

**PRESS COVERAGE OF THE JUDGMENT DEBTS
COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS: A CONTENTANALYSIS
OF THE DAILY GRAPHIC**

BY

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**THIS LONG ESSAY IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEGREE**

JULY, 2016

DECLARATION

Except for the references and quotations which have been acknowledged, I declare that this long essay is entirely the record of my own research, under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

.....
Dr. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo

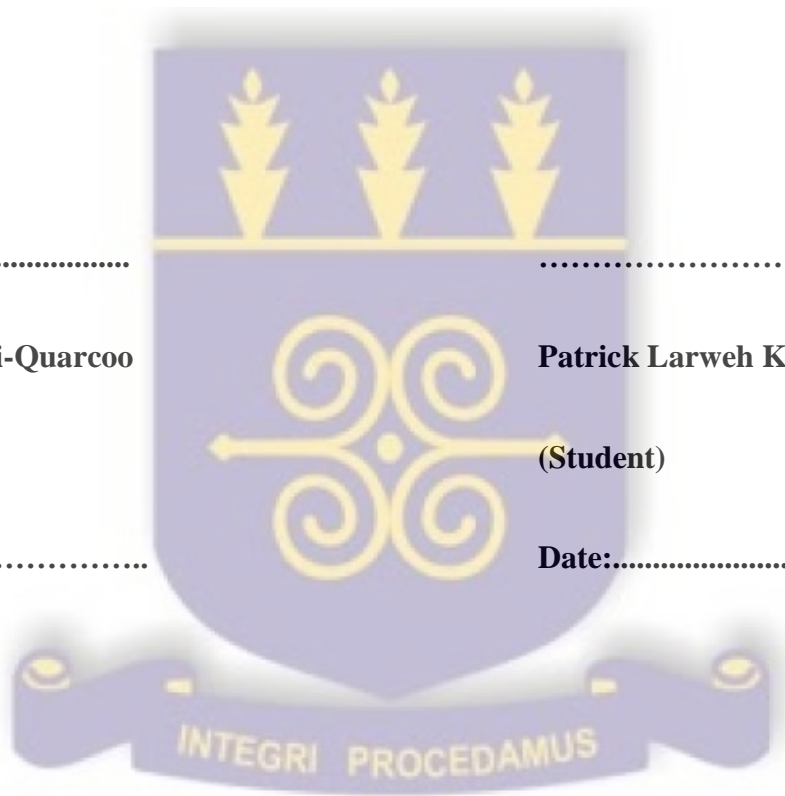
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Date:.....



DEDICATION

To the glory of God I dedicate this piece of work to my father, mother and siblings - Joyce, Patricia and Gabriel.

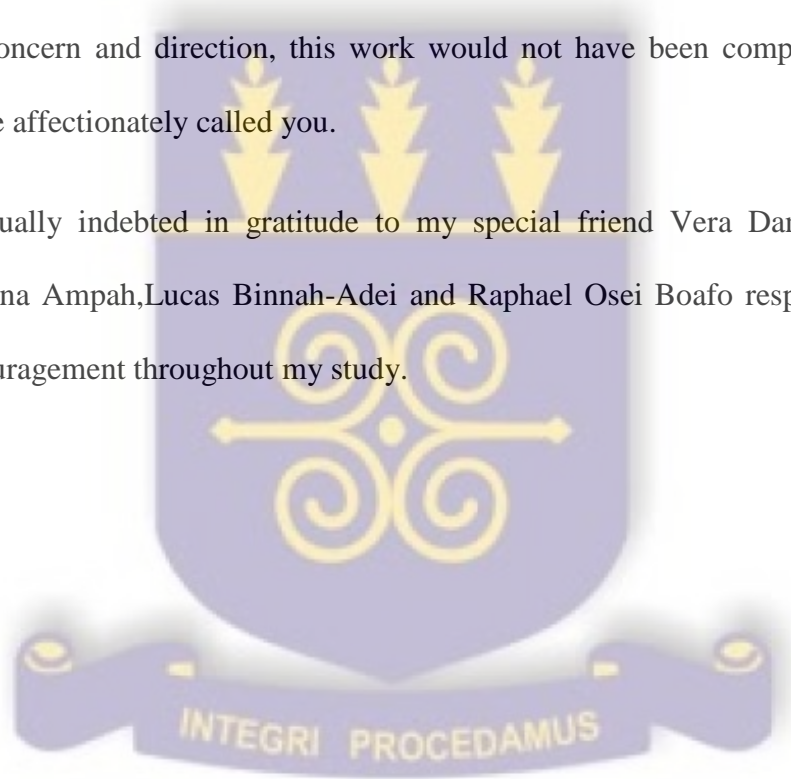


ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I give thanks to the Almighty God, in whom I trust for giving me unmerited grace and favor. Eternal gratitude also goes to my mum and dad, Mr. Eric Narh Kpalam and Ms. Juliana Aluayo Laweteh respectively for their generosity. To my siblings, Joyce Buernarkie Kpalam, Patricia Ata Kpalam and Gabriel Doe Kpalam, I am also grateful.

Pure unadulterated appreciation is in order to my supervisor Dr. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo. But for her dedication, concern and direction, this work would not have been completed. Thank you Aunt Sarah, as we affectionately called you.

Finally, I am equally indebted in gratitude to my special friend Vera Dankwah Badu; my classmates, Lordina Ampah, Lucas Binnah-Adei and Raphael Osei Boafo respectively for their support and encouragement throughout my study.



ABSTRACT

The study is a quantitative content analysis of the coverage of the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission by the *Daily Graphic* newspaper. The Commission was set up by President John Dramani Mahama to inquire into payments made from public funds for and on behalf of the state arising from judgment debts, arbitration awards, negotiated settlements and related processes. The study had the purpose of determining the news worthiness of, and the frames given to the proceedings of the Commission by the press coverage. To this end, the framing theory and news worthy theory were used for the study.

The findings are that by adopting the thematic frame, the *Daily Graphic* focused on the facts and backgrounds that led to the payments of the monies. The *Daily Graphic* also gave the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings attention with respect to comprehensive coverage of the Commission's sittings. The challenge of *Daily Graphic's* has to do with the minimal prominence given with respect to placement of news stories in the inside pages of the *Daily Graphic* and the small page size often dedicated to the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission.

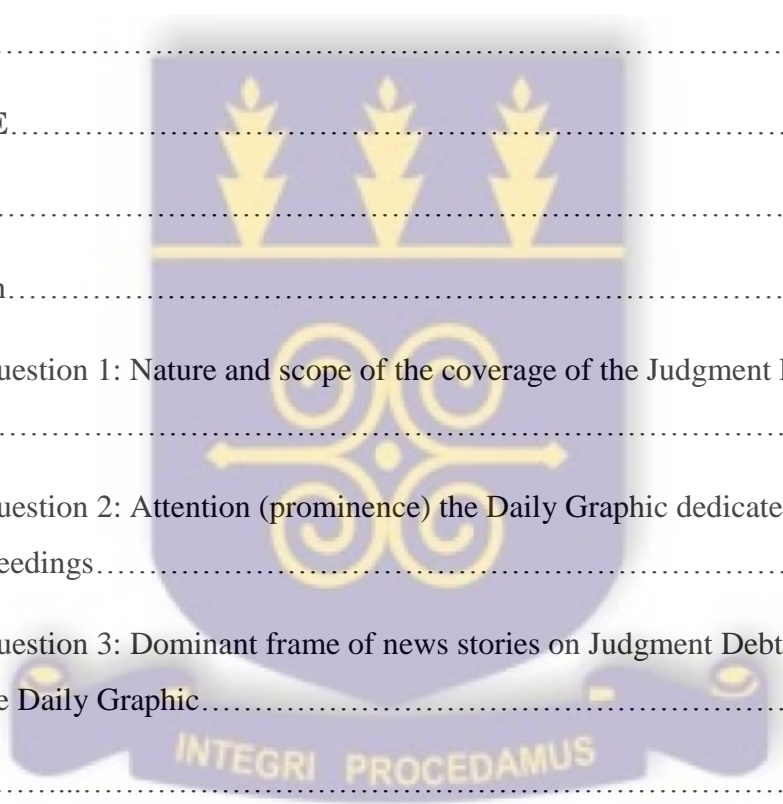


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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

The government of Ghana under President John Mills is reported to have paid out a total of GHC624 million as judgment and settlement debts in its first three years in office:

“Government has so far paid GHC 600 million as judgment debts since 2009.....we have to find a way to avoid the payment of judgment debts. I want the truth to be established. We’re not going to sweep anything under the carpet. Let’s get the total picture...we’ll apply the law to the letter.” – [President John Atta Mills at the Meet the Press Encounter in January 2012.]

