

**GHANAIAN NEWSPAPERS FRAMING OF THE FIRST FEMALE VICE-  
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF A MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY IN GHANA IN THE  
2020 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

**BY**

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**INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the outcome of my personal research effort under the supervision of Dr. Emeka Umejei (Ph.D.) of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. This dissertation has not been presented elsewhere in part or whole for the award of another degree, and all references to other people's work have been properly acknowledged.

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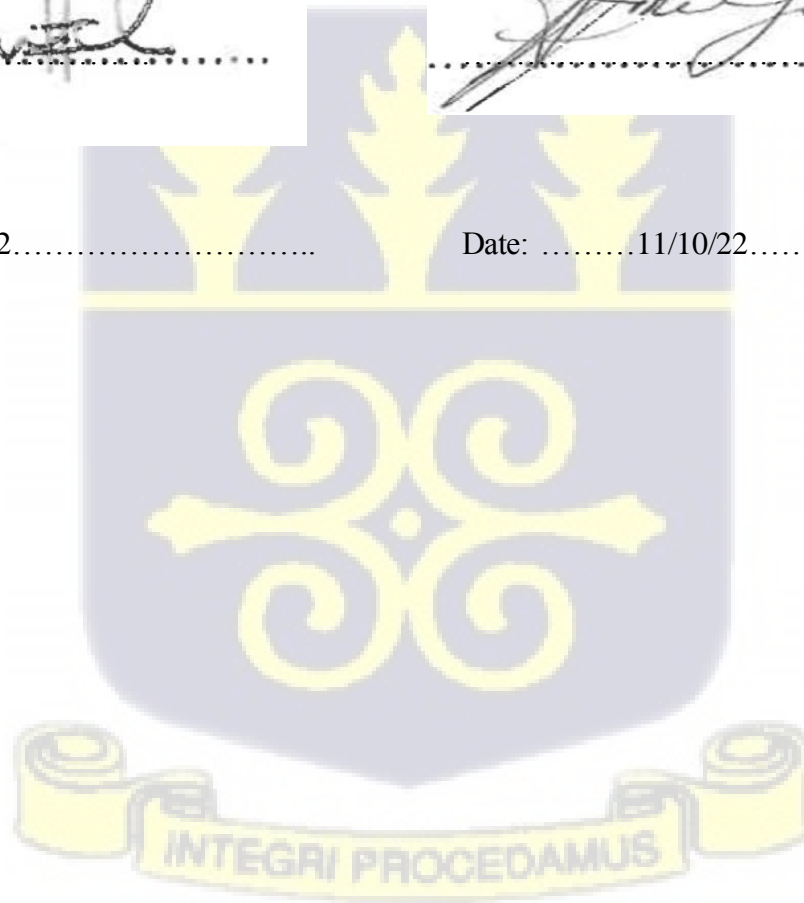
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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, Benjamin Gyawu and Florence Koranteng, for their unwavering support and love throughout my academic studies.



