

**THE REPRESENTATION OF ISLAM IN GHANAIAN NEWSPAPERS: A CONTENT  
ANALYSIS OF *DAILY GRAPHIC* AND *DAILY GUIDE***



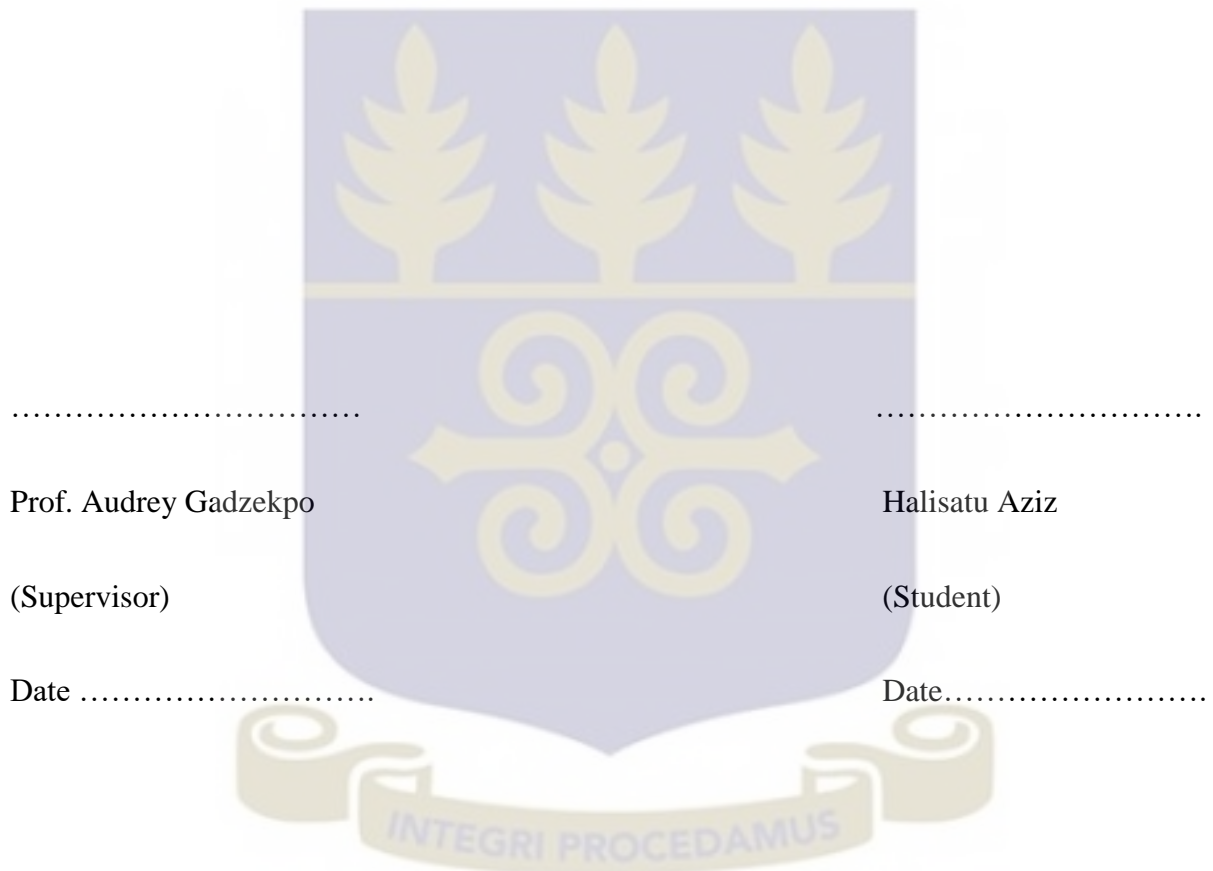
**BY  
HALISATU AZIZ**

**THIS LONG ESSAY IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON,  
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### Declaration

I declare that except for the works of other people that have been duly acknowledged, the work presented in this long essay was done by me under the supervision of Professor Audrey Gadzekpo. This work has not been submitted either in part or whole to any other educational institution for the award of any degree or certificate.



## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Aziz Family.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my family who supported me with prayers, financial and material assistance. Thank you.

Prof. Audrey Gadzepko, thanks for your patience, able guidance and your time spent on this work. God bless you.

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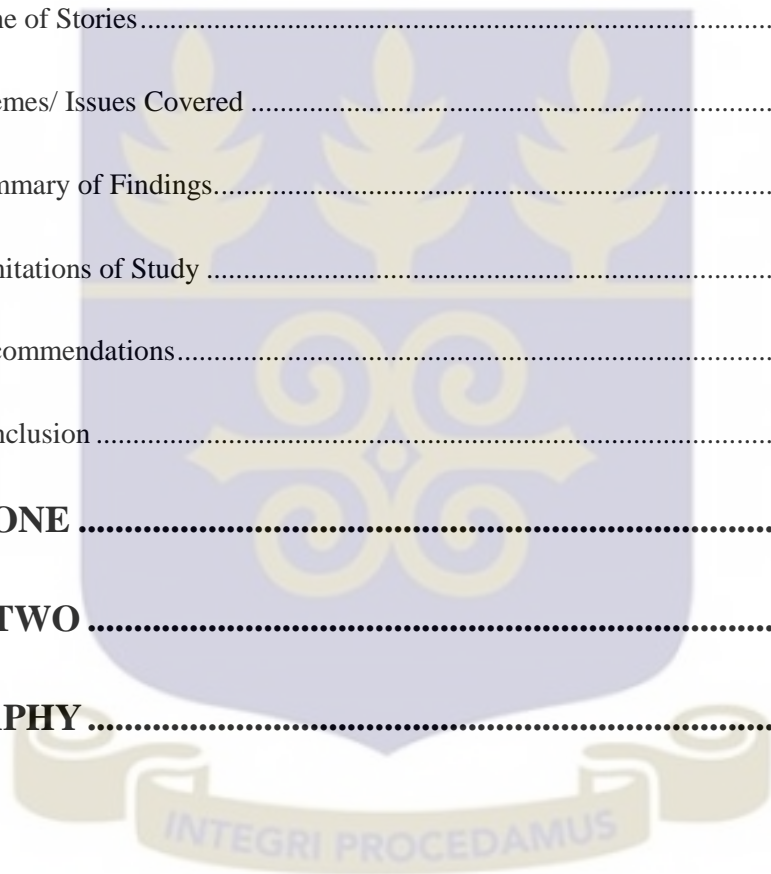


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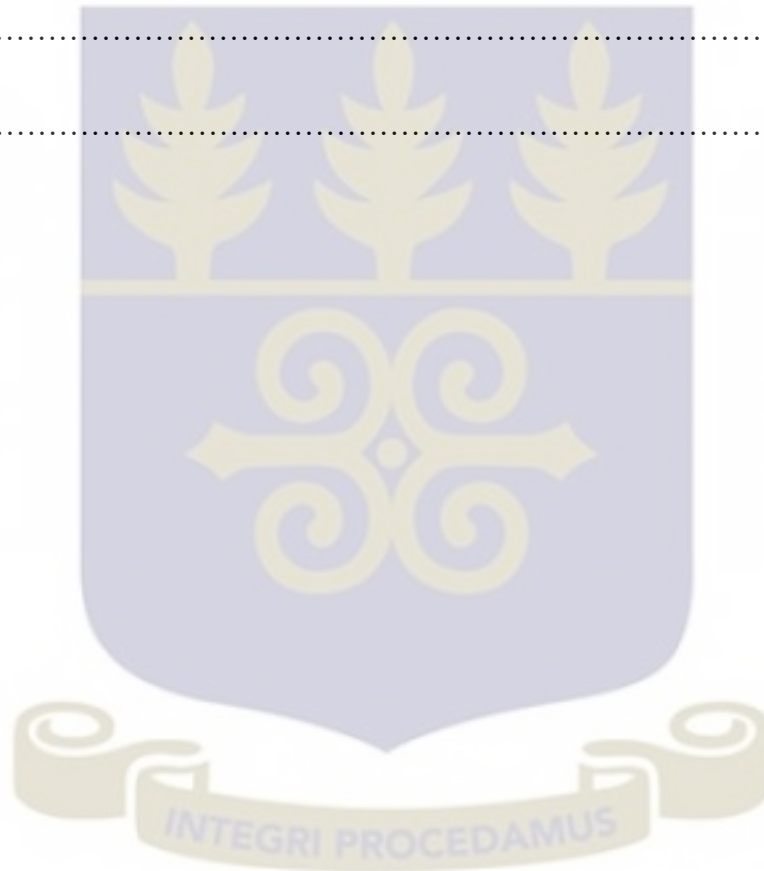
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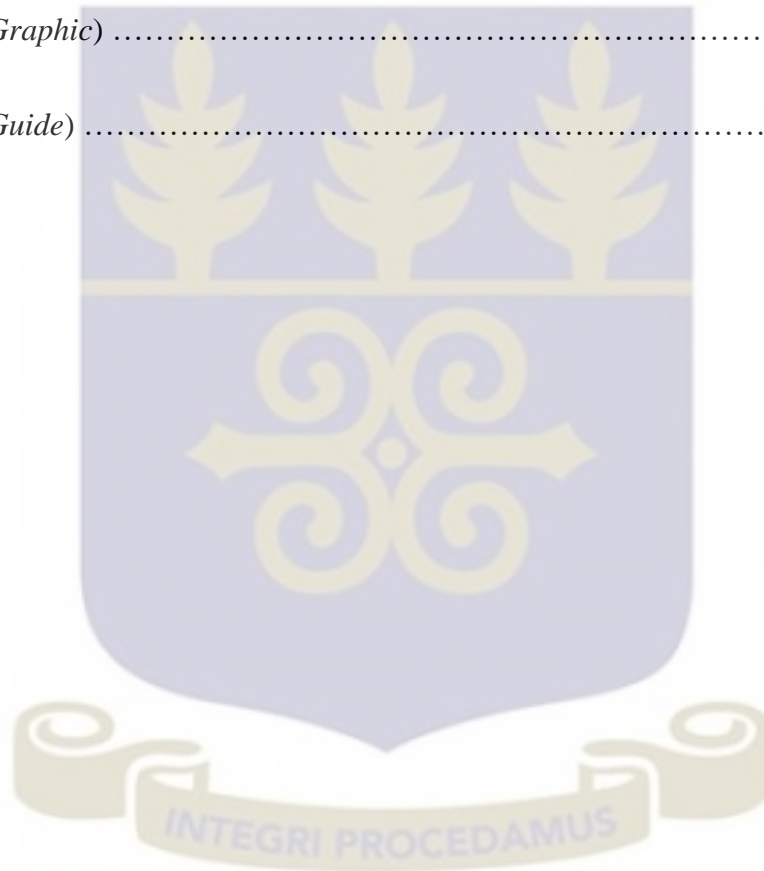
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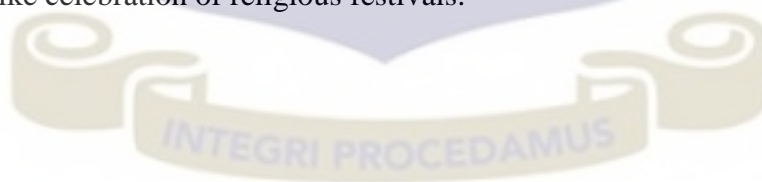
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## Abstract

