, and *Statesman* gave voice to the angry opposition silenced in years of repression, prompting Rawlings to repeatedly denounce the private media as politically irresponsible and selfishly motivated by profit.

According to the National Media Commission (NMC), Ghana has 106 newspapers (11 dailies, 67 weeklies, 23 bi-weeklies and 5 tri-weeklies). Currently, the daily newspapers published in Ghana include; *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Guide*, *Ghanaian Times* and *The Ghanaian*. The other newspapers which are published weekly, bi-weekly and tri-weekly are *Business Guide*, *Business and Financial*

Times, The Finder, Daily Statesman, Graphic Sports, The Evening News, Catholic Standard, The Herald, Ghanaian Observers and The Spectator. Most of these newspapers, take news coverage on topics such as business, sports, politics, education, lifestyle as well as culture and religion. Some of these newspapers are politically aligned and are noted for publishing untruths for political gains. A media measurement survey report in 2018 indicated that the leading newspapers in Ghana are *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* followed by *The Ghanaian Times*. According to the report, *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* have a daily readership of about 2.2 million.

1.1.2 Newspapers and the digital media

Since the emergence of the ‘World Wide Web’ or Web 2.0 popularly known as the Internet, there has been a competition between newspapers and the Internet and this has revised the way news is distributed (Boamah, 2018). Newspapers have been forced to integrate with the Web and now approximately 80 percent of newspaper publishers in Ghana have integrated the web and print operations as well as radio and television broadcasts (Boamah, 2018). Also, the advent of online news channels has hindered the thriving of many newspapers that proliferated the Ghanaian newspaper industry (Boah-Mensah, 2009). The increasing importance of the Internet and related technologies has meant a massive increase in the volume of information audiences can access and process, while the time available for readers more or less remains constant (Holm, Gunzel & Parm, 2013). Innovators in the newspaper industry have reacted quickly to the demands of their readers to make news available online (OECD, 2010). Practically in Ghana, all the major newspapers have launched websites and have started publishing their contents online.

In many parts of the world, newspaper sales are also recording a decline (Ahiabenu, 2015). According to a report in *The Guardian*, a British newspaper named *The Daily Express* sold an

average of 391,626 copies daily in December 2016. This was reduced by 2.3 percent on the same month the year before. Also, *The Daily Mirror* went down by 11.7 percent to an average sale of 716,923 copies daily in 2017. Decline in sales of newspapers is due to the following reasons: a declining revenue due to loss of advertising, stiff competition from an online outlet, the increasing cost of production and the rise of electronic media (Ahiabenu, 2015). However, as readership migrates to online platforms, newspapers are no longer the ‘cash cows’ as they used to be for their owners and investors (Soloski, 2013). Thus, multimedia diversification has become one of the most frequent growth strategies of newspaper companies (Soloski, 2013). Media outlets are increasingly getting integrated with what media economists call multimedia groups that comprise a newspaper, its online edition, a local radio station, a local television station and an advertising sales company (Kuwornu, 2014). In Ghana, the case of the *Daily Guide Network* is a clear example of a multimedia group. Contained in the group is an existing newspaper, ‘*Daily Guide*’, an online presence, ‘*Daily Guide Network*’, a radio station called ‘*Guide Radio*’ and a television station named *DGN (Daily Guide Network)* with national coverage.

Increasingly, news organizations have employed the Web as an outlet to accommodate a growing number of people who seek news online. An annual report released by global digital agencies in 2018 indicated that over 10 million Ghanaians use the Internet as a source of information on local, national, and international events, which is a trend that will likely continue. Also, millions of people seek news through newspaper affiliated websites (Jesdanun, 2009).

The Internet has revolutionized information gathering and dissemination. Talabi (2011) asserted that the Internet changes the face of communication thus, journalists are beginning to have a new way of packaging and disseminating news to the public. Previously, newspapers were providing

audience with headlines and articles a day after an event. Today, the presence of the Internet has made it possible for online versions of newspapers to attach videos and audios to headlines and articles which are published on their online platforms the same day of an event. This means that the competition for news stories is more intense than ever before, and there is enormous pressure to distinguish one newspaper organization from the other.

According to a survey conducted by Pew Research (2010), the Internet has surpassed newspapers in terms of popularity as a news platform and ranks just behind television. The Pew Internet survey also concluded that peoples' relationship to news is becoming portable and participatory because people carry information on mobile devices and are able to give feedback and share comments about a topic of discussion. The survey found that 33 percent of mobile phone owners read newspapers on their mobile phones, and 37 percent of Internet users disseminate news content via postings on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. In response to the changing business environment, a rapidly growing number of people use mobile technologies to read news online rather than buy hard copy newspapers (Pew Research, 2010).

1.2 Problem Statement

The newspaper industry has been an important avenue for news consumption in Ghana. In the past, people turned to it as the only valid source of news (Franklin, 2012). Currently, the newspaper industry is operating in an era of digitization where the majority prefer to be online reading news on tablets, phones or computers, rather than buying newspapers. Digital and electronic services such as online television, radio and encyclopaedia have brought very intensive rivalry among the print and the electronic media (Afrifa, 2015). This is gradually posing serious challenges ranging

from changing trends in advertising, a decline in circulation as well as economic constraints facing newspapers (Kumornu, 2014).

There have been several studies conducted on newspaper and digitization in developed countries. However, not much empirical research has been conducted on how newspaper organizations in African countries such as Ghana are confronting new media and its challenges as well as the opportunities associated with it. The few studies conducted also focused on audiences' perspectives of newspaper operations in the face of digitization.

This study therefore seeks to fill a gap in literature by exploring the strategies being adopted by newspaper organizations in Ghana, to maintain their relevance in the era of digitization.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of the study is to investigate how newspapers specifically (*Daily Graphic and Daily Guide*) position their newspaper to ensure it survives in this era of digitization and beyond.

The specific objectives are to;

- explore the challenges facing *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* in this era of digitization
- find out the strategies *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* employ to survive challenges in the face of digitization
- explore the future of the newspaper industry in Ghana

1.4 Research Questions

From the objectives, the following research questions were posed to give directions to the study and provide essential and relevant information to understanding the research topic. The research questions answered in this research were:

1. What are the challenges *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* encounter because of digitization?
2. How are *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* positioning themselves to survive challenges in the face of digitization?
3. What is the future of the newspaper industry in Ghana?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important to the Ghanaian newspaper industry in many ways. To begin with, it will provide useful information for researchers interested in understanding how the newspaper industry in Africa especially Ghana operate efficiently to maintain their relevance in the face of digitization. Second, it will help identify some opportunities as well as some policies that could be enforced to address certain challenges facing the newspaper industry in Ghana.