Most of the debts paid resulted from breach of contracts in the procurement of certain goods and services on behalf of Ghana(www.myjoyonline.com). Other payments also resulted from commissions and omissions on the part of public officials against individuals and properties. Investigations the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO) conducted however revealed that most of the payments made were either fraudulently obtained or resulted from previous government’s disregard for contractual agreements (Agbola & Sokro as cited in Oubrich et al eds.,2012). These payments, classified as judgment debts, generated a huge public outcry.

President John Dramani Mahama set up the Judgment Debts Commission having satisfied himself that it is in the interest of Ghanaians to appoint a commission of inquiry to investigate into payments sanctioned from public funds for and on behalf of the state of Ghana as judgment debts, arbitration awards, negotiated settlements and similar processes. The commission was set up under a Constitutional Instrument; CI 79 of 2012(www.gog.gov.org).The Commission of Inquiry had as the sole commissioner, Justice Yaw Appau, a Justice of the Court of Appeal of Ghana. The Commission began public sittings on November 28, 2012 at the old Parliament House in Accra.

The task assigned to the Judgment Debts Commission by the president is a matter of public interest. The public therefore look to the media as a source of political information (ibid). Alex Bosire, recognized that the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC) owes much of its success to the media, and that their efforts would have been in vain if not for the media (Garman, 1997 as cited in Cantero, 2011).

1.1 Commissions of Inquiry (Overview)

Originating from the British legal system in the 11th century, commissions of inquiry have traversed and are now a common phenomenon in former English colonies and other democracies. (Fitzgerald 2001; Frankel 1999). Commissions of Inquiry are official ad hoc advisory bodies set up by governments to investigate and advise on matters of public concern such as crisis, disasters, scandals, and when the ordinary administrative system is unable to address the issues effectively. (Sulitzean – Kane, 2006; Elliot and McGuinness, 2002; Gilligan, 2002; Cloakie & Robinson, 1937 and Salter, 2003). Commissions of Inquiry are independent and largely impartial (Solderblom, 2001). The business of commissions of inquiry are usually conducted in public (Elliot & McGuinness, 2002; Centa & Macklenan, 2003; Gosnell, 1934 and The New Zealand Law Commission Report, 2007).

1.2 Commissions of Inquiry under the Fourth Republic of Ghana

Under the 1992 constitution of Ghana, six commissions of inquiry, including the Judgment Debts Commission have been set-up to look into various important matters of national interest. The commissions of inquiry established since the coming into effect of the 1992 constitution are as follows:

1. The Commission of Inquiry (International Transfer of Football Players) instruments, 1999 set-up under CI 22 of 12th March, 1999.
2. The Commission of Inquiry (Accra Sports Stadium Disaster) Instrument, 2001 set-up under CI 34 of 11th May, 2001.
3. The Commission of inquiry (Yendi Events) Instruments, 2002 set-up under CI 36 of 26th April, 2002.
4. The Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the participation of the Black Stars team in the World Cup tournament in Brazil, 2014 set-up under CI 82.
5. The Commission of Inquiry (Ghana at 50) Instrument, 2009 set-up under CI 61.

Article 280 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana states that reports of Commissions of Inquiry are deemed to be judgments of the High Court and persons affected by the adverse findings can appeal as of rights at the Court of Appeal.

1.3 The media and accountable governance

The beginning of the new democratic era from 1993, saw the repressive 1983 newspaper licensing law lifted, allowing for the operation of private press (Asante,1994). Karikari (2000) noted the publishing boom that began in the late 1980s, as Jerry John Rawlings, head of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) prepared to return Ghana back to democracy. There were options in the choice of newspapers on the streets because several independent newspapers burst onto the scene (ibid).

A robust media serves as a watch dog on the government by exposing acts of officials to the knowledge of the general public. In addition to increasing the likelihood that public corruption will be exposed, government awareness of the media's watchful eye enhance transparency and

discourages public corruption (Nyinah, 1994). This function is extremely important because “the majority is in the periphery when it comes to politics and democracy,” while government officials are vested with the power to rule though they are few” (ibid, p. 17). It is the view of Graber (2002) that the power of the media as pervasive conveyers of political information to the public is based on its potential to inform huge audiences of both ordinary people and the elites.

The coming into force of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, introduced provisions that enhanced the work of journalists and the media. Chapter 12 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana which provides for freedom of the media, is where Ghanaians look to for the constitutional guarantee of press freedom. The mass media play a critical role as a foremost source of political information for most citizens (Norris, 2000). The newspaper, unlike television or radio, produces information that the reader can interpret at their leisure without much time constraint (Carter, 2001). This study focused on the print media in Ghana with regard to how the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission was covered by the *Daily Graphic* newspaper.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The revelation that the government of Ghana paid about GH¢600 million in judgment debts to individuals and organisations has not only brought the country’s past and present public officials into disrepute, but has also brought to the fore, the wanton dissipation of public funds entrusted to those with the power to govern (Aikins, 2011). Monies paid as judgment debts were issued during the change overs of 2001 and 2009, when political power was passed on from one party to a different party, specifically National Democratic Congress(NDC) government to New Patriotic Party(NPP) government and vice versa. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana has tasked all agencies of the mass media to at all times be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of the

Constitution, and to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people of Ghana (Article 162 (5) of the 1992 constitution). *The Daily Graphic* newspaper as a state-owned newspaper is enjoined by article 55(11) and article 163 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to grant fair and equitable coverage of all political parties and candidates as well as divergent views and opinions. This constitutional obligation imposed on the state-media was affirmed in the judicial decision of *NPP vs. Ghana Broadcasting Corporation* (1993/1994). Public trust, confidence and support for political actors and institutions mostly depend on the frames emphasized by the media (Johnson and Socker, 2008). The mass media constitute the bedrock of democracy. They identify problems in the society and serve as a platform proposing solutions and ideas. They are also the watch dog relied on for identifying problems and errors committed by those in power. It is the expectation that the media perform to certain basic standards with respect to these roles, and democratic societies rest on the assumption that they do (Venturelli, 1998).

On the premise of Hoolilan's (2001) assertion that newspapers are more successful in informing people than other mass media forms, it is important to find out how they reported the proceedings from the institution of the Commission.

Gyan (2007) studied the frames given to commissions of inquiry by two privately owned Ghanaian newspapers; Verdoolaege (2005), Cantero (2011) and Howsam (2015) also looked at the impact of the media on the work of commissions of inquiry.

No academic study has been conducted on media coverage of commissions of inquiry in relation to news generating events, frame and attention dedicated to their work. This study explores these gaps by looking at how the *Daily Graphic* covered the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings

taking into account the constitutional provisions in article 55, article 163 as well as the National Media Commission Act (1993) which enjoins the state-owned media to take measures to ensure a fair opportunity and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions. It is the focus of this long essay to look at the frames and the news worthiness the state-owned *Daily Graphic* employed in its coverage of the proceedings of the commission set up to look into the several controversial compensations paid by the state to individuals and institutions under both the NDC and NPP governments since 1992.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study will be to find out how the *Daily Graphic* covered the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To find out the nature and scope of *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.
- To investigate the level of attention or prominence *Daily Graphic* gave to its coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.
- To examine whether the episodic or thematic frames dominated the coverage of the proceedings by the *Daily Graphic*.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was directed by these research questions:

Research Question 1: What is the nature and scope of the *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings?

Research Question 2: How much attention or prominence did the *Daily Graphic* give to the coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings?

Research Question 3: Which frame (episodic or thematic) dominated the *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Gyan's (2007) pioneering work remains the only academic study on media coverage of commissions of inquiry in Ghana. This study therefore contributes to existing literature on content studies in Ghana by examining the coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.

The study hopes to inform the management of the *Daily Graphic* and other state-owned media about the nature of coverage and attention given to the coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings in compliance with the paper's mandate and the constitutional requirement of affording fair and equal coverage for all parties that appeared before the Judgment Debts Commission.

This study will also serve as a significant resource material for future researchers, editors and media managers of newspapers in the formulation of future editorial policies with respect to commissions of inquiry.

1.8 PROFILE OF THE DAILY GRAPHIC NEWSPAPER

The *Daily Graphic* was established in 1950 as one of the chain of newspapers owned by the Daily Mirror Group of London (Antwi, 1991). The British Newspaper giant, the *Daily Mirror*, set up the *Daily Graphic* in Ghana mainly for political as well as economic reasons (Asante &

Gadzekpo, 2000). The *Daily Graphic*, unlike the local press, had access to transnational capital, modern technology, a more efficient business organization, and demonstrated better journalistic expertise (Hasty, 2002). After Ghana gained Republican status in 1960, President Kwame Nkrumah on July 2, 1962 bought the *Daily Graphic* which was subsequently incorporated as a statutory corporation in 1965 and has since remained a state-owned organization. (Asante & Gadzekpo, 2000)

After independence in 1957, the company changed its name to Ghana Graphic Company Ltd. In 1971, the company secured a statutory corporation status through a legislative instrument – the Graphic Corporation Instrument; LI 709 and thus changed its name to Graphic Corporation. The company added to its publication *Graphic sports* and *Showbiz* in 1985 and 1998 respectively. The company was converted to an autonomous private limited liability in 1999 under the companies' code, 1963, Act 179 resulting in a change of name to Graphic Communications Group Ltd with a re-defined vision of becoming a multimedia organization.(see www.graphic.com.gh).The *Daily Graphic* is published six times a week (Monday to Saturday). As a state - owned media and as per article 168 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, its chairman and other members of the governing board is appointed by the National Media Commission.