This study was done with the purpose of establishing how Islam is portrayed in two Ghanaian newspapers – *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*. A quantitative content analysis approach was employed to analyse 172 news stories on Islam published in the two newspapers in 2013, 2014 and the first half of 2015. The study established seven story themes of which religion emerged the highest with 27.3 percent. The theme that recorded the least was violence with 4.1 percent. The study also revealed that the stories on Islam were given a fair level of prominence in newspapers as most of them were enhanced with pictures with some placed on pages such as the front and center spread which are considered prominent. Finally, the results confirmed the hypothesis of the study that the two newspapers were likely to adopt a neutral tone in the coverage of Islam. Out of the 172 stories on Islam that were analysed, 64.5 percent were neutral which contrasts with the extant literature that suggests coverage of Islam is mostly negative. The findings revealed that most of the stories that were coded for as negative in tone were sourced from foreign agencies like BBC and CNN and were mostly terrorist activities. All news items that were written by Ghanaians were mostly positive issues like charity/donations and religious issues like celebration of religious festivals.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Islam is the second largest religion in the world with about 1.6 billion adherents (Pew Research Center, 2010). Over the years, Islam has been in the news for acts of terrorism, barbarism, abductions, suicide bombings or support of such acts. For the past few decades, a number of Western and non-Western countries have suffered one form of Islamic related terrorist activity or the other.

In 1983, the media carried news of a US embassy bombing in Lebanon by the Islamic Jihad organisation which caused the death of 63 people and left 120 people injured. In October that same year, the Islamic Jihad organisation embarked on another bomb attack at the Beirut barracks in Lebanon which killed 307 people and injured 75 people. On February 1993, The World Trade Center in New York City experienced its first attack when Al-Qaeda bombed it, leaving six people dead. In 1995, a bomb on a motor scooter believed to be released by a group known as Harkat-ul-Ansar, exploded at a market place in India claiming the lives of at least, 17 people and leaving more than 100 people injured. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there have been a number of attacks by the Boko Haram group, Al-Shabab and Al-Qaeda among others. Some of the more spectacular attacks include the Nigerian bus attack on January 2, 2015 where a group of Boko Haram militants attacked a bus and killed 15 people and left 10 injured. The three-day Baga massacre in Nigeria by Boko Haram militants who opened fire on northern Nigerian villages from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 2015, also claimed the lives of about 200 people. The Westgate shopping mall attack in Kenya on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2013 by the Al-Shabab group also claimed 67 lives and left 175 people injured. In April 2015, the Al-Shabab

group opened fire at the Garissa University in Kenya killing 148 people and injuring 79 people. On January 7, 2015, the Paris office of the satirical news magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, was also attacked by two gunmen who killed 12 people and injured 10.

The most significant of all these and other terrorist activities was what has become known as the 9/11. Terrorist activities and its coverage in the media heightened and brought Islam into the limelight when on September 11, 2001, the United States of America recorded over 6,000 deaths when a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks launched by Al-Qaeda, hit the twin towers, the Pentagon and the Capitol Hill. These series of attacks left Islam being tagged with terrorism and Muslims in America facing scrutiny.

## **1.2 Islamophobia**

Based on these terrorists activities, Islam has over the years been vilified and victimised across the globe. Between 2001 and 2002, there was a 1700 percent increase in hate crimes against Muslim Americans (Anderson, 2002). Eleven years after the 9/11 incident, studies from the Southern Poverty Law (SPLC), American Civil Liberties Union and the United States Department of Justice among others, showed that there had been a sharp increase in anti-Muslim sentiment from politicians and an increase of anti-Muslim activities. The studies also revealed an increase in opposition to mosques and anti-Muslim hate groups. This attitude towards Muslims was not limited to U.S only. In 2008, French Muslim graves in France were desecrated. A pig's head was hung from a headstone with profanities and insults written on some of the graves. In July 2009, a Muslim woman, Marwa El-Sherbini, was stabbed to death in Dresden, Germany, for giving evidence against her attacker who insulted her because of her Hijab. In 2015, Christians in Northern Nigeria decided to take revenge on Muslims by attacking them for allegedly backing the Boko Haram militant group. In Kenya, security forces and

policemen victimized Muslims by detaining and beating them as well as stealing their property (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2015). After the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris, 548 incidents of Islamophobia were reported in Britain. The attacks ranged from online abuse and threats, to street-based assaults and extreme violence (Tell Mama Project, 2015). In France, figures revealed that 147 acts were committed against Muslims after the Charlie Hebdo incident. (French council of the Muslim Faith, 2015)

### **1.3 Media and Islam**

Media has a role to play in shaping the opinions of people through the way they present issues. Thus, how issues are presented or projected tend to have an impact on how people process the information they receive from the media. Some of the attacks described above are thought to have been powered by the media reports. Severin and Tankard (1997) argue that the repeated coverage of Muslims as terrorists in the media leads to the belief that they are actually terrorists thereby fueling the hatred and discrimination against Muslims. Although the media is expected to be objective in reporting issues, in portraying Islam, a number of studies have revealed that media tend to portray Islam negatively. A vast number of these studies, especially in the United States, tend to tag Islam with terrorism (Osman et al, 2013; Powell, 2011; Zulkifili, 2009). According to Said (1981), Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed and apprehended either as suppliers of oil or as potential terrorists.

Islam has been consistently portrayed by media as a violent religion which has been the theme for several researches and studies. A number of these studies have revealed a relationship between media and Islamophobia where media is usually seen to portray Islam negatively. Most of these studies have found that terrorists are being labeled by the media as Muslim fundamentalist or Islamists and sometimes as uncivilised and barbaric (Orbe&Harris, 2008).

In covering Islam, the words “Islam” and “Muslims” are linked to terms such as extremism, Jihadist and terrorists as if they belong together inextricably (Kuwaiti Government, 2002). Many of the Western media display images of veiled Muslim women with terrorist issues like possession of bombs although those pictures originally are devoid of any terrorist connection. Media agencies such as the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten* and the Paris magazine, *Charlie Hebdo* sometimes publish cartoons that tag Islam with terrorism or portray Prophet Mohammed negatively.

#### **1.4 Islam in Ghana**

The 2012 population census estimates that there are 17.6 percent of Muslims in Ghana. Islam made its entry into the Northern territories of modern Ghana at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century (Bari, 2009). The introduction of Islam in Ghana was mainly through trading activities of the Mande people of the Wangara and Sahelian tribes of West Africa and the Borno and Hausa people from Nigeria. Some Islamic scholars believe that, prior to the trading activities, Islam reached Ghana through Da’wah (Islamic propagation) workers who came to Ghana from neighbouring African Countries with the sole aim of spreading Islam (Bari, 2009)

Islam spread to the southern part of Ghana through slave trade activities. Also, the British colonial government in the 19<sup>th</sup> century recruited people from predominantly Muslim communities to join the colonial army. (Bari, 2009)

Today, Muslims communities can be found in almost all the ten regions of Ghana with three or more in some of the regions.

Despite the religious tensions in some African countries like Nigeria, Somalia and Kenya, Muslims and Christians in Ghana live in relative harmony and enjoy good relations.

### **1.5 Problem Statement**

According to Said (1997), media have used historical events and political developments in the Muslim world as a lens to focus their sights on Islam in a manner which portrays the Islamic faith with hostility. In recent times the activities of Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, ISIS, Al- Qaeda and the September 11 terrorist attack are but a few of the events that have shaped media coverage of Islam. Various researchers across the globe have thus, investigated how such activities have shaped the media coverage of Islam and Muslims. Most of these studies conducted in the Western world reveal that Western media portray Islam in a negative way and usually tag the religion with terrorism. Most of the coverage thus, focus on the negative rather than the positive as the West have suffered one form of terrorist activity or the other. However, Ghana has had no terrorist attack unlike in the West and some geographically close African countries like Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon which have suffered a number of terrorist attacks. How then does Ghana portray Islam in the media? This study, based on the literature, sought to investigate the media coverage of Islam in Ghana to find out if the coverage shows a similar trend or tendency in the existing literature.