The study will also highlight current and possible future threats encountered by the newspaper industry in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first part addresses the mediamorphosis theory and its relations to the study. The second part examines and reviews some studies related to this research. Several studies were reviewed to assess the views of various scholars on challenges facing the newspaper industry, factors that account for the growth of the industry and the effect of electronic media on newspapers.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by the mediamorphosis theory. Mediamorphosis is the transformation of communication media, usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures and social and technological innovations (Fidler, 1990). The theory helps to understand how media, technology and communication are all interconnected. The mediamorphosis theory provides a structure for understanding the potential influences of Internet technology or new media innovations on newspaper organizations in different social contexts. Propounded by Roger Fidler (1990), the theory states that a new medium does not lead to the death of an old one since it can adapt and even coexist with the new medium for improved performance. The mediamorphosis theory, also known as the ‘digital metamorphosis’ theory, explains and estimates the changes in the digital world and its culture. As Fidler (1990) has argued, ‘new media’ is created to update and upgrade the old media where technology is constantly changing, and evolving from time to time.

The term mediamorphosis used by Fidler (1997) means the development of the digital world. In other words, it refers to the evolvement and the adaptation processes of the new media by old

media. The mediamorphosis theory emphasizes that new media transforms old media (newspaper) into something better and does not necessarily lead to its death. Fidler (1997) argued that old media is the cause of new media and that old media never goes but grows into something more desirable for humans to have or use. He noted that new media do not arise spontaneously and independently but emerge gradually from the metamorphosis of old media. The theory stated that the established forms of communication media must change in response to the emergence of a new medium else their only option is to die.

Fidlers' (1990) theory provides a unified way of thinking about the technological evolution of newspapers in different social contexts, which can be useful in understanding what is happening to newspapers in Ghana. The theory illustrates six fundamental principles of mediamorphosis, which help to contextualize the transformation processes of the newspaper industry. It also shows how older media can coexist and survive in spite of the emergence of a new medium. The six principles underpinning the theory are:

- Coexistence and coevolution of media forms
- Metamorphosis of new media forms from old ones
- Propagation of dominant traits in media forms
- Survival of media forms
- Opportunity and needs for adopting new media
- Delayed adoption.

The coexistence and coevolution of media forms principle state that all forms of media coexist with other media and that these media coevolve and influence over time and develop their existing forms. In other words, old forms of media influence the new forms of media. Metamorphosis itself

simply means that every emerging medium came about through a gradual process, transforming from an existing medium. Here, a new medium helps the older medium to adapt and hence becomes stronger and helps it to survive.

Fiddler (1997) points out that the propagation of dominant traits in media forms is when emerging forms of media transmit dominant traits from earlier forms. These traits are then passed on and spread to the new media. For example, newspapers were already positioning articles and headlines in their hard copies, similarly, they developed websites that also feature articles and headlines as well as videos on a particular topic of discussion. The survival of media forms principle states that, all forms of communication media, as well as media enterprises, must continue to adapt and evolve for survival in a changing environment rather than die. At this point, new mediums improve older mediums and adapt features of older mediums for survival. The principle of opportunity and needs for adopting new media states that, new media do not succeed because of their technological benefit and how easily people adapt to their usage rather, there is a market opportunity that includes social, political, economic or other factors. The sixth principle, that is, delayed adoption states that new technologies always take longer than expected to attain commercial success.

For this study, since every emerging medium comes about through a gradual process that transforms from an existing medium, it is essential to understand how the adoption of the Internet by *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* has impacted positively or negatively on their operations. Ekharefo et al. (2013), noted that, the adoption of various information communication technologies in newspaper operations directly or indirectly cause change. The theory will help in discussing how the Internet has helped *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* to survive in the digital era.

Fidler (1997) noted that the commercial success of a new technology takes long, usually between 20 to 30 years. Hence, Fidler (1997) is in consonance with Saffo's (1992) notion of the 30-year rule; which states that the amount of time required for new ideas to fully seep into a culture has constantly been around for about three decades. There are three stages in the 30-year rule. The first stage occurs in the first decade with little perceived needs. The second stage proceeds to the second decade with increasing market penetration. Finally, the third stage, which occurs during the third decade, deals with the final acceptance of new media. Despite the rule, Fidler (1997) argued that new mediums do not develop on their own, rather they morph from something that already exists. As such, both new and old medium co-exist to create an effective media space rather than destroy one. This is a useful argument to consider in discussions on how some Ghanaian newspapers have tried to survive in the face of digitization.

2.2 Related Studies

This section of the chapter reviews the available literature on newspapers and their operations in the digital era. It reviews scholarly articles on media in general, challenges facing the newspaper industry, how the electronic media affects newspaper accessibility, factors that account for the growth of newspaper as well as some concepts on newspapers in the digital era. The review focuses on four distinct themes, namely:

- Influence of electronic media on the print media
- Online newspaper and print newspaper readership
- Financial implications for newspapers
- Survival strategies of newspaper organizations

2.2.1 Influence of Electronic Media on the Print Media

In a study conducted by Chari (2011), a combination of survey and in-depth interviews were conducted to gain insights into the prospects of printed newspapers in the Internet age in Zimbabwe. Chari (2011) asserted that technology portends the demise of printed newspapers due to competition presented by online editions, therefore the study examined newspaper reading habits in Zimbabwe in order to ascertain the impact of the Internet on the 10 main newspapers which are; *The Herald, Sunday Mail, Standard, Zimindepend, Zimbabwean, Fingaz, SundayNews, Chronicle, Kwaedza and Umuthunywa*. The study revealed that the internet has transformed the media landscape and has produced new practices whose impact on the printed newspaper could be described as contradictory. Chari (2011) argued that the internet is a blessing for small African publications that are now able to assert their presence globally through online editions thus, improving their readership. However, the same technology foretold the demise of printed newspapers due to competition presented by the online editions (Chari 2011). Chari (2011) concluded that while considerable interest is shown for the newspaper website, the print newspaper is far from extinction and the relationship between online news websites and printed newspapers is complimentary.

A similar study on the impact of new media on traditional mainstream mass media was conducted in Malaysia by Salman, Ibrahim, Abdullah, Mustaffa and Mahbob (2011). The study revealed that the advent of new media has posed a challenge to conventional media; as such the effect of new media on traditional media, is felt on the circulation of print newspapers. However, Salman et al. (2011) argued that just as radio and television did not replace newspapers, the presence of the Internet will also not replace newspapers, as a result, Malaysian newspapers still attract advertising dollars even with the presence of online newspapers. This emphasizes the point that both the

Internet and the printed newspapers reinforce each other (Salman et al. 2011). They further argued that even if there is a drop in circulation, it would be because the younger generation prefers the new media as they are more interactive compared to the online version of the mainstream.

Their findings indicated that the decline in circulation of newspapers in Malaysia may be attributed to issues of credibility as some think that the mainstream newspapers are too government-friendly and serve as propaganda tools (Salman et al. 2011). They thus concluded that the effect of the new media on conventional media is still manageable and that since some conventional media had online versions, they would continue to coexist and reinforce each other (Salman et al. 2011).

Igbokwe, Obidike and Ezeji (2012) also conducted a study to investigate the influence of electronic media on the reading habits of pupils in Nigeria. They adopted a descriptive survey design and interviewed four teachers. From their discussions, it was clear that electronic media in one way or the other affects the traditional mode of communication which includes newspapers. However, they found that the decreasing influence of the print media has to do with some basic factors such as people's inability to read more of the printed forms of information. Ezeji (2012) also noted that the benefits derived from electronic media do not outweigh the benefit derived from the print media; in that, they both operate effectively in their ways and produce good content that allows them to depend on each other for information.