1.9 RATIONALE FOR SELECTING THE *DAILY GRAPHIC* NEWSPAPER

Kahn and Goldenberg (1991) assert that newspapers that circulate largely have great effect on audiences. The *Daily Graphic* is known to be the most read and widely circulated newspaper in Ghana (Midttun et al,2011). *Daily Graphic* was also adjudged the most preferred newspaper in Ghana according to the Ghana Media Standards Improvement Project (GMSIP, 2009).

The *Daily Graphic* was purposively chosen because of its position as the leader in the print media landscape in Ghana, which set the agenda for discussion on other media platforms. Also, the constitutional injunction placed on it as a state-owned media to “afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions” informed the choice (Article 163, 1992 constitution of Ghana).

1.10 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study will be limited to the period of the Judgment Debts Commission hearing from January 2013 to December 2013 and then August 2014 to October 2014(see chapter 2). Wimmer & Dominick (2003) posited that it is proper to study a phenomenon for a sufficiently long period of time especially when employing the content analysis technique to determine the frame so that the phenomenon under study would have had enough time to occur. The study will thus be limited to the period spanning 28 November, 2012 to October 14, 2014. The length of the study period is 15 months. Fire gutted the initial venue for the public hearing in December 2013; thus the commission suspended sitting and resumed on 29th July 2013.

1.11 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGIES

The following terminologies were used in the study and have been operationally defined in the context of the study.

Commission of Inquiry: An official ad hoc advisory body set – up by governments to investigate into or advise on a matter that is of public concern.

Judgment Debt: A debt; for the recovery of which a judgment has been entered.

Press Coverage: This refers to the news reports in newspapers, particularly those in the *Daily Graphic* Newspaper.

Constitutional Instrument: An instrument made under a power conferred by the constitution of Ghana, 1992.

Judgment Debt Commission proceedings: The public sittings held by the Judgment Debt Commission.

News Articles/Stories: These are news stories, feature, opinion or columns published in the *Daily Graphic*.

Nature and scope of coverage: These are the basic or inherent features and the extent of coverage the *Daily Graphic* dedicated to the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.

1.12 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter deals with background to the study and also gives a general overview of commissions of inquiry. Additionally, the chapter looks at the research objectives and questions, problem statement, the significance of study, operational definition of terms and concludes with the organization of study. The second chapter discusses the theoretical framework (framing and news value theories) as well as review of related studies. The third chapter explains the methodology used for the study and the data collection and analysis processes. The fourth chapter provides the findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the findings and concludes the study with the limitations of the research and recommendations for future studies.

1.13 Summary

The chapter began with a background giving reasons that led to the setting up of the Judgment Debts Commission. It also gave a general overview and history of commissions of inquiry. The chapter further defined the problem statement, objectives and research questions, the significance of study and the operationalization of key terms used in the study of study.



CHAPTER TWO

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter of the study discusses the theoretical framework underpinning the research. Furthermore, the chapter also reviews scholarly works related to the study. In the view of Wimmer & Dominic (2011) a theory is a set of related propositions that present a systematic view of a phenomenon by specifying relationships among concepts. Most mass media studies are underpinned by theoretical constructs such as media agenda setting, media ownership, social responsibility theory, media gate keeping and so on.

2.1 The Framing Theory

Ervin Goffman conducted the pioneering work on framing in 1974; thus Goffman is regarded as the founder of the framing theory (Botan & Hazelton, 2006). Goffman (1974) defined framing as a “schemata” of interpretation “that enables individuals to locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences of life experiences (p.45). Goffman (1974) assumed that people cannot understand the world fully and always struggle to interpret their life experiences and make sense of the world around them. Goffman called these interpretive designs frames that we use in our day-to-day experience to make sense of the world (ibid). According to Gramson (1989), the manner of framing the news, has a significant impact on how people come to understand social, cultural and political realities. The mass media, it must be noted “serve as a system for communicating images to the general populace” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p. 16). Domfe (1999) posits that framing reveals itself in news effect. When the mass media produce news stories about an issue, the news stories circulate certain knowledge and then the knowledge influences people’s opinion

about the issue. This is because, the media emphasize issues by bringing them into the domain of the public sphere (Sung, 2009).

Scholars have suggested diverse definitions for framing. Tankard and his associates defined framing as organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggest what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration (Severin & Tankard, 2001). Reese (2001) on the other hand explains framing as organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the world. Entman (2004) also asserts that framing is essentially about selecting and highlighting some aspects of issues and events that promote specific interpretation among audience. According to Entman (1991), the essence of framing is sizing – magnifying or shrinking elements of the depicted reality to make them more or less salient. Similarly, Chong and Druckman (2004) are of the view that from the perspectives of social movement literature, framing is seen as a deliberate tactic used by politicians and media to coordinate individuals around particular interpretation of their problem. This view has been challenged by Stromback and Huengo (2008) who postulated that though framing occurs through the actions of editors and reporters, they do not always do so intentionally.

Discussions on framing are usually preceded by the theory of Agenda Setting. Indeed, some scholars refer to framing as second – level agenda setting (Ghanem, 1996). It has also been asserted by Entman (1993) that the contents of news stories include latent implied questions for which frames provide answers. Frames provide answers to the implied questions by performing four functions: defining and diagnosing a problem; identifying a source or cause; providing a judgment; and justifying a solution for the problem. The process helps the mass media to actively define the frames of reference through which audiences engage in public issues (Tuchman,

1978). In several studies, Iyengar (1990, 1991, & 1996 as cited in Chang, 2012) has suggested that news stories can be mainly divided into episodic and thematic frames.

Among the numerous variants of the framing approach, this study employs Iyengar's episodic and thematic method. According to Iyengar (1990/1991), media coverage of political issues falls into two distinct genres; "thematic" and "episodic" news frames. The thematic frame places an issue on some general context and usually takes the form of an in-depth, structural report whereas episodic framing describes issues in terms of individual instances or specific events (Iyengar 1990, 1991 & 1996). It is the intent of this researcher to find out if the episodic frame predominates over the thematic in the *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. The use of either episodic or thematic news framing affect how individuals assign responsibility for political issues (ibid). According to Iyengar (1991, p. 64) "the episodic framing tends to elicit individualistic rather than societal attributions of responsibility, while thematic framing has the opposite effect". This exposure to episodic news made individuals attribute the cause of social issues to individuals rather that to broader societal forces.

Episodic frames depict issues from the standpoint of concrete instances or specific events where as thematic frames place public issues in some general or abstract context, highlighting the historical background and interpretive analysis of the issues (Iyengar & Simon, 1994). Thematic or episodic frames give a different influence on a media user's perception of the issue the media reports. While stories framed thematically evoke more structural attributions, episodic frames evolve more individualistic attributions (Iyengar, 1990). Having been informed by the literature, the theoretical orientations of framing will be used in understanding the frames the *Daily Graphic* newspaper adopted in the coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.

2.2 The theory of news worthiness

Johnson and Harris (1966) posit that news items compete for space and may be measured according to their comparative importance. They may also be measured according to their intrinsic importance, which determines the length and how they are presented (ibid). Nossek (2008) says news is a genre of mass media content resulting from a journalist's information gathering decisions and following professional practices and norms.

Harrison (2006) argues news is judged to be newsworthy by journalists who exercise their news sense within the constraints of the news organization within which they operate. Lippmann (1922) suggested attributes or conventions for the selection of news items to be published. However, citations on news values have been credited to Galtung & Ruge (McGregor, 2005). Their study has been held up as the foundation study of news values (Bell, 1991).

Galtung and Ruge according to McGregor (2005), conducted a study on the appearance of news about Congo, Cuba and Cyprus in four Norwegian newspapers published in the Journal for International Peace Research in 1965. They discovered that when the frequency of an event is related to the frequency of appearance in a news medium, its chances of becoming news are higher. They further concluded that the more an event satisfies 12 conditions identified, the more likely it will be chosen as a news item. The 12 criteria are Breadth; Frequency; Negativity; Novelty and Lack of ambiguity. The other seven are: Lack of ambiguity; Personalization; Significance; Reference to elite nations; Agreement; continuity and composition.

Jorge (2008) disaggregated the seven as follows: four are connected to identification with the audience while the final three are linked to the ways of covering news. Before the work of Galtung & Ruge, Johnson and Harris (1966) recommended in their work that news items have

intrinsic characteristics issues known as news values. The presences or absence of these values decides its importance and thus guarantees readers attention (ibid).