### **1.6 Objectives of Study**

The primary objective of this study was to investigate how the Ghanaian media portray Islam to find out if it is similar or different from what previous studies have revealed. To investigate this, the study specifically interrogated the level of coverage, the prominence, the dominant themes and the tone of reports of Islam in the newspapers.

## 1.7 Research Hypotheses and Questions

The study answered three research questions and tested one hypothesis.

**RQ 1:** What is the extent of coverage of reports on Islam in *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*?

**RQ2:** Does *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* give prominence to reports on Islam?

**RQ 3:** What are the dominant themes prevalent in reports on Islam in *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*?

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are likely to cover Islamic issues in a neutral tone.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are unlikely to cover Islamic issues in a neutral tone.

**Reason for H<sub>1</sub>:** *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are likely to give a neutral coverage to Islam and Muslims because Ghana has suffered no form of terrorist attack or any major religious conflicts.

## 1.8 Significance of the Study

The rationale of this study is to establish how the Ghanaian media portray Islam in general and particularly, in Ghana on the backdrop that most of the media in the Western world portray Islam negatively.

The study will also add to the scholarship on media portrayal of Islam as well as provide the needed impetus for further research.

### **1.9 Background to *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide***

*Daily Graphic* is a state-owned newspaper established in October, 1950. Currently, *Daily Graphic* is the leading newspaper out of six newspapers published by the Graphic Communications Group Limited (Graphic Communications Group Limited, 2015). The newspaper is published six times a week from Monday to Saturday.

*Daily Graphic* has the widest circulation in Ghana with about 200,000 copies as well as the widest readership (Graphic Communications Group Limited, 2011). The newspaper covers issues about politics, education, health, religion, sports among others.

*Daily Guide* is a privately-owned newspaper established about 22 years ago by Western publications limited. *Daily Guide* is also published six times a week from Monday to Saturday.

It is the highest circulating private newspaper and the second highest circulating newspaper in Ghana with about 22,000 copies in a day (Midtunn et al. 2011).

*Daily Guide* also covers issues on politics, education, religion, sports among others.

### **1.10 Operational Definitions**

For the purposes of this study, the following terms and variables have been operationally defined.

**News on Islam:** All straight news stories on Islam and Muslims.

**Western Media:** All media outside Africa

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature from studies that have been done both in the West and some parts of Africa. However, quite a large number of the studies on media coverage of Islam come from the West. This chapter will also discuss the theoretical framework that will underpin the study.

##### 2.1.1 Structure of Literature Review

The related literature has been reviewed under two subsections. These subsections were generated to categorise similar literature under two themes. The themes are:

- ❖ Media representation of Terrorism and Extremist activities.
- ❖ Media portrayal Islam and Muslims.

##### 2.1.1.1 Media Representation of Terrorism and Extremist Activities

Okoro and Odoemalam (2013) did a content analysis of four Nigerian newspapers – *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, *This Day* and *The Guardian*. Their aim was to identify the dominant frames that these four newspapers used in the coverage of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria in 2012. They used the framing theory as their theoretical framework. Drawing from measures developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000); Iyenger (1991) and De Vreese (2005) for analysing frames in media coverage of various phenomena, Okoro and Odoemalam (2013) categorised variables of the news items into nine frames. The nine frames were government response, political,

ethnic, economic and attribution of responsibility, religious, powerlessness, conspiracy and labelling.

The response frame recorded the highest with 26.3 percent followed by religion which recorded 13.4 percent. Thus, out of the 144 news articles that were analysed, 29 of them drew a relationship between Islam and the activities of Boko Haram. The conspiracy frame recorded the least with 1.8 percent.

There were however, contrasting patterns in the frames used by the four newspapers in the coverage of Boko haram in 2012. In the *Daily Sun*, the religious frame recorded the highest with 18 news articles out of 65. The religious frame was followed by the human interest frame with 10 news articles. However, in *Vanguard*, *Thisday* and *The Guardian*, the response frame recorded the highest, followed by the religious frame. Out of the 144 news articles that were analysed, 57 of them presented issues in light of Nigerian government's response to Boko Haram threats and violence. The dominant frames in the Nigerian newspapers' coverage of Boko Haram were therefore first, in light of government's response to Boko Haram which was 26.3 percent and secondly, religion which recorded 13.7 percent, where Boko Haram was tagged with Islam.

Similarly, Powell (2011) conducted a study on the US news coverage of terrorist events that occurred or were stopped on the day of attack since 9/11. He explored the relationship between terrorism and media by analysing media coverage of 11 terrorist events. Using media framing as the theoretical framework, Powell did an episodic analysis of news frames of the 11 terrorist events since 9/11. The study focused on major US national print and internet media sources including *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN and Fox News. Content analysis was used to identify media frames of terrorism. National media coverage for the two weeks immediately following each terrorist event was collected. The researcher collected all stories found via

LexisNexis and the internet sources for each organisation resulting in a total of 1638 news stories.

An analysis of the data revealed five major themes: labelling or naming of the terror suspect, description assigned to agent, motive for the act, probability of a future threat and portrayal of victims. Under the theme of labelling and terror suspect, Muslim, Al-Qaeda and terrorist emerged as the three dominant labels. Adjectives that were used to describe the agents differed primarily between acts considered to be domestic and those considered international. Some of the adjectives that were used to describe the US domestic agents included “intelligent”, “planner” and “mentally unstable” whereas the International agents were mostly described as “angry” and “terrorists”. Under the theme of motive for act by international agents, the media established violence, revenge and Islamic radicalism as some of the motives. On the other hand, an attempt to get a message out, attention seeking and creating fear were given as some of the motives of domestic acts.

The majority of the news stories that were analysed indicated a possibility of more strikes from the attacker thereby keeping future threats of terrorism salient. However, the threat level was less for domestic terror events. After initial threats of domestic terror events, news coverage shifted focus to explanations for the attacks and dismissed the possibility of future attacks. On the other hand, with the international terror threat, tagging an agent to a larger terrorist group like Al-Qaeda was established suggesting a possible future threat. The last theme, portrayal of victims, revealed three frames. First, victims were often labelled as heroes for their efforts to stop an actor or solely being victims of an act. Secondly, the victims were portrayed as good or innocent where their positive qualities were highlighted and portrayed as undeserving of the attack. Victims, thirdly, were also portrayed as spiritual, often Christians.

According to Powell (2011) these themes suggested that in the US, terrorism is framed primarily as a problem from Islam with domestic terrorism being treated as less threatening.

In another study on media representation of terrorism and extremist activities in Birmingham, UK, Cannizzaro & Gholami (2015) examined the nature of coverage of the Trojan horse affair in the British press. The Trojan horse affair happened in UK on March 2014 where there was an alleged plot by a group purported to be Birmingham Islamists to take over some poorly-governed Birmingham schools and overthrow non-performing non-Muslim staff. This gained a lot of media coverage both in the UK and other countries. Based on this coverage, the researchers' aim was to ascertain the extent to which the representation of the Trojan horse events by the British press emphasised Islamist extremism over issues of poor school governance. They randomly selected 243 news articles from five British newspapers – *The Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Sun*, *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mail* – between 9<sup>th</sup> June and 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2014.

The researchers did a content analysis where they divided the data into two categories - Islamist ideology (E1) and poor governance (E2). They found that, 61.5 percent of the news articles were E1 and 38 percent, E2.

The analysis suggested that the Trojan horse affair was largely represented as a case of Islamist extremism. Specifically coverage contained more evidence of schools' problems attributable to Islamic ideology than to poor governance of the schools. Also, majority of the news articles failed to consider the content of the letter which talked about the poor governance of the schools.

Similarly Osman et al (2013) did a content analysis on two international news magazines – *Time* from US and *The Economist* from UK - to investigate their patterns in labelling Islam. Their objective was to investigate how the media framed Islam and its relationship with

terrorism. The study was also conducted to identify the themes that appeared in the labelling of Islam by the media after the death of Osama Bin Laden.

The researchers used the framing theory as a theoretical framework to see how the media labelled Islam with terrorism. Data was collected from both newspapers through a purposive sample technique from editions that came out on the second week of May to the final week of June, 2011. Issues selected for both newspapers were from the first issue after the death of Osama Bin Laden until two months after that. Osman et al (2013) analysed 109 news articles, including hard news, features and opinions from both *Time* and *The Economist*. Seven themes emerged from the coding: politics, terrorism, criminality or violence and peace effort, discrimination, education and others (war, social problems, leadership and sectarian issues). The findings revealed the dominant theme was “others” with 22 percent followed by terrorism which was 14.68 percent.

Regarding the tone, the data showed that only 12.84 percent of the news were positive towards Islam as opposed to 51.38 percent of the news items which were negative and the highest. The positive news items included news pertaining to the issues of peace and reconciliation effort whereas the negative included news of conflict between Palestine and Israel, protests and riots. News that were considered neutral, that is neither negative nor positive, recorded 35.78 percent.

Four common frames emerged from the analysis of the data: Islam caused violent based, Muslims are terrorists, leadership in Muslim countries and peace and reconciliation efforts between Israel and Palestine. Out of the four frames, only one, peace and reconciliation efforts between Israel and Palestine, was positive.

### 2.1.1.2 Media Portrayal of Islam and Muslims

Ado-Kurawa (2006) investigated how the newspapers covered Islam in Nigeria. He analysed the press coverage of the Shari'ah (Islamic law) when Zamfara state, which is a Northern state, amended its penal laws to incorporate Shari'ah criminal law and the coverage of the Kano civil disturbances of May 2004. The researcher used Chomsky's propaganda model as his theoretical framework to determine if any of the five filters – ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak and anti-communism - identified by scholars, affected coverage of the Shari'ah and the Kano crisis. Ado-Kurawa did a three month study between October and December 1999 and randomly selected ten days of each month for two newspapers: *ThisDay* and *The Guardian*.