The researchers explained that some earlier studies conducted revealed that in the near future the print media will be replaced by the electronic media because of its convenient nature. The move to digital media has been very slow (Igbokwe et al. 2012). However, the researchers argued that digital media may rise over print media.

Economics of Decline and Survival Strategies of Nigerian Print Media Industry: A Study of The Guardian, The Sun, and Leadership Newspapers*

Also, Ekeanyanwu, Tobeckwu, Aniebo and Samson (2017) in their study revealed that even though newspapers continued to interface between the people and the government, the economics of decline that affected the industry globally has also manifested in Nigeria. Using in-depth interviews to collect data from senior editors of the three newspapers that were sampled; they found that newspapers are truly facing a bigger threat of extinction and that the survival strategies adopted by them to stay afloat are inadequate. Their study recommended that an economic template that may involve mergers and acquisitions, shift in traditional news gathering methods, exploring local language publications among others should be embraced by the industry if it must survive beyond 2030.

2.2.2 Online newspaper and print newspaper readership

Adima (2015) investigated the impact of online newspaper readership on newspaper production process in Nigeria. The study sampled 110 members of staff of *The Tide Drawn* through stratified random sampling. Data was collected through administering a questionnaire, which was responded to on a scale of “Yes”, “No”, and “Not Aware”. The study found that online newspaper readership influences the newsgathering stage of newspaper production in Nigeria in that reporters in newspaper organizations that publish both print and online versions are not only cognizant of online news readers in the course of newsgathering, but also make use of user-generated contents from online news readers as sources of information.

On the other hand, Adima (2015) noted that online newspaper readership does not have any impact on the news editing stage of newspaper production in Nigeria. The editors sampled did not require reporters to file stories in ways that made it suitable for online reading nor did they shorten or

rewrite stories to be published online having regard to the universally accepted difference between online and print newspaper readers. The study revealed that the reduction in the number of print copies that goes into daily circulation was not attributable to the online readership of newspapers. The study recommended that Nigerian newspaper organizations should take full advantage of the internet technologies in all phases of newspaper production as well as develop a business model that would compensate for the free readership of online news on newspaper websites.

However, Mathew, Ogedebe and Adeniji (2013) investigated the readership of online newspapers in North-Eastern Nigeria. Data for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire from 150 respondents made up of students, civil servants, private-sector workers and petty traders. Their findings revealed that the majority of respondents, which was 78.86 percent read newspapers and out of that 53.44 percent read online newspapers because they were up-to-date, current and cheaper compared to the traditional newspaper.

Some scholars have also studied some factors that motivate newsreaders to choose between online and print media at any point in time. Oliha and Arthur (2014) found that, while the print media is chosen over online media when it comes to in-depth, quality and reliable information, a majority of respondents preferred the online media to the print media because the former is affordable, immediate, interactive, available and convenient. Using a survey approach, Oliha and Arthur (2014) carried out the study to evaluate the preferred medium for news and information dissemination. They established that print media is dwindling as concluded many preferred the Information Communication Technology-based media. Their study indicated that the advent of the internet has

made news or information media industries, the most preferable and more of a social life that the readership audience have adopted as an opportunity to globally seek for news in diverse media.

Oley and Chile (2015) in their study on reader's perception of newspapers on the internet, examined the subject using a survey study method. They found out that 51 percent of the respondents still bought the printed copies of newspapers after reading their online versions. The study indicated that in spite of the benefits of the Internet, many Nigerians would still not fancy the reading of newspapers online because they believe that any faceless individual can post whatever he likes on the internet for public consumption.

On the other hand, a study was also conducted by Ogan (2014) at Port Harcourt in Nigeria. The researcher adopted a survey research method and sampled 156 respondents on the online readership of newspapers and newspaper circulation index. The study showed that "a greater percentage of Port Harcourt residents read newspapers online more than they read traditional newspapers" because online newspapers are convenient, recent and cheap.

Talabi (2011), in his study, examined the implication of new technology on the practice of journalism especially the use of Internet to produce, disseminate and receive information. The study adopted the basis of McLuhan's theory of technological determinism to justify the work that more emphasis will be on the medium as technology advances in the global village. Talabi (2011) revealed that online versions provide more information and in some cases provide video clips and a series of pictures, unlike the print versions which have limited pages. He noted that the Internet is much more interesting as it provides journalists with multimedia platforms.

Findings from Talabi, 2011 showed that media audience turn to the internet for information. As a result, they develop online communities and discuss the stories created by mainstream media. Talabi (2011) noted that these online communities produce participatory journalism, grassroots reporting, annotative reporting, commentary and fact-checking which the mainstream media such as newspapers later feed upon to develop a pool of tips for story ideas. Also, Talabi (2011) recommended media houses to train their staff on online journalism while the government should provide an enabling environment in the rural areas so journalists can get reports in such areas to keep the newspapers more active.

Chyi and Huang (2011) in their study on demystifying the demand relationship between online and print products uncovered a universal pattern regarding the often misunderstood demand relationship between online and print products in one newspaper brand in Taiwan. A survey was conducted to collect data from 7706 web users. Chyi and Huang (2011) confirmed that more people consumed the print edition of *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times*, *United Daily* and *China Times* over free Web offerings and readers of the online edition were more likely to read the same newspaper's print edition. Thus, the study revealed that rather than getting rid of the print edition, the online edition helped the print edition to thrive simultaneously.

2.2.3 Financial implications for newspapers

Sales that newspaper organizations make from their publications are very important for the sustainability of the business. While increased sales will make a newspaper organization achieve economies of scale, a decline in sales will hinder the growth and sustainability of businesses.

Wairimu (2018) examined the impact of social media on print journalism, with a focus on *The Star*, a Kenyan daily newspaper owned by Radio Africa Group. The study investigated how the

advent of new media namely Facebook, Twitter, among other platforms, has affected newspaper circulation, readership, style of reporting and the extent to which newsroom has been reorganized to respond to social media influx. The study employed a qualitative approach and analyzed resultant data thematically. Observation and key informant interviews were used to generate the data collected.

Findings from the study revealed that *The Star* newspaper's market share was declining due to competition from social media content. Lack of compelling articles, inability by some editors to adjust to the reality of the day, lack of innovative strategies of selling the paper were cited as some of the factors that hinder the paper from reclaiming its market (Wairimu, 2018). The study found that despite the challenges, *The Star* is coming up with new strategies for reaching a wider audience. The findings conclude that social media has affected the sales of print newspapers.

Wairimu (2018) noted that although the older generation of readers accustomed to print newspaper continues to buy the product, young people, who are in the majority, rely on Facebook and Twitter for news, which has led to a decline in sales and newspaper circulation. The study argued that even though social media complement newspapers, it raises concerns such as plagiarism which brings down the image of the identified newspaper and in effect people do not get attracted to the stories and the newspaper as a whole. The study recommended newspapers to build the capacity of its staff to enable them adapt to new emerging demands of social media, especially in content generation to boost print sales.