In the view of Conley & Lambie (2006), news values will determine whether stories are to be pursued; if pursued and whether they will be published. They will determine if published, where the stories will be placed in the news presentation (ibid). In the perspective of events and stories, Schulz defines news value as “those features of an event that determines its news worthiness (Schulz, 1982, p. 5). He hypothesizes that “events with a highly prominent coverage, satisfy to a high degree, the news factor criteria (ibid, p 54.). Harcup & O’Neil (2001) are of the view that news value informs the ground rules that come into operation when journalists select stories.

Galtung & Ruge (1965) propose a chain of news communication that involves the process of selection, distortion and replication. They hypothesize that the more an event satisfies the criteria or news factors, the more likely that it will be registered as news (selection). Once selected, what makes the event newsworthy, according to the factors will be accentuated (distortion) and finally, that selection and distortion will be repeated in all steps in the chain from the event to the reader (ibid).

In evaluating news worthiness, Johnson & Harris (1966) propose the following factors of magnitude: Degree of variation of status quo (intensity); The number of people affected (extension); Distance from the event (proximity); Time of the event (opportunity); Significance of results arising out of the event (consequence) and Diversity of news values (variety).

The theory of news value or news worthiness is important to the study because, the Judgment Debts Commission was set up just two months before the December 2012 elections. Whilst it was subsisting, the focus of the media is likely to shift to the 2012 general elections and the

protracted election petition case in its aftermath. Thus while all these unprecedented activities were happening, this study seeks to find out the level of attention given to the Judgment Debts Commission by the *Daily Graphic* newspaper. Practitioners in the media industry and scholars understand that the decision to publish and give prominence to a news story, particularly in terms of size and placement are informed by news value or worthiness of the event. Thus, this theory aims at identifying the level of attention the *Daily Graphic* gave to the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission.

2.3 REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Very little can be accounted for with regards to literature on press coverage of commissions of inquiry. This may be due to the occasional nature of their set up.

Gyan (2007) conducted a study to determine what influences private newspapers in their coverage of the proceedings of commissions of inquiry. The focus of his study was to ascertain how the *Daily Guide* and *Ghana Palaver* newspapers covered the committee of inquiry set up to investigate the MV Benjamin and East Legon cocaine scandals.

The papers used in the study were the *Daily Guide* and *Ghana Palaver* newspapers are known to lean towards the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) respectively in their reportage. Using quantitative content analysis, he examined all the editions of the two papers within the study period; his findings were that the background of the two newspapers influenced the coverage of the cocaine scandal committee of inquiry. Thus, *Palaver* did not publish any favorable story about the NPP government likewise the *Daily Guide* not also publish any favorable story about the NDC government then in consonance with the political

affiliations of their owners. The findings of Gyan (2007) will be a yardstick in measuring how the *Daily Graphic* covered the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission.

In her studies to find out the type of news frames applied in the coverage of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC) in the Apartheid era, Cantero (2011) admitted that the coverage of the media was extensive and further established that the episodic rather than the thematic frame was used. The way the media reported the process only added a lack of structural analysis about apartheid (ibid). The media covered the SATRC without subjecting the content of the information they gathered to deeper criticism therefore deepening the analysis gap (ibid). Ultimately, Cantero (2011) contends that the media's downplay of race in their coverage of the SATRC have contributed to race relations that remain problematic in contemporary South Africa (ibid). Thus the media projected the cases of the Commission in political and human rights terms, with minimal attention to racism which was one of the key terms of reference for the setting up of the SATRC. The SATRC concentrated on two important case studies, the Terre Blanche murder and the Reitz four case. It was revealed that the newspapers framed racial issues better today than during the Truth and Reconciliation Process (ibid). The newspapers studied concentrated on the few individuals involved while others highlighted the wrongness of the acts perpetrated.

Conducting a study on the representation of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the media, Verdoolaege (2005) focused on the linguistic and visual aspect of the media discourse. In the study, he found out ways in which the discourse was ideologically colored. Focusing on the theories of critical discourse analysis: sensationalism, bias and simplification were distinguishing aspects inherent in the media reportage of the activities of the SATRC. That seem to indicate an uncritical approach of some media towards the Commission.

The features identified were applied to a particular Television Programme [Special Report on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)] that covered the SATRC. It was revealed that although the programme tried to stand as example of independent and critical journalism, it could not avoid pitfalls of partiality and sensationalism (ibid).

Thus the discourse was reconciliation oriented as the result on the TV programme indicated and the commission's objective of promoting national reconciliation was met. The sensational and partial reporting lowered the success of impact the SATRC had on the society.

Howsam (2015) focused on media coverage of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to assess how the media reported the commission's promotion of healing and reconciliation. Individual texts were examined by sampling newspaper articles with a focus on the syntax, grammar, the nature of the text, verb tenses, and timing of word choice, literary devices and implications of these selections on the reading public. A focus was also placed on the dominant discourses between the state and media with respect to the battle for self-determination of the aboriginal group. Dwelling on the correlation between media coverage and public perception, Howsam (2015) used a qualitative method of textual analysis on how the media framed the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Howsam (ibid) examined 49 newspaper articles each with over 500 words in length as made available by Canada Newsstand major daily. From an "all text" search of the key issues-indigenous and non-indigenous residential schools, she focused her research on seven articles published per year beginning in 2008 and concluding in 2014 when the national reconciliation event was concluded (ibid). The study both confirmed and nuanced the lack of binary between government, survivors and the TRC texts from the coverage of the media (ibid).

Hunt (2014) examined how the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times* covered and represented the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Special Court for Sierra Leone. A deeper highlight was focused on how the three American newspapers covered the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the American media (ibid).

The study looked at African transitional justice through the work of the Commission and analysed the media coverage of the TRC of South Africa and the TRC and Special Court of Sierra Leone in order to understand the characteristics of these transitional justice process (ibid). She used the qualitative textual analysis methodology where she analyzed news articles published during the time frame of study (ibid). She selected sections from each newspaper and analyzed what is discussed with one research question in mind- how did major newspapers report on transitional justice in South Africa vs. in Sierra Leone? Specifically, what aspect of the methods and operations do they focus on and how do they differ between the two countries? The coverage showed that the crisis narrative was obsessed with high-profile figures. Also it had a biased and stereo typical view of how conflicts in Africa drives what information we receive or do not receive about peace and peace building (ibid).

Also of interest was Hunt (2014) finding in her study that the media do not show readers a balanced portrait of both conflict and peace-making on the continent of Africa (ibid). If given the choice between covering peaceful processes and chaotic conflicts such as in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively – the media will most likely choose conflict – and in their coverage of the peace making processes (TRCs) they did not give the full scope of what citizens of the countries think about the TRC or the war crimes tribunals and how these procedures might contribute to reconciliation (ibid). In a comparative analysis with how local media in the two countries

covered proceedings of the Commission, it was revealed that the media in South Africa focused on the question of amnesty. But even more so on high – profile figures and revelations – or lack of – that came out of their hearings (ibid). The media failed to examine what those revelations meant in the greater scope of the nation’s reconciliation (ibid). In Sierra Leone, peace building was for the most part ignored completely thus by focusing only on other conflicts in the region, and ignoring the importance of seeing the TRC and SCSL succeed in Sierra Leone, the media painted a picture of a fractured West Africa that could only be pieced together by international intervention (ibid).

2.4 Summary

The chapter discussed the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The framing theory which suggest that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or consideration was discussed with special focus on Iyengar’s episodic and thematic frames which are part of the objectives of this current study. The theory of news worthiness was also discussed because of the issues, personalities and revelations made during the proceedings. Related studies were also reviewed in this chapter in order to situate the study properly and within the context of previous works done on commissions of inquiry.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study examines how the *Daily Graphic* covered the proceedings of the commission of inquiry on Judgment Debts. This chapter explains the method used for conducting the study and discusses the research design, methods of data collection, the study period, sampling procedure, unit of analysis, coding scheme and procedure for data analysis. Quantitative content analysis was used in conducting the research to be able to respond to the research questions within the theoretical perspective of framing and newsworthiness

3.1 Research design

There are three known methodological approaches to research in the social and behavioral sciences. Creswell (2013) have identified these as the qualitative, quantitative and the mixed approaches. This study employed the quantitative content analysis technique. Content analysis was chosen because according to Rife et al (1998), it is one of the most practical methods for studying media content. Content analysis is the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics (Neurendorf, 2002). Rife et al (2005) also explain content analysis as the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods. Content analysis is a systematic method that permits valid inferences about the message (Weber, 1990).