In the *Guardian*, all the front page items of the period under review were negative to Shari'ah headlines. Five out of seven letters to the editor in the period under review were negative and opinions and reports were all false.

In *Thisday*, more than 60 percent of the news items studied during the period under review were unfavourable to the Shari'ah. The research revealed that the columnists during the period under review were anti-Shari'ah and they effectively used the resources at their disposal for propaganda against it.

However, due to *The Guardian's* use of influential Muslims on its board and the fact that some Muslims are minor shareholders of the paper, their coverage of the Shari'ah had more favourable items than *ThisDay's* coverage.

Addo- Kurawa concluded that the Nigerian press was mostly incapacitated by the interests of its owners and dominated by propaganda hence the vast differences in the coverage of the same issue.

In the same way, Fathilla and Khairi (2015) investigated how Islam and Muslims are portrayed in BBC news. Their objective was to find out the negative terms used to associate Islam and Muslims, how they were framed, the source of news and the focus on the issues related to Islam and Muslims. The researchers used the framing theory as the theoretical framework for the study. The study period was 30 days between March 6, 2015 and April 6, 2015. Data was retrieved from the BBC news online, and the search yielded 139 news items which were subsequently content analysed.

The analysis revealed that the reportage portrayed Islam and Muslims negatively using negative terms such as radicalised, Islamic extremists and jihadists. The dominant frames were religion, security and politics. A little less than half (40 percent) of the stories that were analysed centered on religious affairs, followed by security with 23 percent of the news articles.

The 139 news articles that were analysed came from four main sources: Government, primary sources, secondary sources and television and radio. Out of the four sources, the primary sources which comprise witnesses and victims recorded 50 percent followed by secondary sources, 48 percent. The other two sources recorded 1 percent each.

Mahony (2008) also examined how Indonesian Islam has been constructed in Australian media. The researcher, using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches, did a comparative analysis of newspapers on three issues– the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings and the 2004 Australian Embassy bombing in Jakarta.

The source of data for the research was three Australian publications: *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *the Daily Telegraph* which were published a week following the events. . A total of 332 articles were collected from these three publications. Mahony (2008) coded the articles into three variables – positive, negative and neutral.

The positive articles included articles that used non-biased or inflammatory language, articles that were balanced in presenting various perspectives, articles that provided contextual information of issues and demonstrated an understanding and enhanced reader's knowledge of Indonesian Islam.

The negative stories used slanted or inflammatory language, articles that lacked contextual information and alternative perspectives. The neutral articles included articles that did not use inflammatory language, articles that do not discuss Indonesian Islam or Muslims in any detail.

The researcher, using elements of both framing analysis and critical discourse analysis, examined how journalists frame an issue.

The findings of the research revealed that taking each article at face value, Indonesian Islam and Muslims are overall, objectively reported on and there are more positive images than negative.

Similarly, Akbarzadeh and Smith (2005) investigated the type of language *The Age* and *Herald Sun* newspapers used to describe Muslims and Islam in Australia. The researchers sought to find out the frequency of coverage in relation to major events, if journalists explore the diversity of Islam and Muslim cultures by highlighting nationality, ethnicity, cultural practice and theological differences and the typology used to categorize certain groups, practices or modes of Islam. The aim was to gain an understanding of the ways in which the media plays a role in shaping perceptions on Muslims and Islam in the broader community and how they do so in response to particular events either in Australia or abroad. To achieve this aim, Smith and Akbarzadeh (2005) looked at the images of Muslims and Islam that are most frequently propagated in the media and how recurrent certain misrepresentations are. They also investigated the press media of Victoria to find out if it is Islamophobic.

Out of a total of 1200 news articles collected from both newspapers, 451 were selected. They used the mixed method; both quantitative and qualitative approaches in analyzing her data. The

first section was quantitative, where the number of Islamic articles that appeared in *The Age* and *Herald Sun* was quantified. They also, in this section, coded articles as positive, negative, neutral or mixed. The second section was a qualitative analysis of the patterns established by the quantitative analysis where major themes were identified, including racism, gender, terrorism and the interconnection between international and domestic reporting. The significance of news stories written in response to international and domestic events and how this shapes the way Muslims or Islam is represented overall in the news article was also identified.

The research revealed that both newspapers are not Islamophobic but established that the representation of Islam and Muslims is not problem-free. It also revealed that there are degrees of ignorance in the Australian community in relation to Muslims and Islam. The picture that emerged from the media coverage of Islam therefore was established as mixed. This according to the researchers, reflects the level of journalists' familiarity with Islam and professionalism. Another finding was that *The Age* and the *Herald Sun* published news stories that reinforced the dichotomy of 'Us' and 'Them,' often with racial undertones.

Smith and Akbarzadeh (2005) concluded that how Islam was represented emphasized stereotypes and cast Muslims and Islam in an unfavorable light.

Last but not least, Dahinden et al (2011) also studied the representation of Islam and Christianity in the Swiss media. Their aim was to find out if the Swiss media was aggravating tensions between religions or rather helping to promote mutual understanding between Christianity and Islam. Dahinden et al used the framing and narration theories as their theoretical framework. They collected data from 11 Swiss media outlets which comprised eight newspapers, two radio stations and one television station. They collected all religious news items of a one year period between December 2007 and November 2008 after which the data was content analysed.

The data revealed that Islam receives a relatively high media attention considering the number of Muslims in Switzerland. Islam received coverage of 30.7 percent although the population of Islam in the country is 4.3 whereas Christianity received coverage of 43.5 percent although Christianity has a population of 43.5 percent in Switzerland.

The research also revealed that the geographical attention of the Swiss media differed between Christianity and Islam. Whereas the coverage of Swiss media on Christianity is on Christianity in Switzerland, coverage on Islam focuses more on Muslims abroad.

Another finding was that Islam was portrayed in a negative frame whereas Christianity was portrayed in a positive frame.

The last finding was that the Swiss media under review usually provide knowledge about Christianity but rarely show an in-depth exploration of Islam.

Just as Akbarzadeh and Smith (2000), Sayyid et al (2012) conducted a study of the various constructions and representations of Muslims in the press in the context of UK. They did a critical discourse analysis of 68 news items on domestic issues concerning Muslims in the UK to examine the current hegemonic articulation of Muslims in issues surrounding the war on terror. Their data was retrieved from a three- month monitoring period of the British press between October 2011 and December 2011. The newspapers sampled were *The Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*. The researchers used the framing theory as a theoretical framework to find the inherent frames the newspapers employed. The analysis of the data revealed five dominant themes including war on terror, Muslim related domestic issues and world news, grooming, abuse and madrassas (Islamic schools). The theme of abuse and madrassas focused on the ‘dangerous’ male where stories were largely hypersexual and radicalised. It also focused on forced marriages where the activity was condemned and usually termed as slavery and abuse of family systems. Generally, about 70 percent of the representations were hostile and strongly Islamophobic.

Similarly, Schonemann (2013) investigated the stereotypical portrayal of Muslims in the US media. The aim of the study was to find out how Muslims are portrayed to the American public. The researcher used the prejudice theory and stereotype theory as the theoretical approach to investigate the stereotyping process against Muslims in the media. The primary source of data was newspaper articles related to veiling from 2002 and 2012 and news articles on the Muhammad cartoon crisis between 2006 and 2012. The researcher purposively sampled 159 newspaper articles from both *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. According to Schoenemann (2013), due to the extant literature about Muslims in the media, the researcher did a random sample of the data. Thus, the researcher deemed it essential to narrow the theme and select cases that could reveal how Muslims were stereotyped. After collecting data, the researcher used the qualitative content analysis approach to do an in-depth analysis of the contents of the text data. The results indicated that most of the articles had a negative coverage of Islam and Muslims as a whole. Muslims were often portrayed as violent, fanatic, disrespectful of women and excessively pious.

Common stereotypes such as the traditional veiled woman, the terrorist, the religious fundamentalist and the submissive victim formed some of the negative portrayals.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

According to Severin and Tankard (2001), theoretical assumptions are tested through research where the results may approve or debunk the theoretical claims. This study used the framing theory as it sought to establish how Islam is portrayed or framed by *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*.

## **Framing Theory**

The framing theory has been used in a number of studies, including Islam, conducted on media representation, media portrayal and media framing of issues. This study, similarly, relies on the framing theory to examine how Islam is represented in two newspapers in Ghana. The basic underlining idea of the framing theory is that the media project certain events in a particular light thereby giving them a contextual meaning. Different scholars have focused on a variety of things that influence the frames through which people understand news stories. Entman (1993) defines framing as the selection and salience of particular aspects of an issue rather than the issue itself. Thus, instead of making a particular issue stand out or prominent, the use of frames rather makes certain aspects of the issue or news more memorable or noticeable to the audience. This suggests that the media has the ability of telling its audience how to think about a given phenomenon by the use of certain framing devices. It also suggests that how issues are presented have an impact on how people process the information they receive from the media. Entman (1993) explains that to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and for treatment recommendation. Gamson and Madigliani (1987) add that in the process of organising a story or idea by a journalist, the concept of media framing can include the intent of the sender although the motives may be unconscious ones.

Gitlin (1980) however argues that the mass media are conscious distributors of ideology. These ideologies are created primarily through the way the information is packaged and presented. Every story has an angle and this angle or lens through which the events are interpreted creates the frame. Thus, when journalists are gathering information or covering the same event, whereas one journalist will report from a positive angle, another reporter will report from a

negative angle. Journalists reporting from different angles is what sometimes accounts for the difference in headlines and news stories of the same event.