Graham and Smart (2010) also studied the impact of the internet on different value activities in a newspaper supply chain. They adopted the case study approach and obtained data from three newspaper companies in the United Kingdom. Their study revealed that the internet has led to

falling advertising revenues and dwindling circulations. Due to this, some newspaper organizations reacted by developing online news services, which did not have the high distribution costs but enable the customization of editorial and advertising content, and facilitate the co-creation of news content with consumers (Graham & Smart 2010). However, they noted that moving online had not fully compensated for the losses in revenues because readers are still reluctant to pay for online content. The study found out that income from the sale of online advertising space is significantly lower than for the printed form.

2.2.4 Survival strategies of newspaper organizations

Udenze's (2018) study on print media and the challenges of social media revealed that the newspaper industry is struggling to survive amid the technological revolution that has engulfed the media landscape. Udenze (2018) used a qualitative method to gather data. The study was anchored on the technology determinism theory which states that media technologies shape how individuals in a society think, feel and act and how a society operates as we move from one technology age to another.

Udenze (2018) noted that although consumption of news from television has affected sales of newspapers, the advent of digital media has also brought new dimensions to the media world. The researcher explained that the rise of social media and online news poses a challenge to the traditional newspaper model in which professional journalists act as guardians and privileged distributors of (scarce) information. Findings from the study indicated that there had been a paradigm in media convergence. Hence, traditional media now converges on new media to keep its relevance in this digital era.

Abubakar, Abdulmutallib, Abubakar and Yahaya (2015) used a qualitative methodology to evaluate challenges at the various departments (editorial, production, accounting and circulation) of *Daily Trust* newspaper in Nigeria. The study used interviews as well as personal observation methods to generate primary data. The researchers found that the *Daily Trust* newspaper has challenges with technology, staff poaching and adaptability of new media. The researchers recommended among other things, that for the newspaper to avoid trailing the path of dead publications, it should endeavor to meet the genuine demands of the internal staff that will enhance their productivity and stop them from poaching institutions that teach printing technology.

Price (2015) also explored the challenges facing the newspaper industry in Asia and Europe. He argued that social media is also disrupting the newspaper industry by allowing consumers to disaggregate their preferences. He noted that newspapers have long acted as aggregators, combining general news with coverage of sports, business, and entertainment among others. However, the role of newspapers is being taken over by services such as Yahoo and Google. The news-related benefits of Internet-powered platforms such as Google and Facebook could compensate for the declining revenues in newspapers. However, Talabi (2011) asserts that Internet audiences are responsible for the predicaments of traditional media. Today's journalism finds itself at a rare moment in history where, its dominant role as the gatekeeper of news is now threatened; not only by new technology and competitors but by the audience it serves (Talabi, 2011).

Ekeanyanwu, Tobeckukwu, Batta, Herbert, Oyokunyi and Ita (2017) also studied the economies of decline in the media industry. They focused on the survival strategies American Print Media Firms adopted and its implications for a diminishing print media in Nigeria. Using the qualitative method, they gathered data through in-depth interviews and on-site observation of the operations

of the selected media organizations. The researchers found that American print media industry adopted strategies such as having online editions, use of pay wall, free online views, Search Engine Optimization and Micro-funding to deal with the economic recession. They concluded that the Nigerian print media industry could apply similar strategies used in the US to address its own negative economic situation. Their findings recommended an improvement in media training to address some of these concerns effectively.

The literature reviewed indicated that newspapers currently have an online presence where audiences could read, watch and listen to any information displayed. In relation to this study, the reviewed literature provided an understanding of what is already known about newspaper operations in the digital era and this informed the study on how new media platforms promote the endorsement of a two-way communication model, which challenges the traditional practices of journalism that are based on one-way communication.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section describes and justifies the methodology and techniques employed in this study. It begins with a discussion on the research design and an explanation of the type of methodology used for the study. The chapter also describes the population and details the sampling techniques employed. It also discusses the data collection instrument.

3.1 Research Design

The research design for the study is qualitative and the type employed is the ‘phenomenology qualitative design’. Phenomenology is a study of phenomena be it events, situations, experiences or concepts. This specific method describes something that exists as an integral part of the world in which we are living (Astalin, 2013). The phenomenology method was used because the study explored the happenings and predicted the future state of newspapers in Ghana in this digitalized era.

The study used *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* as a case to investigate the challenges and strategies adopted to keep newspapers relevant as well as project the status of the Ghanaian newspaper industry. These two newspaper organizations were used as a case because they are the leading newspapers in the country. According to a survey conducted by GeoPoll in 2018, *Daily Graphic* topped the popular daily newspaper in Ghana with 1.5 million readers per day. It also has a circulation rate of more than 100,000 copies daily. Also the survey indicated that *Daily Guide* is the second largest after *Daily Graphic* with a daily readership of 726,000. It is the most widely

circulated private newspaper in Ghana with a market share of about 15 percent of the newspaper industry as of January 2018.

The phenomenology method allows data to be collected in the form of in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are usually conducted to critically examine the extent to which one major factor in the growth or decline of newspapers helps to sustain and develop the newspaper industry (Kuwornu, 2014). Wimmer and Dominick (2013) noted that in-depth interviews generally use small samples and provide detailed background information about the respondents' answers to questions. In other words, in-depth interviews provide more comprehensive information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys and content analysis. The study specifically chose in-depth interview because unlike focus group discussions and other qualitative approaches such as ethnography and case study, in-depth interviews have been found to be very relevant because it paves way for greater opportunity to ask follow-up questions, probe for additional information, and circle back to key questions later on in the interview to generate a rich understanding of attitudes, perceptions and motivations among others (Jamshed, 2014; Cleary, Horsfall & Hayter, 2014).

3.2 Study population

A population refers to the aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected (Babbie, 2014). Odhiambo (2015) noted that departments in newspaper organizations are based on specialization, where different job descriptions are placed together or set apart depending on the specific target. In this study, the structure of the two newspaper organizations are different, hence they both have different number of departments and different names for each department.

The population of the study comprised workers at three departments of *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*. These departments are the Editorial Department in *Daily Guide* (which is called the Newspaper Department at *Daily Graphic*), the Sales and Production Department in *Daily Guide* (named Marketing and Sales Department at *Daily Graphic*) as well as the Pre-press and Designing Department in *Daily Guide* (known as the Technical Department at *Daily Graphic*). These departments were chosen because workers there play an integral role in the design and development of newspapers. The researcher was thus interested in finding out if digitization poses challenges in the development and design of newspapers and the strategies they employ to address such challenges.

The editorial department, for example, was chosen because it is responsible for the newspaper's content and appearance. Also, the sales and circulation department was selected since it is responsible for promoting the papers. As such, the department makes decisions about current and emerging factors that will enhance sales of the papers. This, therefore, places them in a good position to answer questions on how digitization affects production and sales of newspaper-a phenomenon which is being explored by this study. Finally, the pre-press and design department was chosen because they also play a crucial role in the design and layout of the newspapers.

The total number of workers in the sampled department at *Daily Graphic* is **268** and that for *Daily Guide* is **64**. As a result, the population for the study is $268 + 64 = 332$.