Content analysis is commonly used to describe or identify media content, comparing varying media contents, assessing the image of particular groups in society and establishing a starting point for media studies (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). Content analysis has also been described

by Barbie (1992) as being amongst the most appropriate methods for studying processes or events occurring over a long period of time. It is the view of this researcher that content analysis as a research design, fits the purpose in studying the press coverage of the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission which lasted for about 15 months.

3.2 Population and sample size

Population is the larger group to which one hopes to apply results of the findings (Frankel and Wallen, 2002). The population or universe for this study was all editions published by *the Daily Graphic* newspaper from January 2013 to December 2013 and then August 2014 to October 2014. The gap between December 2013 to August 2014 was necessitated by the fact that a fire outbreak compelled the Judgment Debts Commission to suspend sitting for seven months (December 2013 to July 2014). The editions of the *Daily Graphic* newspaper within this period have an equal chance of being sampled. *Daily Graphic* publishes six times per week (Monday to Saturday).

Barbie (1992) defines sampling as the process of selecting a set of elements from a population such that attributes of those elements accurately represent the attributes of the total population from which the elements are selected. Constraints with respect to time permitted an analysis of 48 editions of the *Daily Graphic* newspaper.

3.3 Sampling procedure

The probability sampling method of composite week was used for selecting the sample for the study. Every other month, beginning January 2013, within the study period was selected and a composite week was constructed for each month in a sample by selecting, for example, one

Monday; drawn at random from the four or five possible Mondays in a particular month, one Tuesday also drawn at random from the four or five possible Tuesdays in a month (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). This process was repeated through to Saturday which ensured that all the days were included. This was how the dates of the publications of the *Daily Graphic* were selected through the composite week: all Mondays in the month of January were written on pieces of paper, folded and dropped in a container after which one Monday is randomly selected. This process was repeated for Tuesday through to Saturday to generate the composite week of six days and specific dates for each month of the two years. 48 editions of the *Daily Graphic* thus represented the sample size.

3.4 Unit of analyses

The unit of analysis is described as the smallest element of a content analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). The unit of analysis for the study was all articles on the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission in the *Daily Graphic* newspaper within the stipulated period of study, qualified as an analysis unit. The articles include simple straight news stories, editorials, opinion articles and features.

3.5 Data collection technique and coding procedure

The study of Hayes (2008) on content analysis guided the coding scheme formulation for this study. Data collection in content analysis study is referred to as 'coding'. Wimmer and Dominick (2003) explained coding as the placement of unit of analyses into various categories. The unit of analysis devised from the data collection process was assigned to the content categories. The following operational definitions are given to the content categories:

News Article type: The news article type may either be straight news, feature article or letters to the editor which contained information about the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission.

Source of news (news maker): this was about the person who a news story was attributed to. Analysis of this was to find out the person who made the news during the proceedings.

Placement of story: This was concerned about the page on which the news article was placed. The categorization was as follows: front page, back page, center spread and other pages.

Story enhancement: This category seeks to ascertain whether a story was accompanied by photograph or not. The element could be with or without a photograph.

Story Frame: The stories covered on the Judgment Debts Commission will be coded on either the thematic or episodic frames.

News story size: the page size dedicated to a story

By-line or Originators of News: These were the sources of or originators of the news item. The category of sources employed is staff of the newspaper, a news agency or an anonymous person.

3.6 Data analysis and presentation

The data collected will be analyzed according to the coding categories using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.7 Summary

This chapter explained the quantitative content analyses method, the sampling procedure, the instruments used, the data gathering and analyses process.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the findings of the quantitative data gathered based on the objectives of the study. This study was undertaken with the objective of determining the nature and scope as well as the attention and frames used for covering the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings by the *Daily Graphic*

4.1 RQ 1. Nature and scope of coverage of the Judgment Debt Commission proceedings by the *Daily Graphic*.

This research question investigated the nature and scope of *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission. The nature and scope was broken down into the following categories: the total number of judgment debts related news stories published, source of news story, type of story and the origin of story.

4.2 Total number of news articles (Judgment and Non-Judgment Debt stories)

TABLE 1: Total number of Stories during the period

Year	Total number of judgment debt stories	Total number of non-judgment debts stories	Total
2013	46 (1.42%)	3202 (98.58%)	3248(100%)
2014	19 (1.68%)	1108 (98.31%)	1127(100%)
Total	65 (1.48%)	4310 (98.51%)	4375(100%)

Table 1 above illustrates a total of 4375 news articles published by the *Daily Graphic* in the 48 sampled editions during the study period (see chapter one). The indication is that out of a total of 4375 stories published during the period of study by the *Daily Graphic*, 4310 news stories representing 98.51 percent were non-judgment debts related news stories whilst 65 news stories representing 1.48 percent, were judgment debts related. The breakdown of the 65 news stories within the period of study are 46 stories representing 1.42 percent published in 2013 as against 19 stories representing 1.68 percent published in 2014. From the table above, dedicating 1.48 percent of total news articles within the study period suggest that the nature and scope of coverage given to the Judgment Debts Commission was not wide.

4.3 Source of news articles on the Judgment Debt Commission proceedings published in the *Daily Graphic*

Figure 1: Source of news articles

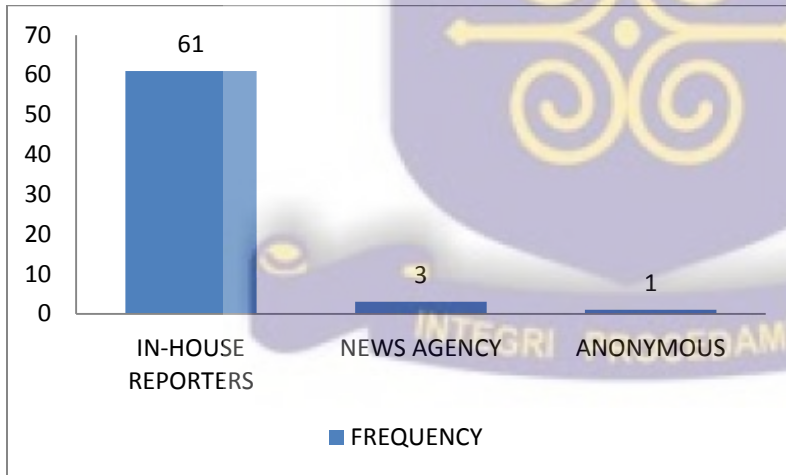
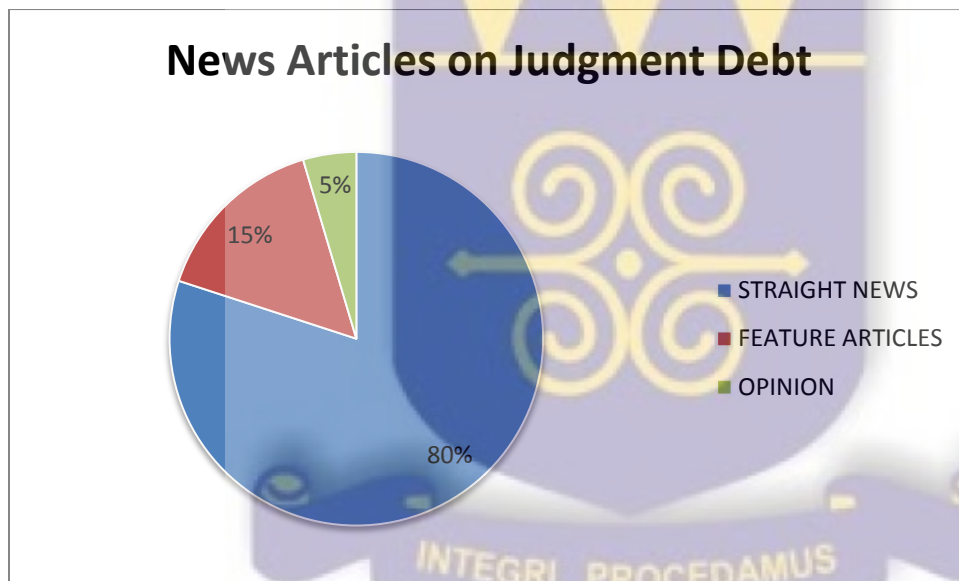


Figure 2 shows that news articles generated by in-house reporters dominated the sources of the *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. Out of a total of 65 news articles on the proceedings published in the *Daily Graphic*, 61 news stories representing 93.81percent, were from in-house reporters working with the *Daily Graphic*. New agencies

reported three news articles representing 4.61 percent of the stories whilst one news article, representing 1.53percent of news articles, was reported without a byline. A news house sourcing a whopping 93.81% of its news stories from its own reporters suggest that the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings was of much importance to the *Daily Graphic* and thus they gave little room from sources other than their in-house journalists who may not believe in their editorial values and style. Thus the *Daily Graphic* took the work of the proceedings seriously.