Reese (2001) explains that frames are more than phrases. They are the organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world. When journalists attempt to present information in the form of news stories, the way they present the information is sometimes affected by their own biases and perceptions. Although the presentation and the facts of information may be true, the elements the journalist chooses to include and emphasise can affect and shape reader's perceptions (Campbell, 1995). Thus, if two journalists from different media organisations are sent to cover an event of a given ethnic group with one of the journalists belonging to that ethnic group, chances are that the stories by both journalists may come out different. For instance, should there be a major scuffle at the event, the journalist who belongs to that ethnic group may entirely ignore the scuffle in his presentation. The other journalist may however, use the fight as his angle of presentation.

Scheufele (1999) also describes media frames as dependent variables that focus on extrinsic and intrinsic factors influencing the production and selection of news including ideology, social norms and values. The ideology of the news source and values of the country one lives in for example, can affect news production. Even the most objective journalist can be manipulated by their sources' imposition of dominant frames on the news (Entman 1989; Entman&Rojecki, 1993).

In classifying studies with respect to their focus on media and audience frames, framing research can be broken down into research examining frames as independent or dependent variables (Scheufete, 1999). Studies as dependent variables have examined the role of various factors influencing the creation or modification of frames. At the media level, journalists'

framing of an issue may be influenced by several social-structural or organisational variables (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) and by individual or ideological variables (Tuchman, 1978). At the audience level, frames as the dependent variable are examined mostly as the direct outcomes of the way mass media frame an issue (e.g. Price, Tewksbury and Powers, 1995, 1996).

Based on previous research such as Shoemaker and Reese (1996) and Tuchman (1978), five factors may potentially influence how journalists frame a given issue. These are social norms and values, organisational pressure and constraints, pressures of interest groups, journalistic routines and ideological or political orientations of journalists.

In another research by Pan and Kosicki (1993) they described the structure of news discourse in general and potential framing devices using a newspaper article on an anti-abortion rally in Wichita, Kansas. They identified four types of structural dimensions of news that influence the formation of frames:

1. Syntactic structures or patterns in the arrangement of words and phrases
2. Script structures referring to general newsworthiness of an event as well as the intention to communicate news and events.
3. Thematic structures reflecting the tendency of journalists to impose a casual theme on their news stories either in the form of explicit casual statements or by linking observations to the direct quote of a source.
4. Rhetorical structures or the stylistic choices made by journalists in relation to their intended effects.

Tankard et al. (2001) suggest 11 framing mechanisms or focal points for identifying and measuring news frames. Among the 11 are: headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection and quotes selection. The rest are: pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts,

concluding statements and paragraphs. In determining how a news article or item has been framed, therefore, a researcher may consider any of the 11 mechanisms suggested by Tankard et al.

Theoretically, this study looked into the role of the Ghanaian media in labelling or representing Islam based on the framing theory. The study was guided particularly by the framing mechanisms suggested by Tankard et al (2001) in measuring frames. Specifically, in analysing the data, the researcher examined the headlines, pictures, story leads, paragraphs and concluding statements.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses. The chapter discusses the data collection procedure, the research design, the sampling technique and the main method of enquiry for the study.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study used the quantitative approach by conducting a content analysis to investigate the representation of Islam in two Ghanaian newspapers: *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*. Content analysis was chosen for the study because not only did this research approach offer the researcher the opportunity to do a systematic quantifying of data but also, an objective description of the data (Sandelowski, 1995; Downer-Wamboldt, 1992).

#### ***Content Analysis***

Walizer and Wiener (1978) define content analysis as any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded data. Data can thus, include verbal, written or visual communication messages. Over the past decades, a lot of researchers have used content analysis to study a number of phenomena, including media content. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) outlined five purposes for which content analysis could be used. One of such purposes is that content analysis can be used in a descriptive manner for describing communication content to reveal what exists. Content analysis can also be used to test hypothesis. Thirdly, it can be used to assess the image of a particular group of people in society usually, the minority or otherwise notable groups. Establishing a starting point for studies of media effects is another purpose of content analysis. Here, the dominant messages and themes in media content are documented by systematic procedures and a separate study of the audience is done to see

whether these messages are fostering similar attitudes among heavy media users. The last use of content analysis is comparing media content to the real world.

It was necessary for this research to employ content analysis however, because of time limitation, the research used only three of the uses outlined – testing hypotheses, accessing the image of a given group especially the minority in society, and documenting the dominant messages and themes in media content by systematic procedures.

### **3.3 Population and Sample**

The population for this study was all the 2013, 2014 and the first half of 2015 issues of both *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*. These issues were selected because the researcher sought to reveal a more recent picture of how Islam is represented in Ghanaian newspapers. The choice for the two newspapers rests on the backdrop that they have the widest circulation and readership in Ghana (Center for Media Analysis, Ghana, 2012). Also, the researcher wanted to look at coverage of Islam in both private and public media thus the reason for choosing one state-owned newspaper, *Daily Graphic* and one privately-owned newspaper, *Daily Guide*. Both the *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are published six times a week which makes for a population of 1458 issues, 729 issues for each of the newspapers. The researcher did a census where every unit was studied. At first, the researcher used the composite week sampling technique which yielded only 13 news stories from both newspapers which was not representative enough. Thus, the researcher went through all the 1458 issues to search for the data which yielded 172 news stories from both newspapers.

### **3.4 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis was straight news on Islam. The researcher scanned through all the newspapers for the study period searching for the keywords, Islam and Muslim(s) to identify all stories on Islam. The research was limited to only straight news stories because the researcher wanted to solely know the position of the newspaper. Thus, opinion pieces, features and letters to the editor were excluded from the study.

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

A coding guide developed based on the research questions and hypothesis, was used to record the extant patterns and categories of the data. The coding scheme consisted six variables which coded for the name of newspaper, tone, placement, size, photograph and theme.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

Stories on Islam were searched for in both newspapers and findings were recorded on the coding sheet. The data was collected by reading the headlines, story leads, paragraphs, and concluding statements as suggested by Tankard et al (2001). Data was coded to reveal words, phrases and sentences that portrayed Islam positively, negatively and neutrally. The data was also coded to reveal the prominence given to the stories on Islam by considering the size of the story, placement and use of pictures. The extent of coverage of stories on Islam was also coded for. In finding the themes, the researcher made notes while reading the news items noting the various themes that were present. The researcher did a second reading to be sure no themes had been missed. Similar themes were merged and all the themes that were gathered from the data were coded for. The nominal level of measurement was used which means the frequency of occurrence of the units in each category was simply counted.

The major variables which were coded for are below:

**Positive News:** All stories that reflected harmony and the efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between the two major religions in Ghana.

**Negative News:** All stories that involved issues of violence, chaos, misunderstandings, terrorism and conflicts.

**Neutral News:** All stories that did not fall into either the negative or positive news category. Such stories included religious activities, education, natural deaths and health related issues.

**News Prominence:** All stories that were enhanced by pictures, have been placed at the front or center spread pages and has been published on a full or half page.

**Religious stories:** Stories on Eid-ul-Adha, Eid-ul-Fitr, Ramadan, Hajj activities and all forms of Islamic prayers.

**Charity and donation:** Stories on donations by Muslims or any Muslim group to specific organisations.

**Health:** Stories on any health-related issue involving Muslims

**Education:** Stories on any education related issue involving Muslims

**Terrorism:** Stories on any terrorist or extremist activity.

**Conflict resolution:** News stories on Islam about resolving issues involving Muslims or attempts to resolve religious tensions between Muslims and other religious groups.

**Violence:** Stories about Muslims who cause mayhem.

**Others:** News stories on Islam that are political, financial and involves death.

### **3.7 Inter-coder Reliability**

To ensure there was less or no error in the coding, the researcher trained two students from the Department of Communication Studies to test for inter-coder reliability. The students were taken through the coding scheme and the operational definitions of variables to code

for. They also practiced by coding some of the news items. After the training, the researcher conducted a pilot study by randomly selecting some of the news items for the coders to code. Holsti's (1969) inter-coder reliability formula was used to test the pilot study. This formula was considered because Holsti (1969) reports that it is the formula for determining the reliability of nominal data. Below is the formula:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

In the formula, M represents the number of coding decisions on which two coders agree. N1 and N2 represent the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coders respectively. (Holsti, 1969).

Coding for the theme, below was the result:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2(11)}{14 + 14} = 0.78$$

For the tone, the result was (0.85) and the prominence was (0.9). Considering the high level of agreement between the coders, the coding was considered reliable.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

After the data had been coded, the researcher transferred the information from the coding sheet into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for the analysis. Tables, graphs

and charts were created after which the research questions were answered and the hypothesis tested.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the data, interprets the data through a discussion and concludes on how *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* covered Islamic related issues. As part of the discussion, one hypothesis was tested and three research questions were answered. The discussion was linked to the literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The discussion was also done vis-à-vis the research questions and hypothesis. The focus of the discussion was thus, be based on the findings on the tone of the news, the extent of coverage, the dominant themes and the extent of prominence in the news stories on Islam.