3.2.1 Profile of Daily Graphic

Daily Graphic has a population of 340 workers with 8 departments. The departments consist of Newspaper, Technical, Marketing and Sales, Finance, Human Resource and Administration, Internal Audit, Regions and Legal Department. The newspaper department is made up of 118

people who deal with the processing of the main products of Graphic Communication Group Limited (GCGL). They handle all issues related to the newspaper itself. The department consists of editors and news reporters working on the various brands of the GCGL that are; *Daily Graphic*, *Junior Graphic*, *The Mirror*, *Graphic Business*, *Graphic Sports* and *Graphic Showbiz*. The technical department is made up of 112 workers who are in charge of machines used in producing the newspapers as well as gadgets used for the day-to-day activities of the company. Under the technical department is the Pre-press and Designing department which is in charge of designing all images and artworks for the newspapers. They consist of online editors and other information technology experts who handle all technical issues.

The marketing and sales department also has a population of 38 workers. They are in charge of promoting the brand and selling products of the GCGL. The department consists of the sales and circulation manager who helps to keep track of daily sales of the newspaper. The Finance department also manages and tracks revenue. It consists of 15 people who help to disburse monthly payments and ensure that the company does not run at a loss. The Internal Audit department consisting of 10 people, works together with the finance office to manage financial resources.

The human resource and Administration department takes care of workers' welfare. The 23-member department works hand-in-hand to recruit, prepare or update employment records and coordinates the administrative functions of the organization. The Legal department consists of 21 people. The department takes charge of strategy integration and implementation as well as deals with legal issues. The Regions department consists of 54 workers. They manage the affairs of the company in various regions.

The sum of all workers in the three departments (Newspaper Department, Marketing and Sales Department, Technical Department) selected under *Daily Graphic* is $(118 + 112 + 38) = 268$

3.2.2 Profile of Daily Guide

The *Daily Guide* has a population of 250 workers and 6 departments namely: Administration, Editorials, Accounting, Pre-press and Design, Production and Circulation, and Security. The administration department is made up of 6 people who control the day-to-day running of the company. They are in charge of drafting letters, scheduling meetings and handling issues related to welfare and human resource. The editorial department is also made up of 36 people consisting of 20 employees who are either editors or news reporters. They search for the news, compile, correct mistakes and determine how the news should appear in the paper. Additionally, the editorial department has sub-divisions such as the “Wembly” department consisting of 6 people and a transport department made up of 10 people. Workers at the “Wembly” department are in charge of proof-reading the papers before it is published.

The accounts department is made of 7 people who manage all financial affairs of the organization, from salary to petty cash. The Pre-press and Designing department is in charge of designing all images and artwork in the newspapers. There are 4 website administrators in this department and their job is to design the layout for online content. The Production and Circulation department, made up of 24 people, is the department that ensures the newspapers are printed, widely circulated, distributed and sold to several companies. The Security department guards the company to ensure there are no thieves or dangers in the workplace. They are made up of 5 people.

The sum of all workers in the three departments (Editorial Department, Sales and Production Department, Pre-press and Designing Department) selected under *Daily Guide* is $(36 + 4 + 24) = 64$.

3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

For this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents based on the objectives of the study. A purposive sample is one subjectively selected by the researcher (Wimmer and Dominick, 2013). Purposive sampling selects subjects based on specific characteristics or qualities. The method is usually used when a researcher seeks one or more specific predefined groups. This type of sampling starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is therefore selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. The researcher purposively sampled 3 departments and 6 people each from the *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*.

At the *Daily Graphic*, the study purposively sampled workers from the newspaper department, marketing and sales department as well as the technical department that included members at the pre-press and designing unit. Out of the total number of 118 workers in the newspaper department, the study sampled 4. Also, one worker was sampled at the marketing and sales department out of the 112 workers to address issues concerning circulation figures and finally, from the technical department, one worker was sampled out of the 34 workers. The number of people selected from the newspaper department was 6. They were the managing editor and 3 journalists, the sales and circulation manager and the website administrator. The total number of workers purposively sampled from these three departments was $4+1+1= 6$.

Similarly, at *Daily Guide*, the study purposively sampled workers from the editorial department, circulation and production department, as well as the pre-press and designing department. Out of the total number of 36 workers in the editorial department, the study sampled 4 people: the managing editor and three journalists. Also, the sales and circulation manager was purposively sampled at the circulation and production department out of the 24 workers in that department to address issues concerning circulation figures. At the pre-press and designing department which consisted of 4 workers, the website administrator was sampled. The total number of workers purposively sampled from these 3 departments was $4+1+1= 6$

In all, the study purposively sampled 12 workers from editorial (newspaper), sales and production (marketing and sales), as well as the pre-press and designing (technical) departments in *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide*. The sampling quota included 2 managing editors, 2 sales and circulation managers, 2 website administrators and 6 journalists. The researcher identified the few number of respondents based on job titles and by referrals from other workers regarding who would be best suited to talk about the current situations of the newspaper industry in the digital era. Also, the respondents' willingness to participate and time available was considered while selecting interviewees.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

An interview guide was used to gather the necessary data for the study. The interview guide was structured for each department to seek accurate information from the right resource persons. However, the editorial department had two different sets of questions because the researcher sampled two different people which were news reporters and news editors in the same department. These two people have different approaches and perspectives on newspaper

development. Darrough (2013) noted that in most newsrooms, there were lots of reporters than editors. Due to this more reporters were allowed to participate and share their understanding of how digitization affects newsroom operations. Also, different questions were set for these two people to discern how they both operate to ensure newspapers maintain their relevance in this digital era and beyond.

The questions were open-ended in order to make room for the respondent to provide responses that may not have been captured by the researcher. The questions were also devoid of wordings that might influence answers from respondents and were asked one at a time. The final question allowed respondents to provide any other information they preferred to add. The interviews were conducted one-on-one and they all took place face-to-face in the newsroom and the offices of the sales and circulation manager and the website administrators.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data gathered for analysis focused on themes from responses that were given by respondents from the two newspaper organizations. These recurring themes were analyzed and presented in a narrative form. Braun, Clarke and Weate (2016) argued that thematic analysis is relevant since it can identify patterns of meaning across a qualitative dataset.

Sparker (2005) as cited in (Vaismoradi, Turunen, Bondas, 2013) also indicated that thematic analysis systematically examines narrative materials by breaking the text into relatively small units of content and submitting them to descriptive treatment. In other words, thematic analysis enables a researcher to analyze large data in smaller parts. Braun and Clarke (2016) referred to thematic analysis as a flexible and useful research tool, which provides a rich and detailed, yet complex,

account of the data. The idea adopted here is to identify from *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*, the extracts of data that are informative and identify common threads that extend across the entire set of interviews conducted.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the analysis of the data collected in the study. Twelve respondents, six each from *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*, were interviewed. To ensure the anonymity of information provided, respondents from *Daily Graphic* were identified as Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and respondents from *Daily Guide* were identified as Respondents 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Two themes and seven sub-themes were derived from the data. The two main themes were threat of digital media and strategies print media employed to survive in the digital era. Under threat of digital media, four sub-themes were derived. These comprised a decline in readership, fall in sales, cost of production and changes in people's media consumption.