4.4 Coverage of Judgment Debts Commission proceedings by story type

Figure 2: Coverage by Story type



The study found that most of the stories on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings (80%) published by the *Daily Graphic* fell in the straight news category. Opinion articles were very few with only three stories representing 4.6 percent. However, feature articles had ten news stories, representing 15.3% percent. Thus eight out of ten news articles were straight news stories. This means that the reporters and sources of the news stories published in the *Daily Graphic* did little

analysis or wrote the stories from their point of view considering the fact that 80 percent fell in the straight news category.

4.5 Attributions to news articles on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings

Table 2: Attribution of news stories

Attribution of news articles	Frequency	Valid Percent
Sole Commissioner(commission)	31	46.15%
State Institution	9	13.84%
Others(Individuals)	25	38.46%
Total	65	100%

Usually, journalists attribute their news stories to particular individuals or groups. Table 2 above shows that the sole commissioner (Justice Yaw Appau) dominated the source/attribution given to a news story from the proceedings. Out of 65 news articles that were published, 31(46.15%) had the sole commissioner as source of information. State institutions had 19 news stories representing 13.84 percent attributed to them, whilst 3.84 percent were attributed to various individuals. The distribution of stories suggests that the *Daily Graphic* regarded the comments, suggestions and lamentations of the sole commissioner, Justice Yaw Appau, as newsworthy hence attributing a little over half of the total news stories to him whilst almost 40 percent were attributed to statements made by individuals.

4.6 RQ 2: How much attention (prominence) was given to the Judgment Debt commission proceedings by the *Daily Graphic* coverage?

Table below present findings on the level of attention the *Daily Graphic* dedicated to its coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. The categories under this section are page size of a news story, type of enhancement and placement of story.

4.7 Page size of news articles on the Judgment Debt Commission proceedings

Table 3: Page size of stories

Story Size	Frequency	Valid Percent
$\frac{3}{4}$ page	13	20%
$\frac{1}{2}$ page	15	23.07%
$\frac{1}{4}$ page	26	40%
Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ p	11	16.92%
Total	65	100%

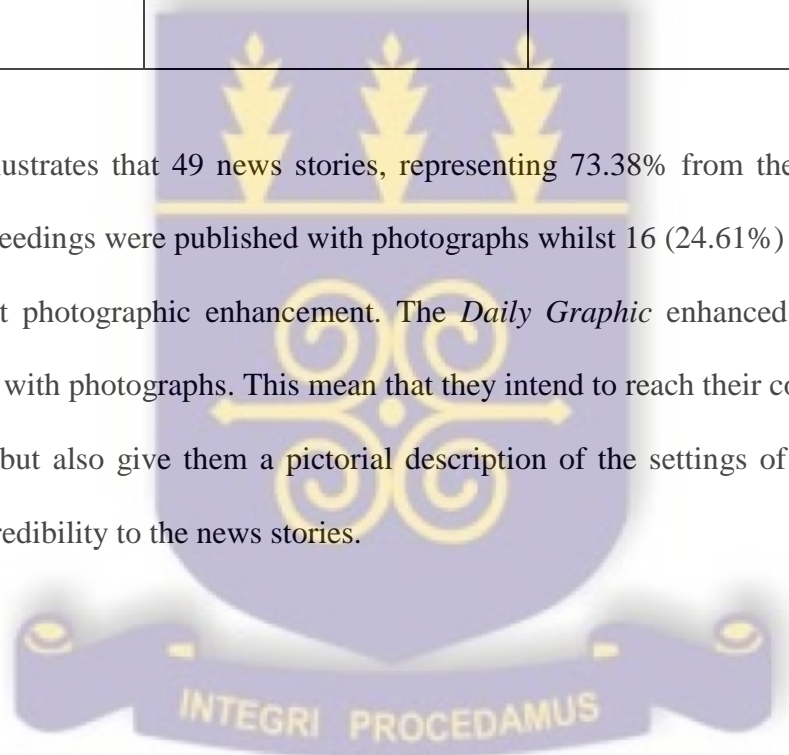
Table 3 shows that the space occupied by news stories published from the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings were mostly $\frac{1}{4}$ of a page. There were 40% of such news stories. Also, 15 (23.07%) of news articles occupied $\frac{1}{2}$ page. Table 2 also illustrates that 11 stories, representing 16.92%, were published on less than $\frac{1}{4}$ page. This means that the *Daily Graphic* dedicated at least half a page to about 4 in 10 (43.07%) of news stories from the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. This is almost half of the 65 news stories that were published. Thus it can be said that there was prominence with respect to the size of the news stories published from the proceedings.

4.8 Enhancement of news stories from the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings

Table 4: Enhancement of news stories

Story Enhancement	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	49	73.38%
No	16	24.61%
Total	65	100%

Table 5 above illustrates that 49 news stories, representing 73.38% from the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings were published with photographs whilst 16 (24.61%) news stories were published without photographic enhancement. The *Daily Graphic* enhanced three-quarters of their news stories with photographs. This mean that they intend to reach their consumers not only through reading, but also give them a pictorial description of the settings of the Commission. This adds more credibility to the news stories.



4.9 Placement of news stories from the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings

Figure 3: Page Placement of news articles

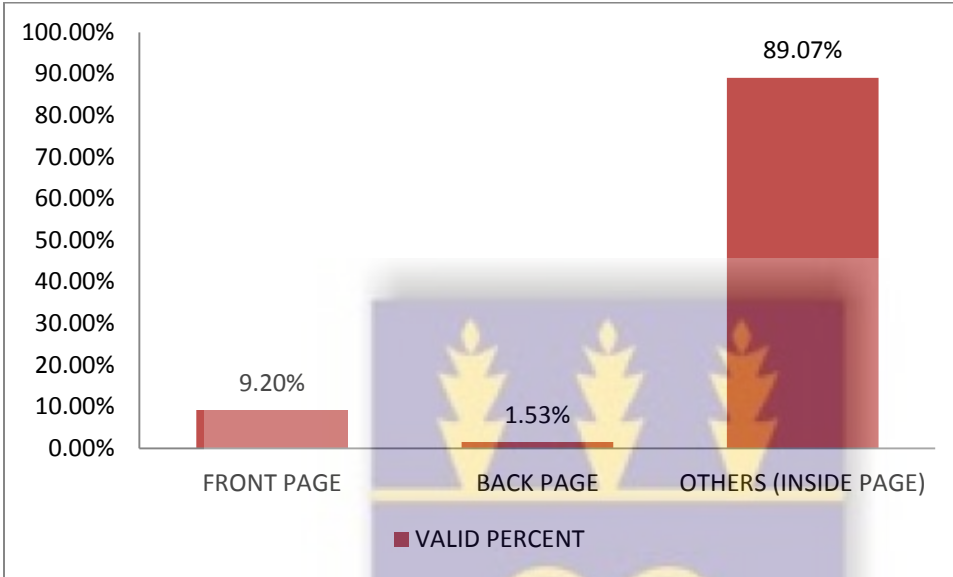


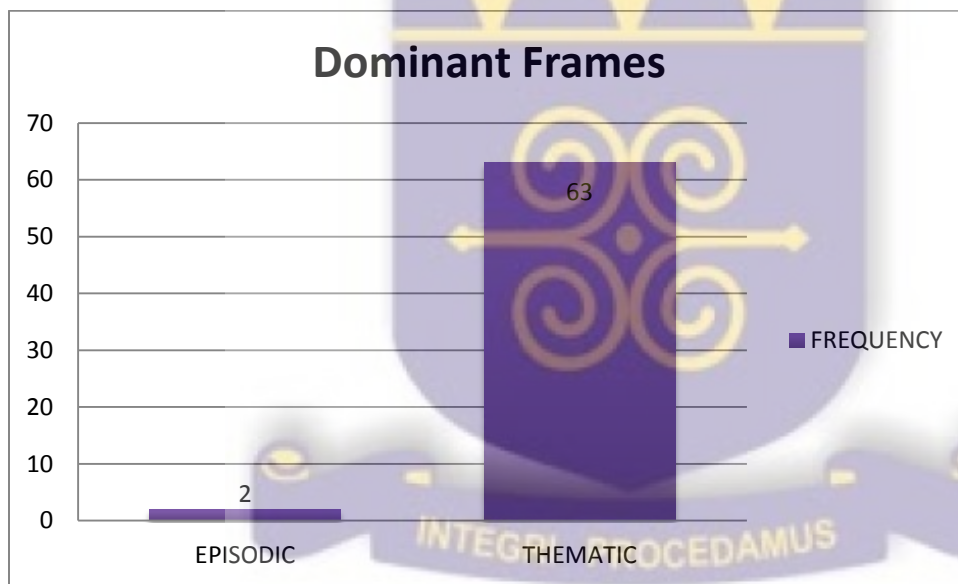
Figure 3 above illustrates the distribution of news stories on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings with regards to their placement in the *Daily Graphic*. The figure shows that there were no center spread stories on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings during the period under study. There were as many as 54(83.07%) news stories on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings published on other pages (inside pages) with six stories representing 9.2 percent placed on the front page. One story representing 1.53% was published on the back page during the period of study. The placement of almost 9 out of 10 Judgment Debts Commission proceedings stories on the inside pages indicate the low level of importance the *Daily Graphic* gave to the Commission.