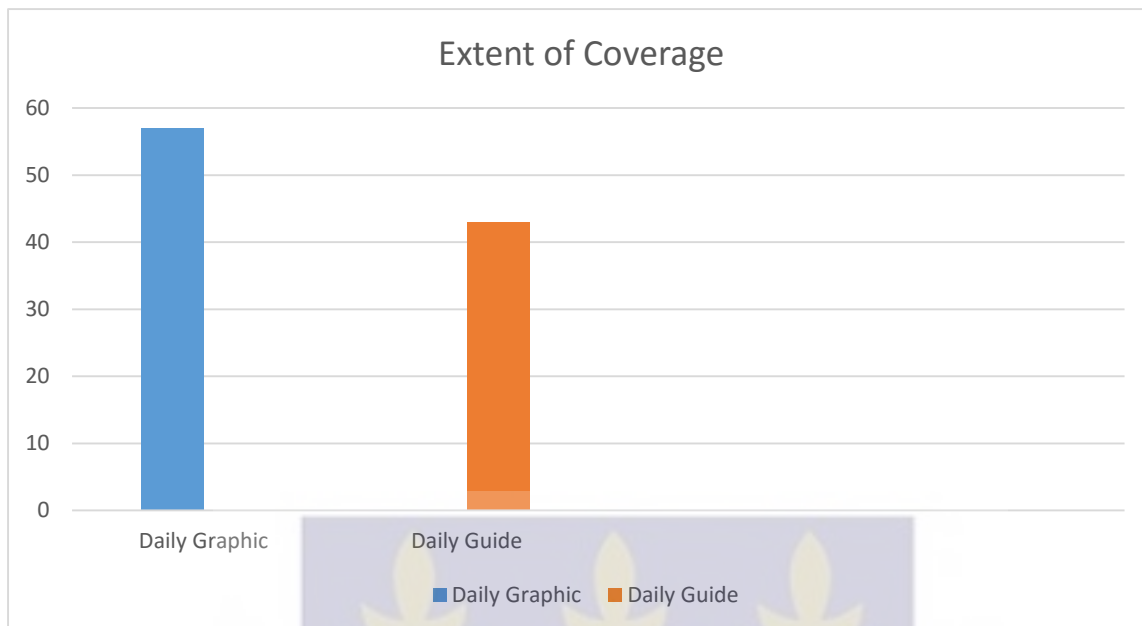
#### **4.2 Extent of Coverage**

The study first examined the extent to which *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* covered news on Islam. The extent to which a newspaper gives coverage to an issue may depend on various factors such as the orientation of the newspaper or ownership (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The study sought to answer the research question:

What is the extent of coverage of Islamic issues in *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*?

Diagram 1 presents the extent to which each of the two newspapers covered news on Islam.

#### **Diagram 1**



The data in Diagram 1 shows that out of a total of 172 news stories on Islam that were analysed during the study period which was 2013, 2014 and the first half of 2015, 98 stories (57 per cent) , were from the *Daily Graphic*.

*Daily Guide* had 74 stories representing 43 per cent of the total number of news stories on Islam.

*Daily Graphic* has an average of 95 pages whereas *Daily Guide* has an average of 24 pages.

The higher number of pages of the *Daily Graphic* compared to the *Daily Guide* may account for the higher percentage of news on Islam in the *Daily Graphic*.

Also comparatively, considering the number of pages, *Daily Graphic* seems to have more interest in the news on Islam than *Daily Guide*.

### 4.3 Prominence

A news item is considered prominent when it is enhanced with pictures, is allocated a full or half page in newspapers and usually placed on the cover page of newspapers (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

To determine the extent of prominence given to the news on Islam in both newspapers, the study sought to answer the research question:

What is the extent of prominence given to Islamic issues in *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*?

To answer this question, the study examined story placement, the use of pictures and size of story. Table 1 presents the placement of the stories, Table 2 presents the use of pictures and Table 3, the size of the stories.

#### 4.3.1 Story Placement

The placement of stories in newspapers determines how important or prominent one news item is over the other. A front page story is deemed the most prominent as it is the first story a reader sees before the other stories (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Other pages like the center spread is also considered prominent. To determine the kind of prominence given to news on Islam in relation to placement in both newspapers, the researcher analysed the pages where the stories were published. In *Daily Guide*, more than half (60.9%) of the stories were placed in the middle pages.

**Table 1: Cross tabulation of Newspaper and Story Placement**

Newspaper Name	Placement					Total
	Front Page	Middle Page	Back Page	Centre Spread	Other	
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	4(4%)	28(28.5%)	4 (4%)	3(3%)	59(61%)	98(100%)
<i>Daily Guide</i>	5(6.7%)	45(60.9%)	4(5.4%)	0	20(27%)	74(100%)
Total	9(5.3%)	73(42.4%)	8(4.7%)	3(1.7%)	79(45.9%)	172(100%)

In *Daily Guide*, more than half (60.9 percent) of the stories were placed in the middle pages whereas a little over one quarter of the stories in *Daily Graphic* were placed at the middle pages. Only 4.7 percent of the stories were placed on the front page of the *Daily Graphic* whereas 6.7 percent of the stories in *Daily Guide* were placed on the front page.

In both *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*, close to half (45.9%) of the stories were on other pages other than the front, middle, centre spread and back pages.

Some of the news stories on Islam that made the front pages in both newspapers included conflict resolution issues such as the hijab controversy in Western Region, death of prominent Islamic clergies and Islamic Festivals such as Eid-ul Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr.

For both newspapers, the centre spread pages captured most of the religious issues including Hajj pilgrimage and celebration of Islamic festivals in caption stories.

In *Daily Graphic*, the back page usually had stories on charity/donations, and “other” stories. Similarly, some stories about charity/donations were placed at the back page of the *Daily Guide*. In both newspapers, stories on terrorism were on “other” pages other than the front, middle, centre spread or back pages.

From the findings, both newspapers deemed religious issues – Islamic festivals, Hajj pilgrimage and Ramadan – as the most important as *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* published these news stories on their front pages and center spread. On the other hand, stories about charity/donations and “other” stories were considered less important and therefore placed on “other” pages and the back pages.

It is however worthy of note that the stories that made the front pages and the center spread were within a time frame. In 2013 for instance, the news stories on Islam made the front pages and the center spread in both newspapers on August 9, a day after Muslims celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr. News on Islam also made the front pages on October 16, a day after Muslims celebrated Eid-ul- Adha. Thus, the few times Muslims make the front pages and the center spread are usually within a context and usually influenced by how important Muslims deem such activities above others.

#### **4.3.2 Use of Photographs**

Aside from photographs making news seem authentic, they also give a level of prominence and attract some level of attention to the news item. Newman et al (1992) state that newspapers are less likely to grab attention on low salience stories unless presented in a manner designed to attract attention. Table 2 shows the extent to which both newspapers used photographs in Islamic news items.

**Table 2: Cross tabulation of Newspapers and Use of Photographs.**

Newspaper Name	Photograph		Total
	Yes	No	
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	66(67.3%)	32(32.7%)	98(100%)
<i>Daily Guide</i>	66(89.1%)	8(10.8%)	74(100%)
Total	132(76.7%)	40(23.3%)	172(100%)

More than half of the stories in both *Daily Graphic* (67.3percent) and *Daily Guide* (89.1 percent) were accompanied with photographs. In *Daily Guide*, only 10.8 percent of the news items were presented without stories whereas in *Daily Graphic* 32.7 percent of the news items were presented with no photographs. Out of the 172 news items that were analysed, 76 percent of the news on Islam had photographs with 23.3 percent of the stories having no photographs. A majority of the stories in both *Daily Graphic* (67.3percent) and *Daily Guide* (89.1 percent) were accompanied with photographs. Out of the 172 news items that were analysed, 76 percent of the Islamic news stories had photographs with 23.3 percent of the stories having no photographs. This suggests that both newspapers attach a high level of prominence to news on Islam.

### 4.3.3 Size of Story

The space allotted to stories in newspapers can also be determined by a number of factors including news value judgement, editorial policy and house style. (Spencer-Thomas, 2013). Whereas a full page may suggest how prominent a story is, a quarter page or less may suggest a less important issue (Spencer-Thomas, 2013). Table 3 shows the amount of space *Daily Guide* and *Daily Graphic* gave to Islamic news items.

**Table 3: Cross tabulation of Newspapers and Size of Story**

Newspaper Name	Space				Total
	Full	Half	Quarter	Other	
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	10(10.2%)	38(38.7%)	45(45.9%)	5(5.2%)	98(100%)
<i>Daily Guide</i>	3(4.1%)	18(24.3%)	49(66.2%)	4(5.4%)	74(100%)
Total	13(7.6%)	56(32.5%)	94(54.7%)	9 (5.2%)	172(100%)

Table 3 shows that a little over half (54.7 percent) of the stories that were published in the newspapers were allocated a quarter page. More than one quarter (32.5 percent) of the stories were allocated a half page and less than one quarter (7.6 percent) of the stories were published on a full page. The other stories (5.2 percent) were allocated spaces less than a quarter page.

However, judging from the higher number of news stories on Islam in *Daily Graphic* compared to *Daily Guide*, there was a sharp contrast in the allocation of quarter page for Islamic news items in the two newspapers.

Whereas 45.9 percent of the stories in *Daily Graphic* were published on a quarter page, 66.2 percent of the stories in *Daily Guide* were published on a quarter page.

The difference can also be attributed to the amount of space available to each of the newspapers. As *Daily Graphic* has a higher number of pages compared to *Daily Guide*, it may have more space for stories than *Daily Guide* will have.

As more of the stories, per the findings, were allotted a quarter page, the study may suggest that, Islamic issues with regards to the size of the stories were given less prominence.

#### 4.4 Tone of Stories

The study also investigated the kind of tone in which news on Islam were covered. The majority of the literature that was reviewed pointed out that newspapers, mostly in the Western world, where Islamophobia is high, give a negative portrayal to news on Islam (Said, 1977), (Okoro and Odoemalam, 2013), (Powell, 2011) and (Sayyid et al, 2012). The study sought to test the hypothesis:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are likely to cover news on Islam in a neutral tone.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are unlikely to cover news on Islam in a neutral tone.