The second theme focused on strategies print media employed to survive in the digital era. Three subthemes were derived under this section, they were: synergy between print and digital media, improved graphics and features, commercialisation and diversification to include digital media.

4.1 Threat of digital media

The findings showed that *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are confronted with several challenges, particularly, with the development of digital media. The digital media pose threats to the traditional media agencies, in terms of distribution as well as sales and changes in reading consumption. This is because of the convenience, cost (comparably cheaper than newspapers) and ease of access to information from digital media. The findings from *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* showed that the advent of technology is affecting the operations of the two print media houses. The findings showed that the quantity of newspapers produced on a daily basis has shrunk over the years, yet,

the cost of production is increasing exponentially. The findings also indicated that the availability of devices such as mobile phones and tablets have made reading easier and accessible compared with traditional media. This trend poses a threat to *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* in terms of volume of sales. According to Respondent 6,

This trend has a negative implication on the volume of sales as customers, particularly, the millennials, prefer to read news on their mobile phones and tablets for convenience and easy access.

4.1.1 Decline in readership

All respondents for both newspapers (*Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*) indicated that readership has declined because of the introduction of social media. They stressed that it was easier and convenient to have access to news on social media compared to traditional media. The finding is reflected by Respondent 2 who said,

If one can get the same information via social media, it's easy to access than having to walk all the way to the market to look for the hardcopy of a news item to buy

A respondent was of the view that the current generation of people or demographic of people who prefer assessing their news from newspapers are gradually dying out leaving the younger generation who prefer to assess news online due to the ease with which large information is accessed.

The young and upcoming ones may not be buying the newspapers again. The buying of newspapers is stimulated to maybe the middle age and the older generation. For the young ones coming I hardly think they would be interested in buying the newspapers because we have our phones and the internet is always available (Respondents 5).

Similarly respondent 8 noted that a large chunk of readers who would have gone to the newsstands to buy hard copy papers now prefer to read on tablets and smartphones

According to another respondent, people perceive the cost of newspapers to be high and thus lack of interest in buying and reading hard copies. Respondent 10 noted that “*due to generational differences, everyone wants to hold digital devices, and that is causing dwindling readership of the newspaper*”. Likewise, Respondent 12 highlighted that readership had dwindled because of alternative sources of information and also in a country where people love to listen than read, reading habits would be bad.

4.1.2 Fall in sales

Another finding common to both *Daily Graphic* and *Daily* is that the fall in sales is mostly attributed to the newspaper review that radio and television stations do on their morning shows. This trend, as observed by one of the respondents, has a negative influence on sales. Respondents said that because most radio and television stations undertake an in-depth review of the headline stories, it reduces readers’ incentive to purchase the newspapers. According to Respondent 9,

Sometimes, the newspaper review by radio and television stations helps in promoting some front-page stories, but the detailed analysis that follows affects sales of the papers.

Some of the respondents indicated that the ease to access information on social media is a cause for the low patronage for hard copy newspapers. Respondents indicated that this has impacted sales to some extent because by the time the newspaper hits the newsstands, most of the stories are already online and on other social media networks which are accessed at very low cost. According to respondents, in times past where the traditional media was the primary source of conveying

‘breaking news’, there was an increase in the volume of sales. However, because of new media, sales have fallen due to the presence of “citizen journalists”. Respondent 7 explained:

“Now people collect, disseminate and analyse newsworthy information on their own utilising the Internet. This affects sales because the information conveyed in our newspapers usually comes a day after news it is all over town”.

4.1.3 Cost of production

Interviews with respondents from *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* revealed that while the cost of production is rising exponentially, returns on sales are on a downward spiral. The study showed that producing content for traditional media is expensive. One respondent indicated that the cost of buying products and materials for production is rising unabated. The respondent continued that almost all the materials including papers and ink used for production are imported. The respondent noted that the pricing of these materials and products keep fluctuating because of the declining value of the Ghanaian cedi against the United States of America dollars on the market. The respondent explained that the variation in the economic and financial nature of these materials most times lead to cuts in staff and sections of the paper in efforts to stem losses and keep costs under control. Unfortunately, he added that the cuts often cause a decline in the quality of the newspaper’s content. To maximise profit and cut down on production costs, another respondent suggested the importance of going paperless. Respondent 11 noted that;

The high cost of production is a major challenge facing the newspaper industry.

Another respondent from *Daily Graphic* indicated that those who are the future of the newspaper business are no longer reading hard copies. He added that people now read news items on their mobile phones and not from the hard copy materials. Respondents noted that this recent activity has made it very necessary for newspaper organizations to switch to the Internet to lessen the high

cost of production so they can remain in business while ensuring their relevance. By switching to the internet, a respondent explained that newspaper organisations could provide the content contained in the hard copies on the Internet and monetise it. The respondent stressed that it will mean an added medium of production at a reduced cost.

4.1.4 Changes in people media consumption

There are also external factors that pose threats to traditional media. Findings from *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* indicated that the mode of assessing news from newspapers is shifting steadily towards social media or online news portals. The trend, according to one of the respondents, is exacerbated by the lack of interest in reading hardcopy materials in the country because of the advent of social media. The findings indicated that the instantaneous nature of social media puts newspapers in a tight corner. One of the respondents indicated that there is a low desire to purchasing newspapers because of the advent of social media which makes available the same news in the prints. According to the respondent;

The world has advanced in technology, people now have tabs, android phones and iPads. As a result, people do not go to the newsstand to access new stories. With a click or with a touch on the phone once you have data you can go to any media organization you want to and access their news (Respondent 11).

Further, respondents noted that the concise writing styles of news on the Internet influence the choice of news material. The study revealed that the writing styles used in social media reportage are different from the writing style for traditional media. The respondents explained that the evolution of new media technology has brought a new way of thinking, as such reporters think of new angles when writing a story for the traditional media, especially when a story is already

published online. Findings showed that “*newspapers change angles to news stories just to increase readership*” (Respondent 12). The study showed that captions used in social media contribute to the increasing interest in online news. Respondents said that such captions report stories that draw traffic to online portals to the detriment of the traditional media. According to one of the respondents;

People want short crispy stories that communicate ideas easily. Online portals have thus adopted this and use catchy headlines with small wording but more pictures (Respondent 9).

4.2 Strategies that print media employed to survive the digital era

The two newspaper organizations (*Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*) employed several strategies to ensure sustainability, growth and profitability. The interviews revealed what *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* did and are doing to mitigate the challenges they faced in order to survive the new trend associated with Information Communication Technology. Three subthemes; synergy between print and social media, improved graphics and features, commercialisation and diversification to include social media were found while analysing the data.

4.2.1 Synergy between print and digital media

The respondents noted that the management of both newspapers ensured that audiences are engaged in a more dialogic platform. As a result, online television and a nationwide television was established by *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* respectively to broadcast stories available in the hardcopies and get audiences more interactive. One of the respondents indicated that despite the successful presence of the newspaper’s digital platform, some subscribers still request hard copies and that keeps the prints versions still relevant. Respondent 12 indicated that;

Beyond seeking exciting and compelling content that engages with people, the newspaper's social media platforms are very strong and interactive.