4.10 RQ 3: To examine whether the thematic or episodic frames dominated the coverage of the proceedings by the Daily Graphic?

According to Entman (2004) framing emphasize the selection and highlighting of certain facets of reality to encourage a particular evaluation. The frame categories for the purpose of this study are the episodic and thematic frames. The type of frame employed indicates the orientation of the *Daily Graphic* coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.

4.11 Type of frame (Thematic or Episodic)

Figure 4: Dominant frame used in covering the Judgment Debts Commission

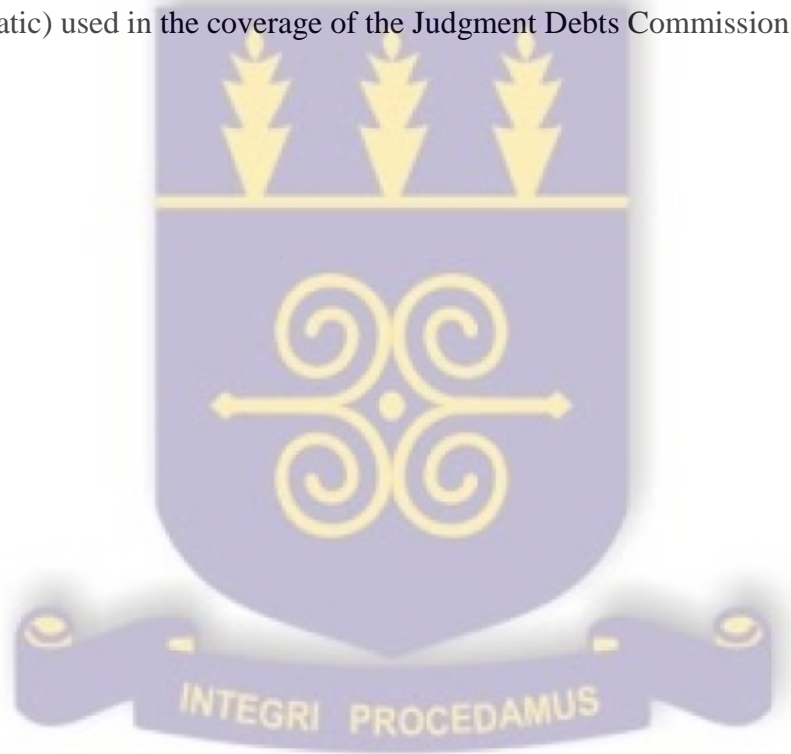


The findings presented in figure 4 above shows that majority of the news stories, 63 news stories representing 96.92 percent were framed thematically in the *Daily Graphic* coverage of the proceedings. Thus, over nine in ten of the news stories published by the *Daily Graphic* employed the thematic frame. On the other hand, the *Daily Graphic* employed the episodic frame in only two (3.07%) of its stories which is low when compared to the thematic. The thematic orientation given to almost all (96.92%) of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings news stories by the

Daily Graphic suggest that the reporters gave the backgrounds or historical antecedents to the various issues that made the stories they published from the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.

4.12 Summary

The study findings based on the objectives of the study were presented and analysed under this chapter. The presentation focused on the nature and scope, attention and the dominant frames (episodic or thematic) used in the coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This section is under four sub-themes. Each sub-theme discusses the four research questions in relation to the results of the analysis.

5.1 Research Question 1: Nature and Scope of the coverage of the Judgment Debts

Commission proceedings by the *Daily Graphic*

This study established that during the period under study (see chapter 2), the *Daily Graphic* published a total of 4375 news articles. Out of this number, 65 news articles were about the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission whilst 4310 news stories were about news articles on non-Judgment Debts issues. Publishing 65 news stories on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings out of a total of 4375 news stories is very low considering the task assigned the commission to unravel the mystery behind the reckless use of state funds as Judgment Debts payments. On the other the hand, publishing 65 news stories in 48 sampled editions of the flagship *Daily Graphic* confirms the position of McGregor (2005) that the frequency of an event is related to the frequency of its appearance in a news medium and that its chances of becoming news are higher. The 65 news stories out of 48 sampled editions also indicates that the *Daily Graphic* is adhering to the constitutional mandate imposed on it in Article 162(3) of the 1992 constitution to uphold the accountability and responsibility of government to the people of Ghana.

The study under this research question also examined the source or origin of the news articles published by the *Daily Graphic* on the Proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission. This category refers to the reporters or news agency a news story is credited to. A little of over nine in ten of the news stories representing 93.84 percent were credited to staff reporters of the *Daily Graphic*. News agencies and anonymous sources were credited with almost one in ten (1.53%) of the news stories from the Judgment Debts commission proceedings. A sample of the news stories in the editions of the period under study indicates that *Daily Graphic* was consistent by having a number of their reporters filing the story primarily from the commission. Notably ‘Arku Jasmine’ and ‘Edmund Smith Asante’ were two reporters whose names were consistently used as the by-lines. In so doing the *Daily Graphic* agreed with the assertion of Harris (2006) that news is judged to be news worthy by journalists who exercise their news sense within the constraints of the news organisation within which they operate. This is a testimony of the importance the *Daily Graphic* attached to the proceedings. News agency (Ghana News Agency) and anonymous sources were credited with almost one in ten (1.53%) of the news stories from the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings.

The study also established the type of news stories carried by the *Daily Graphic* on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. Over eight in ten of the stories representing 80 percent were straight news stories whilst one (15%) in ten news stories fell under the feature articles category. Less than one (5%) in ten of the news stories were opinion articles. The adoption of the straight news format of news reporting sends a message that the *Daily Graphic* wants the news reader to independently judge news report on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings confirming the position of Entman (1993) that the contents of news stories include latent implied questions for which the public must independently judge. This also sits well with the argument of Domfe

(1999) that when the mass media produce news stories about an issue, the news stories circulate certain knowledge which influences their opinion about the issue.

The study again revealed that almost half (46.15%) of the stories were attributed to the sole commissioner. In the reports, he usually expressed worry at some of the revelations made by public servants who appeared before him. An example was this headline, “Huge Judgment Debts linked to lack of coordination between Police, AG” –the 25th July, 2013 edition of the *Daily Graphic*. The remaining attributions were shared between state institutions (13.84%) and individuals who appeared before the commission (38.46%). The attribution of almost half of the total of 65 news stories to the Judgment Debts Commission sole commissioner implies that amongst the various issues that came up during the proceedings, the comments by Justice Yaw Appau, the sole commissioner were newsworthy supporting the views of Johnson and Harris (1966) that headlines and contents are usually sourced from popular individuals. Also, the attribution of almost 4 in 10 stories to individuals who appeared before the commission is worth noting. An instance is the controversy over the where about of the proceeds generated from the sale of the drill ship to satisfy a judgment debt condition. Individuals Tsatsu Tsikata, a former chief executive officer of the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation under the NDC government and Honorable Kobina Tahir Hammond, a former minister for energy under the NPP government comes to mind.

5.2 Research Question 2: Attention (Prominence) the *Daily Graphic* coverage dedicated to the Judgment Debt Commission proceedings

According to Croteau and Hoynes (2003) news editors consider a lot of factors before deciding which position a news article should occupy. As figure 3 indicates the study revealed that more

than eight(89.07%) news stories in ten were placed in the inside pages whilst a little over one(10.73%) out of ten news stories were placed on the front and back pages respectively. Thus in terms of page placement, *Daily Graphic* did a lot of inside page stories and hence did not give much prominence to news stories from the Judgment Debt Commission proceedings. This suggests that the coverage was only a fulfillment of the public service mandate specifically imposed under article 162(5) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana.

Enhancement of stories also indicates the level of attention the *Daily Graphic* gave to its coverage. With respect to story enhancement, the study revealed that about three-quarters (75%) of news articles were accompanied by photographs. This could be an indication that the *Daily Graphic* attempted in its coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings to give additional impetus to the news stories it published by adding photos to enhance its report, supporting further the assertion of Gramson (1989) that the manner of framing a news item has significant impact on how people come to understand realities.

According to Peng (2008, p. 362) the “physical space devoted to an element of a particular story in print news medium frame the story in such a way that the elements taking more space will be influential in the reader’s interpretation of the story”. This study revealed that 26 news stories (40%) were at least quarter page and 13 news stories representing 20% were dedicated to half a page. On the other hand, 11(16.92%) news stories were less than a quarter page. The amount of space dedicated to the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings can be said to be satisfactory taking into account the views of Nossek (2008) that news articles are measured according to their intrinsic importance which determines the length of space and how they are presented. On the basis of the three categories (placement, enhancement and size) when put together to determine

attention or prominence in this study, the level of attention given to the coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings by the *Daily Graphic* could be described as encouraging.