The table below was generated to test the hypothesis

**Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Newspapers and Direction of story.**

Newspaper Name	Direction			Total
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	
<i>Daily Graphic</i>	12(12.2%)	23(23.25%)	63(64.3%)	98(100%)
<i>Daily Guide</i>	12(16.2%)	14(18.9%)	48(64.9%)	74(100%)
Total	24(14.0%)	37(21.5%)	111(64.5%)	172(100%)

$$\chi^2 = 0.885 \quad df = 2 \quad \rho = 0.064$$

According to the data, most of the stories on Islam by both newspapers were predominantly neutral. More than half (64.5 percent) of the Islamic news items in both *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* were given a neutral tone in coverage. A little less than one quarter (21.5 percent) of the news items had a negative tone with 14 percent having a positive tone.

After the data was subjected to a statistical test, a chi square value of 0.885 at a degree of freedom of two and a probability of 0.65 was produced. With a p-value of 0.064 which is less than the generally accepted level of significance of 0.05 in social science research, the null hypothesis was rejected. The data for the study thus, accepts the research hypothesis that *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* are likely to cover Islamic issues in a neutral tone. From the findings, the newspapers gave a neutral tone to the news on Islam. This finding differs from studies from the reviewed literature such as Mishra (2004), Addo- Kurawa (2006), Sayyid et al (2012), Osman et al (2013), Schoenemann (2013) and Fathilla and Khairi (2015) that found that the Western media and Nigerian media portray Islam negatively.

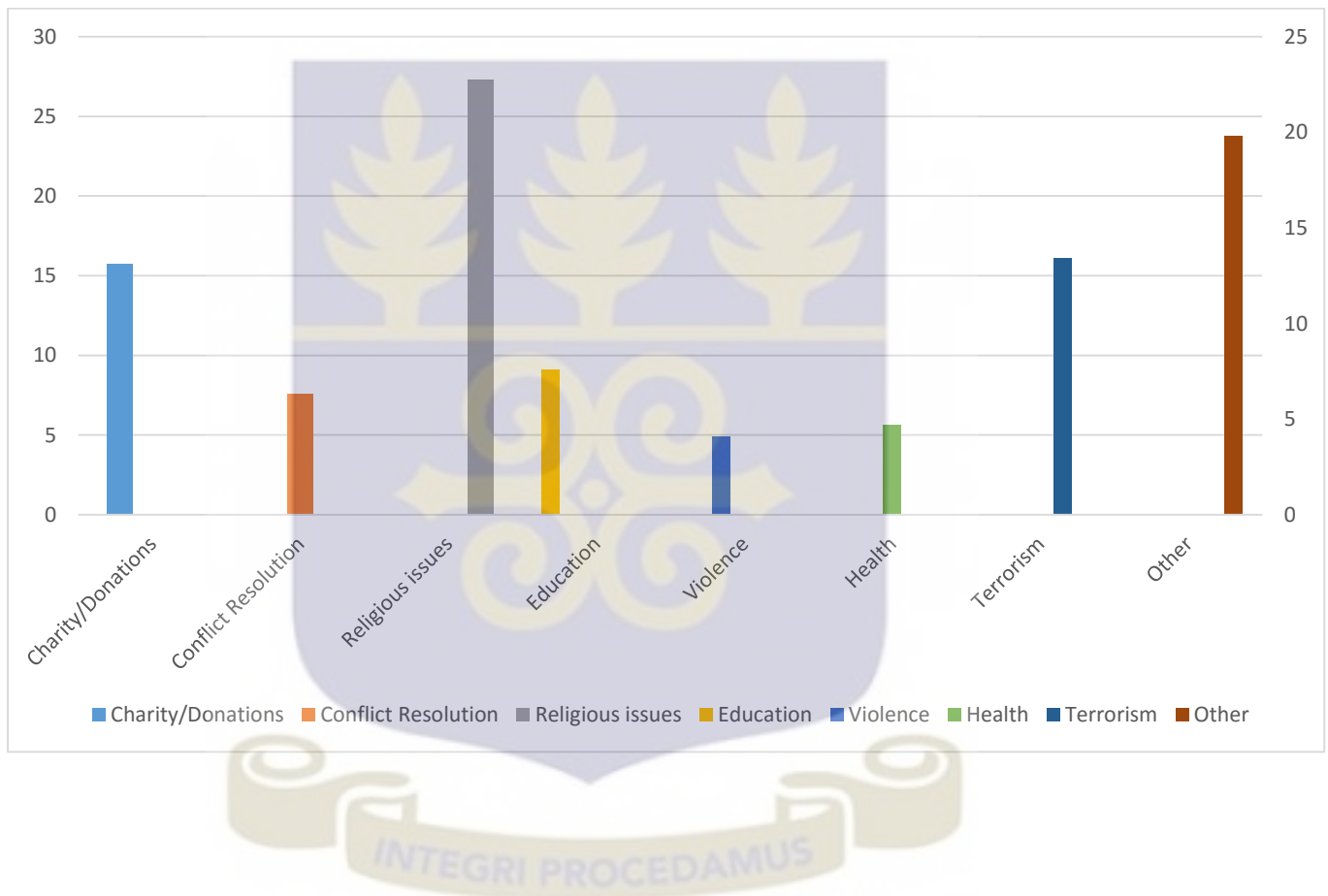
#### **4.5 Themes/ Issues Covered**

The study also sought to find out the dominant themes that were present in the coverage of Islam in both newspapers. The search for the themes was done inductively thus, the researcher did not use any existing template in determining the themes. Journalists use selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration of parts of a main issue to suggest a specific frame (Tankard et al., 2001). Thus, although an issue may have different angles, a journalist can select and elaborate one of the angles to give it a specific frame or theme. To find out how news on Islam is framed, this study sought to answer the research question:

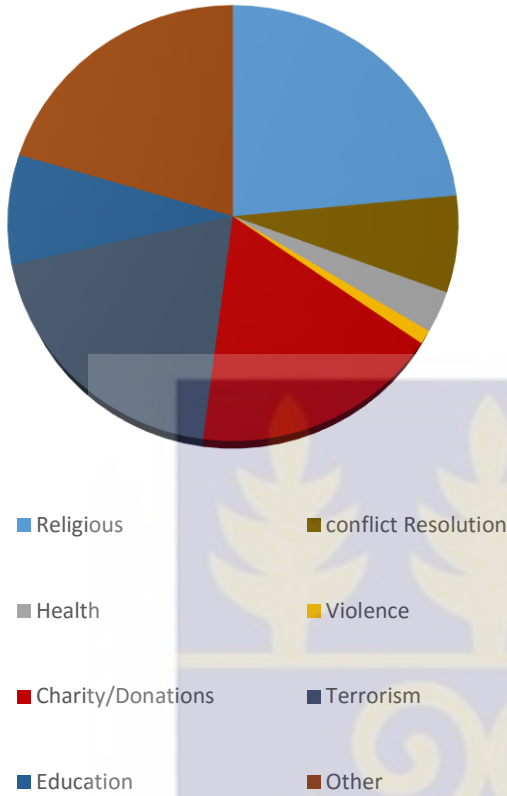
What are the dominant themes prevalent in news reports on Islam in *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*?

Diagram 3 presents the overall findings on the themes in both newspapers. Diagrams 3a and 3b present the themes in *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* respectively.

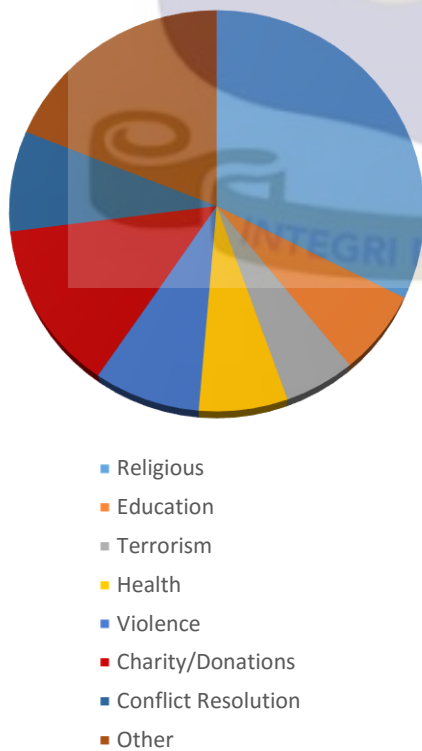
**Diagram 3**



**Diagram 3a**  
*Daily Graphic*



**Diagram 3b**  
*Daily Guide*



Seven themes emerged out of the analysis of this study with a number of other varying issues which were grouped under “other”. Most of the issues that were covered centred on religious issues. The result in diagram 3 shows that a little over a quarter (27.3 percent) of the news on Islam in both newspapers were on religious issues. Charity/donations emerged the second highest theme with less than a quarter (15.7 percent) of the stories on Islam. Terrorism followed as the third highest theme in both newspapers. A little over one tenth (13.4 percent) of the stories on Islam in both newspapers associated Islam and Muslims with terrorist groups and activities. Other dominant themes included conflict resolution (7.6 percent), Education (7.6 percent), Health (4.7 percent) and Violence which recorded the least with 4.1 percent.

The results however, differed slightly in each of the newspapers. Whereas in *Daily Graphic* Terrorism emerged the third highest issue with 11 percent, in *Daily Guide*, Terrorism was the least covered issue with 2.3 percent. Also, violence emerged as the least covered issue in *Daily Graphic* with less than one percent whereas in *Daily Guide*, Violence was the fourth most covered issue with 3.4 percent tying with Conflict Resolution.