Also, the study revealed that *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* have social media platforms that they use to complement hard copy newspapers. The respondents indicated that such synergy will revive the low reading culture amongst Ghanaian youth. According to one respondent;

We acknowledge the role of social media in news reportage and the need to strike a good synergy with the traditional media, thus, we are into online TV, lots of videos showing online and showing some of our works online to satisfy our online followers (Respondent 7).

4.2.2 Improved graphics and features

One of the findings of the study is that there is a need to improve the graphical presentations in newspapers to catch the attention of the present generation. According to a respondent, over the years, their newspaper has improved its hardcopy by making it very interactive. The respondent noted that a Quick Response Code (QRC) has been attached to stories and with a scan on the code, readers are led to audios or videos that complement a particular news story or article.

Another respondent indicated that too much clutter does not appeal to the eye, thus their newspaper has over the years gone through different stages and faces in terms of design and layout. A respondent was also of the view that newspaper organisations have to be strategic to make sure that they defend the ideals of original print journalism by producing quality content. According to one respondent;

We need to give the newspapers a life because there are still people who buy newspapers and they have a particular time of the day they buy newspapers. So we make sure they are available at any point in time while making sure that the newspapers quality of the newspapers, in terms of graphics, is of the highest quality (Respondent 3).

4.2.3 Commercialization and diversification to include digital media

Most of the respondents indicated their organizations have all taken advantage of the revolution of new media technology for over a decade now. The finding revealed that *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* have migrated into the digital space. Thus, they have incorporated social media journalism into their operations to remain relevant and competitive. Further, the findings showed that traditional news agencies have moved from being producers of hard copy publishers only to website publishers and they now have readers online who can access the exact copy of the printed version on their mobile phones, tablets or computers. According to one respondent, allowing portions of some news content to be hidden and permitting readers to subscribe is a good way of making good revenue. Another respondent indicated that his organization had also unveiled other media outlets in addition to their online websites and traditional hard copies. According to the respondent,

We have diversified in that we have a graphic online TV. We read the news as newsreaders read, the pictures showed, videos there are sound bites and all other things. We are doing that so that we continue to hold our position as leaders in the newspaper industry, it doesn't mean we are quitting newspaper that is one way of switching more readers and entrenching our position (Respondent 7)

One of the respondents indicated that diversifying is a good way of reaching out to a large audience while satisfying the needs of the reading population. Furthermore, another respondent said that their organization has successfully been able to set up an FM station and TV station as a way of diversifying to make more revenue through paid commercials. According to one of the respondents, the advanced countries also went through a similar phase and now do not sell papers but yet they survive on advertisements. The respondent noted that it was an important initiative to make multiple streams of income to support the print departments of the company. According to one respondent,

When it comes to the online segment we are trying to get people to advertise more on our platform. They pay for that advertisement and we are able to generate some funds there.

We also try to set up a website to monetise itself such that we can generate some funds there as well (Respondent 6).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses and gives a summary of the findings of the study. The discussion pivots around the objectives of the study, theory and related studies. The chapter highlights the limitations that emerge from the study as well as recommendations for future studies related to print media.

5.1 Discussion of key findings

The first research question of the study that sought to find out the nature of challenges *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* encounter in the face of digitization found several setbacks facing the organizations. According to the findings of the study, challenges faced by *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* are very similar. Challenges such as low readership, fall in sales, increased cost of production and changes in people's media consumption are all major challenges facing the newspaper industry. Today, before newspapers are distributed for sales, most of the news stories are already online. This serves as a disincentive for readers to patronize hard copy newspapers since they might have read the stories the previous day. These challenges notwithstanding, the study revealed that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* had put in place measures to curb these challenges and ensure the growth and sustenance of the newspapers. Some of the measures were commercialisation and diversification to include digital media in newspaper operations as well as improved graphics and features.

The study showed people often consume news and information from social media rather than traditional media. The availability of mobile devices such as mobile phones and tablets have made reading easier and accessible. However, this trend has negative implications on the volume of sales as customers, particularly, the millennials, prefer social media content to traditional media (*Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*) content. This also has a dire effect on the cost of production making sales inconsistent. The findings agreed with a study by Udenze (2018) on print media and the challenges of social media which revealed that the newspaper industry is struggling to survive amid the technological revolution that has engulfed the media landscape. The findings further agreed with a study by Agboola (2014) on the influence of new media on conventional media which revealed that the drop in circulation experienced by print media is as a result of the younger generation's preference for the new media as they are more interactive compared to the online version of mainstream media. Also, the findings are consistent with the mediamorphosis theory which emphasizes that the new media (social media) transforms old media (newspaper) into something better (Fidler 1997).

The findings imply that Internet audiences are responsible for the predicaments of traditional media, thus, today's journalism finds itself at a rare moment in history where its dominant role as the gatekeeper of news is now threatened; not only by new technology and competitors but by the audience it serves. Also, there was evidence from the findings that there is a low desire to purchasing newspapers because of the advent of social media which makes available the same news in the prints. The finding is consistent with a study by Ogan (2014) which showed that a greater percentage of Port Harcourt residents read newspapers online more than they read traditional newspapers because online newspapers are convenient, recent and cheap. The finding

further agreed with a study by Mathew, Ogedebe, and Adeniji (2013) on the readership of online newspapers in North-Eastern Nigeria. Their findings revealed that the majority of respondents who read online newspapers because they were up-to-date, current and cheaper compared to the traditional newspaper. The finding further agreed with a study by Oliha and Arthur (2014) which found that majority of respondents preferred the online media to print media because the former is affordable, immediate, interactive, available and convenient.

The role of *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* in ensuring the relevance of their newspapers agrees with Fidler's (1990) mediamorphosis theory which states that the established forms of communication media must change in response to the emergence of a new medium else their only option is to die. The findings imply that so far as *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* are willing to adopt social media to lessen the high cost of production, the two newspapers will remain in the newspaper business while ensuring their relevance.

The study evaluated the reasons why there are downward sales of newspapers. According to respondents, over the last three years, *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* have experienced a downward sales of newspapers due to the advent of social media. The finding is consistent with a study by Wairimu (2018) on impact of social media on print journalism which revealed that although the older generation of readers accustomed to print newspaper continue to buy the product, young people, who are the majority, rely on social media for news, which has led to decline in sales and newspaper circulation. It is undoubtedly true that many people buy newspapers to keep records of vital information published in newspapers. However, the prices of these newspapers are very high. As a result, some newspaper consumers no longer purchase the

hardcopies anymore, they rather resort to reading information from the Internet. The finding implies that the advent of the internet is affecting the sales pattern of the traditional media.

Findings concerning the second research question that examines how *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* position themselves to survive the digital era revealed that the two newspapers had incorporated many online media technologies available to keep up to new trends and stay relevant. They have also improved the graphical presentations in newspapers to “catch” the attention of the present generation. Findings indicated that the *Daily Graphic* had improved its papers by attaching a Quick Response Code to make their papers interactive.