5.3 Research Question 3: Which frame (episodic or thematic) dominated the *Daily Graphic*'s coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings?

Reese (2001) explains frames as organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the world. This study anticipated that the *Daily Graphic* as a result of the constitutional obligation imposed on it by articles 163 of the 1992 constitution and being state-owned will shift towards the thematic frame in its coverage of the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. The findings confirmed this. More than nine (96.97%) in ten of the news articles on the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings were reported by giving the historical background (thematic frame) supporting the scholarly proposition of Iyengar (1990,1991 and 1996). Under the thematic frame the, *Daily Graphic* gave the trend though short of how a judgment debt came about. The adoption of the thematic rather than the episodic frame contradicts the finding of Cantero (2011) who though admitting that the media coverage of the South African Truth Commission by the media was extensive, the episodic rather than the thematic frame was used. The media, according to Cantero (2011) divided its work to cover the TRC hearings without subjecting the content of the information they gathered to deeper criticisms. The remaining percentage of 3.07 percent representing two news stories were episodically reported with less focus on the historical background of the issues making up the news stories.

5.4 Conclusion

The study basically sought to find out how the *Daily Graphic* covered the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. Underpinned by the theories of news value and framing, the study adopted the methodology of quantitative content analysis to establish the nature and scope of coverage; the attention (prominence) given to the coverage and the frames (thematic or episodic) employed in the coverage. The study largely showed that though the *Daily Graphic* through in-house reporters dedicated the needed attention to the coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission with respect to frequency, the coverage was mostly focused on straight news format of reporting bereft of analysis of the issues involved. Thus the coverage in terms of prominence is satisfactory. This is due to the fact that news articles published were most of the time accompanied by visual enhancement which usually enhances the aesthetic pleasure of the readers. The only low point under this objective is in respect of story placement, where majority of the stories were hidden in the inside pages other than front or back page.

With regards to the third objective of the study the *Daily Graphic* adopted the thematic method of framing as against the episodic method. This ensured that the *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the proceedings of the Judgment Debts Commission were focused on the facts and backgrounds that led to the payments of the monies rather than on personalities and sensationalism. Thus the *Daily Graphic* in its coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings displayed a lot of objectivity hence re-affirming the constitutional mandate under chapter 12 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. Overall, the *Daily Graphic's* coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings can be said to be consist with the newspaper's national character.

5.5 Limitation of study

The study was faced with a number of limitations: First, lack of funds for graduate research limited the scope of the study to only the coverage by the *Daily Graphic* of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings. An inclusion of a privately-owned newspaper in the study of the media coverage of the Judgment Debts Commission proceedings would have given a broader perspective.

5.6 Recommendation

Because the proceedings of commissions of inquiry generate a lot of public interest, they are covered live on national television, therefore, a study on television or radio coverage of the proceedings of commissions of inquiry will be an interesting area to explore.

Moreover, the coverage could have been improved if the reporters had use less technical words in writing their stories. Reports from future Commissions of Inquiry must be published in more prominent pages like the front page or back page.

Also, it is recommended that future studies on media coverage of commissions of inquiry should consider a comparative study between a state-owned newspaper and a private press. Such a study will help give a broader perspective and insight on all the issues that transpired at the public sittings of commissions of inquiry.

Finally, it is recommended that a triangulated study comprising of a quantitative and qualitative study should be considered. It is the expectation that such a study will give a wider scope to the coverage.

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APPENDIX 1

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING GUIDE

PRESS COVERAGE OF THE JUDGMENT DEBT COMMISSION

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE DAILY GRAPHIC

Questions

1. Reference Code: (Begins from 001)

2. Date Published:..... (Day/ Month/ Year)

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE DAILY GRAPHIC COVERAGE OF THE PROCEEDINGS

3. Total number of news stories.....

4. Total number of Judgment Debt commission proceeding news stories.....

5. Source of news story

1. In-house reporters

2. News Agency

3. Anonymous

6. Attribution to a news story

1. Sole commissioner (Judgment Debt commission)

2. State Institution

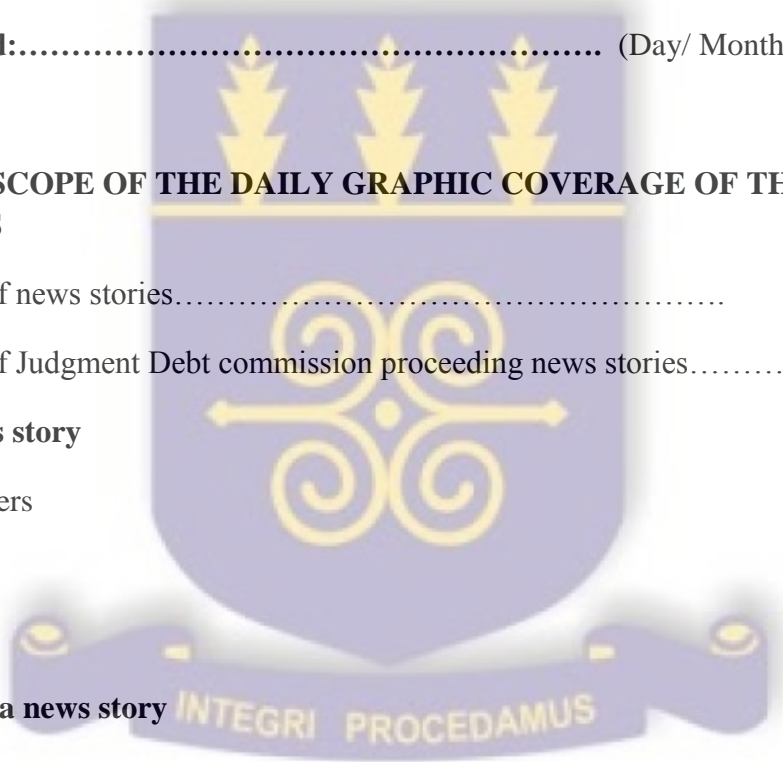
3. Others (Individuals)

7. Type of news story

1. Straight news story

2. Feature Articles

3. Opinion Articles



ATTENTION OR PROMINENCE GIVEN TO JUDGMENT DEBTS COMMISSION STORIES

8. Size of news story

1. Three-quarter page
2. Less than quarter page
3. One -quarter page
4. Half page
5. Full page

9. Enhancement of news story

1. with Photograph
2. without Photograph

10. Placement of news story

1. Front page
2. Back page
3. Others (Inside page)

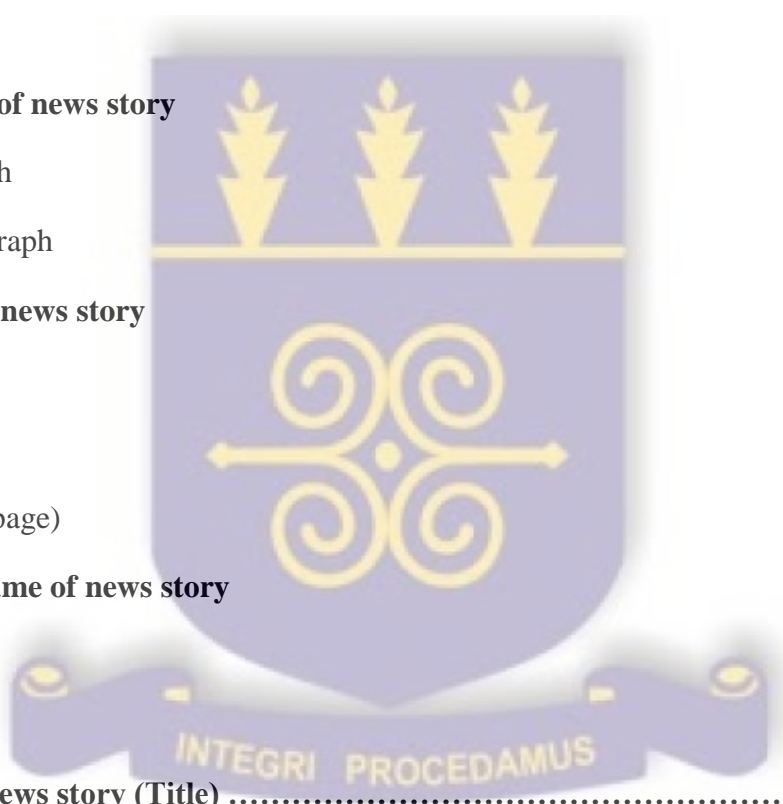
11. Dominant frame of news story

1. Episodic
2. Thematic

12. Headline of news story (Title)

13. Brief Summary of news story.....

14. By-line.....



Episodic frame: These are news stories frame with no background information or details.

Thematic frame: These are news stories with a lot of background information or details.