A majority of the stories on Islam which were categorised under the theme of religious issues were reports on Islamic activities such as festivals and pilgrimages. Story headlines like “Eid-ul-Adha observed in regions” (*Daily Graphic*, October 7, 2014), “Muslims begin Ramadan” (*Daily Graphic*, July 10, 2013), “Quran recitation contest begins” (*Daily Graphic*, June 30, 2014), “Muslims begin New Year” (*Daily Guide*, October 27, 2014) and “Pilgrims return starts 20 October” (*Daily Guide*, October 9, 2014) were among the religious stories. Although the analysis of the themes was done inductively, the religious frame forms part of the frame scholars such as Semetko and Valkenburg (2000); Iyengar (1991) and De Vreese (2005) have developed for analysing media frames. In a study by Fathillah and Khairi (2015), for example, religion emerged as the first dominant theme with 40 percent of the stories and in Okoro and

Odoemalam (2013), religion was the second highest theme constituting 13.4 percent out of 10 themes coded in a study on the dominant frames in the coverage of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers.

The theme of charity/donations was mainly stories about donations or charity work by Muslims to identified groups and Muslims receiving donations from other groups. Some of the stories included: “President Mahama donates ambulances to Muslims in Ashanti” (*Daily Graphic*, May 27, 2015), “Ahmadiyya Youth donates to Osu Children’s Home” (*Daily Graphic*, May 20, 2015), “Kasapreko donates to Chief Imam” (*Daily Graphic*, August 15, 2013), “Kuwaiti NGO commissions mosque” (*Daily Guide*, December 17, 2014), and “Zoomlion touches more lives” (December 24, 2014).

Interestingly, the third dominant theme – terrorism – was all stories culled from foreign sources such as the Cable News Network (CNN) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). These stories linked the terms “Muslim” and “Islam” with terrorist groups and activities. Words such as extremist, terrorist and jihadist were in some cases, modified by the terms, “Islam” and “Muslims” to get terms like “Muslim extremist” or “Muslim terrorist.” In some stories, the term, “Islamist”, was used interchangeably with “terrorist.”

Most of the literature have established such findings where the terms Islam and Muslims were attached to words such as extremist, terrorist and jihadist as if they belonged together inextricably (Kuwaiti Government, 2002).

The stories coded for the theme of education mostly centred on the benefits of education where Muslim parents and communities were advised to educate their children. Some of the stories included, “Ahmadiyya Muslim Girls SHS launches anniversary” (*Daily Graphic*, February 4, 2015) and ‘Muslim Parents urged to invest in education’ (*Daily Guide*, October 3, 2014).

The stories on the theme of conflict resolution were mostly reports on attempts by leaders to solve religious tensions between Christian and Islamic issues in Ghana. Some of the stories were headlined: “No tension between Muslims, Christians - Chief Imam” (*Daily Graphic*, March 9, 2015), “Muslims call for dialogue on religious freedom” (*Daily Graphic*, March 6, 2015) and “Freedom of religion must prevail” (*Daily Guide*, February 23, 2015).

Surprisingly, none of the literature that were reviewed captured this frame

The stories under the theme of health were reports mostly on medical advice to Muslims and issues concerning medical facilities. Stories on the theme of health included, “Ameer unveils medical equipment at Swedru Ahmadiyya hospital” (*Daily Graphic*, June 27, 2015), Muslim communities in Takoradi educated on Ebola, cholera” (*Daily Graphic*, October 13, 2014) and “Muslims urged to know their HIV status” (*Daily Guide*, December 2, 2014).

The stories coded for the theme of violence were stories that included disregard for road traffic and people taking the law into their own hands by meting out punishment on wrong doers. Stories with such headlines as “ACP Awuni appeals to Muslim youth” (*Daily Graphic*, July 26, 2013), “Madina group chases lesbian” (*Daily Guide*, July 17, 2013) and “Muslim members burn church at Atebubu” (*Daily Guide*, February 14, 2015), were among the stories categorised under the theme of violence. Osman et al (2013) captured violence as one of the dominant themes in their study on patterns used to label Islam in UK and US.

The stories captured under “other,” included one or two stories on finance, leadership and the role of Islam in governance.

#### 4.6 Summary of Findings.

The study revealed that coverage of Islam by the two newspapers centered on seven themes. Out of these seven themes, religion emerged as the most dominant theme with 27.3 percent and violence was the least covered theme with 4.1 percent in the study period in both newspapers.

Regarding the extent of coverage, the findings showed that *Daily Graphic* covered more Islamic issues than *Daily Guide*. Whereas *Daily Graphic* had 57 percent of Islamic news stories, *Daily Guide* had 43 percent.

Unlike most of the reviewed literature where Islam was given a negative coverage, the tone in the Islamic news items in both *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* was neutral (64.5 percent). Only 21.5 percent of the stories was negative and 14 percent was positive.

Striking about this finding was that most of the stories which were coded for as negative were stories on terrorism which were sourced from foreign agencies. None of the stories on terrorism were covered by either of the newspapers.

Concerning prominence, both newspapers largely used photographs to enhance the news stories on Islam. In both *Daily Guide* and *Daily Graphic*, 76.7 percent of the Islamic news items were accompanied with photographs.

Regarding the placement, 42.4 percent of the Islamic news items were placed in the middle pages which suggests quite a high level of prominence.

With size of story, most (54.7 percent) of the Islamic news items were allotted a quarter page which suggests a low level of prominence in both *Daily Guide* and *Daily Graphic*.

Concerning the portrayal of Islam in the two newspapers, this study reveals that both newspapers portray Islam in a positive light. Most of the stories were about religious issues and charity/donations which can be considered as positive issues.

#### **4.7 Limitations of Study**

There is a plethora of media in Ghana – print, radio, television and online – however, the study was limited to only the print media due to time restrictions. Future studies can thus, consider generating data from other media to be able to broaden findings.

Another limitation was the use of only the quantitative method of analysis in doing the study. A larger study could have employed the triangulated method to allow for a more in-depth analysis of findings. Future studies can add interviews or do ethnographic studies to know the backgrounds and routines of journalists, house styles, editorial policies and other factors that could affect the direction of news items.

#### **4.8 Recommendations**

Most of the stories on the theme of terrorism from both *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* were news items coming from foreign sources like BBC and CNN. It is recommended that the Ghana News Agency (GNA) put in place, measures for the agency to serve as the main source of news for foreign news including news on terrorism. The Ghanaian media can then cover the news devoid of any derogatory terms in this case, terms such as “Islamic terrorists”, “Islamists” and “Muslim extremist”.

The Ghanaian media can thus, to avoid using terms such as “Islamists” and “Muslim extremists”, they can edit or re-write the stories they source from the foreign media to suit the media house-style.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

The study sought to investigate the representation of Islam in two newspapers in Ghana – *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*. This study was motivated by the large number of research conducted

in the West where the Western media portray Islam negatively mostly because of some terrorist activities they have suffered. As Ghana has had no form of terrorist attack to influence coverage of Islam compared to the Western world, the researcher hypothesised that the representation given to Islamic issues by the two newspapers would be different from the Western media. To find out how Islam is portrayed in *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*, a qualitative content analysis approach was employed. The findings of the data were presented and discussed in line with the literature and the theoretical framework – framing – underpinning the study. The study established that both newspapers, unlike most of the extant literature, give a neutral coverage to news on Islam. Also, all the news on Islam covered under the period of study were given a fair level of prominence through the use of photograph, placement and size of story. It was also discovered that religious issues and charity/donations were the most dominant themes whereas violence recorded the least theme in the study period.

## APPENDIX ONE

### CODING GUIDE

#### Q1. Newspaper Name

Number Assigned	Category
1	Daily Graphic
2	Daily Guide

#### Q2. Tone of Story

Number Assigned	Category
1	Positive
2	Negative
3	Neutral

#### Q3. Issues Covered

<b>Number Assigned</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Charity/donations
2	Conflict resolution
3	Religious
4	Education
5	Violence
6	Health
7	Terrorism
8	Other

**Q4. Story Placement**

<b>Number Assigned</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Front Page
2	Middle Page
3	Back Page
4	Center Spread
5	Other

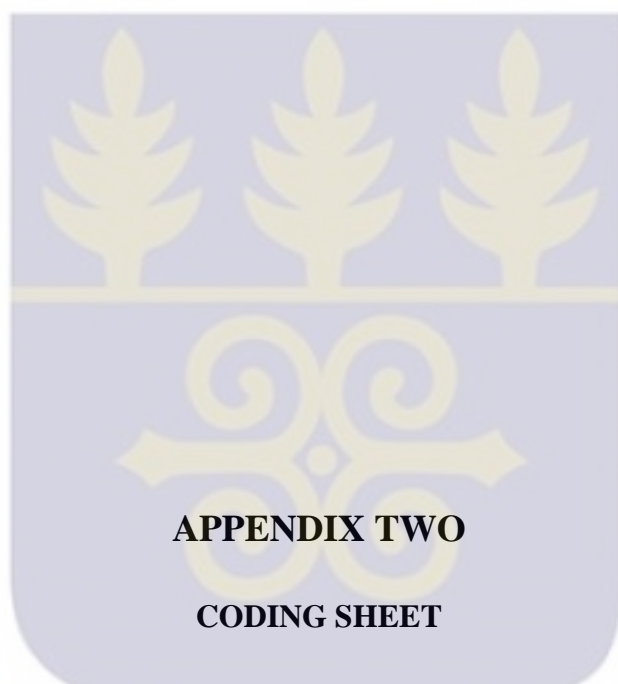
**Q5. Story Size**

<b>Number Assigned</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Full Page
2	Half Page

3	Quarter Page
4	Other

**Q6. Use of Photograph**

Number Assigned	Category
1	Yes
2	No



**APPENDIX TWO  
CODING SHEET**

Number	Newspaper	Tone	Issues	Placement	Size	Pictures
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						



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