The finding revealed that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* have migrated into the digital space. Thus, they have incorporated social media journalism into their operations to remain relevant and competitive. This indicates that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* reacted to the advent of social media journalism by developing online news services, which do not have the high distribution costs but enables the customisation of editorial and advertising content, and facilitate the co-creation of news content with consumers (Graham & Smart 2010). Also, the finding is consistent with Fiddler’s (1997) theory of metamorphosis which points out that propagation of dominant traits in media forms when emerging forms of media transmit dominant traits from earlier forms. For example, *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* were already positioning articles and headlines in their hard copies, similarly, they have developed websites that also position articles and headlines as well as videos to keep the audience interactive. The finding implies that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* must continue to adapt and evolve for survival in a changing environment with the advent of social media.

The findings established that reading clubs have been formed in schools to encourage the youth to read more hardcopy materials to complement reading from online sources. This will inculcate good reading habits into students and reinforce the fact that the Internet will not replace newspapers, just as radio did not replace newspapers and television. The finding is consistent with a study by Igbokwe, Obidike, Ezeji, (2012) on the influence of electronic media on the reading habits of pupils in Nigeria which established that the decreasing influence of the print media has to do with some basic factors which include people's inability to read more of the printed forms of information. The finding implies that educating the youth on the importance of reading hardcopy materials is key to increasing the patronage of hardcopy materials.

The findings concerning the third research question that explored the future of the newspaper industry in Ghana showed that the future looks uncertain but definitely will not die. This was attributed to downward trends. However, findings indicated that even though readership has moved largely from hard copy newspapers to online, advertising has remained for newspapers and this keeps the industry moving.

Also, the findings established that newspapers continue to print the number of quantities needed to serve the aged and the cultured readers. The findings further indicated that traditional media have diversified their operations to co-exist with digital media. This is in congruence with the mediamorphosis theory which states that a new medium does not lead to the death of an old one since it can adapt and even coexist with the new medium for improved performance (Fidler, 1990). That is, the 'new media' is created to update and upgrade the old media where technology is

constantly changing, and evolving from time to time. Furthermore, the finding is in agreement with a study by Chari (2011) which concluded that while considerable interest is shown for the newspaper website, the print newspaper is far from extinction. Thus, the finding suggests that the relationship between the online news website and *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* is complimentary.

5.2 Limitations of the study

Though some interesting insights into the challenges confronting newspapers in Ghana were revealed in the study there were limitations. One of the limitations of the study was that the results and conclusions are based on only two independent newspapers as noted earlier and that is not representative of the large Ghanaian newspaper industry. Using more newspaper organizations would have permitted a wider generalisation of the findings.

Another limitation of the study was the refusal of the management of the selected newspapers (*Daily Guide and Daily Graphic*) to give the researcher figures and statistics on their sales volumes. Access to such statistics could have provided further insight into the financial vulnerability of these newspapers. These limitations, however, do not diminish the importance of the study, and its intended contribution to the literature on the future of newspapers in the digital age.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, it is recommended that future studies should examine more than two newspapers in Ghana to interrogate the extent to which new media technologies have affected the larger newspaper industry. It is also recommended that additional studies should be conducted on how newspapers deal with their online audience in the face of digitization.

It is further recommended that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* needs to streamline their operations to enhance their productivity. Also, it is recommended that *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* must take full advantage of the Internet technologies in all phases of newspaper production as well as develop a business model that would compensate for the free readership of online news on newspaper websites.

In addition, it is recommended that newspapers in search of survival strategies must become more reader-friendly and serve the youth with news and stories that serve their interests, without compromising quality journalism.

Also, respondents suggested that sales might increase if newspaper organizations adopt publishing contents in local dialects. Therefore, the study recommended that the newspaper industry must exploit and publish news stories and articles in the local languages to engage people who cannot read and understand English.

5.4 Conclusion

The newspaper industry in Ghana has witnessed a rapid transformation in the digital era over the past decade. As a result, some newspaper organisations particularly *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* have adopted alternative ways of disseminating information to reach a growing number of their audience online. The study indicated that although the older generation of readers accustomed to print newspapers continues to buy the product, young people, who are the majority, rely on social media for news. This has led to a decline in sales and newspaper circulation.

It is also evident that the improved graphics and features on newspapers and the commercialisation and diversification to include digital media in newspaper operations have provided easy access to information and sustained the presence of *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide*. However, these strategies still make it difficult for *Daily Graphic and Daily Guide* to increase sales in order to boost revenue. There is therefore, the need for newspaper organizations to adopt efficient reading skill strategies among the youth to ensure newspapers continue to coexist with other media outlets and reinforce each other. Though considerable interest is shown by consumers for newspaper websites, the print newspapers (*Daily guide and Daily Graphic*) are far from “extinction”.

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Appendix A: Interview guide for managing editors

TITLE: THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS IN A DIGITAL ERA: THE CASE OF DAILY GRAPHIC AND DAILY GUIDE.

RESEARCHER: THELMA NAA ANERCHO ABBEY

CONTACT NUMBER: +233 43111129

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview on the future of newspapers in the era of digitization.

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline from participating at any time, without being negatively affected in any way. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you had agreed to take part.

1. How has your company welcomed the revolution of new media technology?
2. What impact has new media technology had on your newspaper so far?
3. What major challenges face newspapers today?
4. What is your organization doing to mitigate these challenges?
5. What strategies have your organization employed in order to survive in the face of new media technology?

Appendix B: Interview guide for sales and circulations manager

TITLE: THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS IN A DIGITAL ERA: THE CASE OF DAILY GRAPHIC AND DAILY GUIDE.

RESEARCHER: THELMA NAA ANERCHO ABBEY

CONTACT NUMBER: +233 43111129

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview on the future of newspapers in the era of digitization.

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline from participating at any time, without being negatively affected in any way. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you had agreed to take part.

1. What major challenges face newspapers?
2. What is your organization doing to mitigate these challenges?
3. How has the changing trends in readership affected the figures of circulation and penetration of newspapers?
4. What can the organization do to keep the print version relevant?

Appendix C: Interview guide for news reporters

TITLE: THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS IN A DIGITAL ERA: THE CASE OF DAILY GRAPHIC AND DAILY GUIDE.

RESEARCHER: THELMA NAA ANERCHO ABBEY

CONTACT NUMBER: +233 43111129

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview on the future of newspapers in the era of digitization.

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline from participating at any time, without being negatively affected in any way. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you had agreed to take part.

1. How have new media technologies changed the operations in your organization?
2. In this digital era, what are some major challenges that face your daily task as reporters in the newsroom?
3. Why do you think it is important to take up different opportunities presented to you by new media technology?

Appendix D: Interview guide for website administrator

TITLE: THE FUTURE OF NEWSPAPERS IN A DIGITAL ERA: THE CASE OF DAILY GRAPHIC AND DAILY GUIDE.

RESEARCHER: THELMA NAA ANERCHO ABBEY

CONTACT NUMBER: +233 43111129

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview on the future of newspapers in the era of digitization.

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline from participating at any time, without being negatively affected in any way. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you had agreed to take part.

1. How has your organization responded to the advancement in media technology?
2. When did you go online?
3. Why did you go online, in addition to the newspaper versions?
4. What strategies have your organization employed to survive in the face challenges of new media technology?