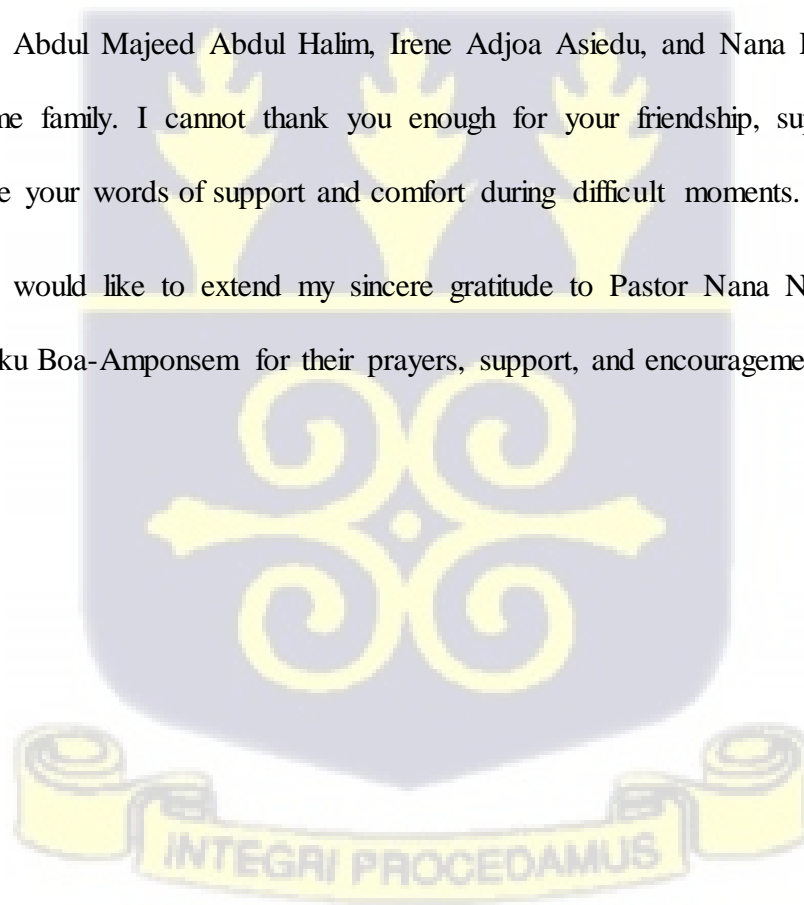
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	i
DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background to the Study .....	4
1.1.1 Media and Politics in Ghana .....	4
1.1.2 Gendered Media Coverage .....	6
1.1.3 Women in Politics .....	7
1.1.4 Women in Politics in Ghana .....	9
1.2 Problem Statement .....	13
1.3 Research Objectives .....	17
1.4 Research Questions .....	17
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	18
1.6 Organization of the Study .....	19
1.7 Definition of Key Terms .....	19
1.8 Chapter Summary.....	20
CHAPTER TWO .....	21
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	21
2.0 Introduction .....	21
2.1 Literature Review .....	22
2.1.1 Media Framing and Gender Stereotyping of Female Political Candidates .....	22
2.1.1.2 Gender Stereotyping in News Coverage .....	25
2.1.2 Visibility of Female Politicians in the Print Media .....	28
2.1.3 Factors that Influence Representation and Participation of Women in Politics .....	31
2.1.3.1 Political Institutions .....	33
2.1.3.2 Legislation and Policies .....	33
2.1.3.3 Social and Economic Factors .....	34

2.1.3.4 Cultural Factor .....	35
2.1.3.5 Media Effects .....	36
2.2 Literature Gap .....	36
2.3 Theoretical Framework .....	38
2.3.1 Framing Theory .....	38
2.3.2 Functions of Framing.....	42
2.3.3 Types of Media Frames .....	43
2.3.4 Liberal Feminist Theory .....	43
2.3.5 Relevance of the Framing and Liberal Feminist Theories to the Study .....	45
2.4 Relationship between the Framing and Liberal Feminists' Theories.....	47
2.5 Chapter Summary.....	47
CHAPTER THREE .....	48
METHODOLOGY.....	48
3.0 Introduction.....	48
3.1 Research Approach .....	49
3.2 Content Analysis .....	50
3.3 Profile of the First Female Vice-Presidential Candidate of the NDC Party (Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman).....	51
3.4 Profile of Selected Newspapers for the Study.....	54
3.4.1 Daily Graphic.....	54
3.4.2 Daily Guide.....	55
3.5 Population and Sample for the Study.....	55
3.6 Unit of Analysis .....	56
3.7 Sampling Technique.....	56
3.8 Data Collection Instrument .....	57
3.9 Data Collection.....	57
3.10 Inter-coder Reliability Test .....	58
3.11 Data Analysis and Analytical Tool .....	58
3.12 Chapter Summary.....	59
CHAPTER FOUR.....	59
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	59

4.0 Introduction .....	59
4.1 Presentation of Findings .....	60
4.1.1 Frequency of Stories Covered by the Two Newspapers .....	60
4.1.2 Placement of Stories in the Two Newspapers .....	61
4.1.3 Format of Stories Covered by the Two Newspapers .....	62
4.1.4 Gender Stereotype Stories Published by the Two Newspapers .....	63
4.1.5 Gender of Reporters by the Two Newspapers .....	64
4.1.6 Focus of the Stories Covered by the Two Newspapers .....	65
4.1.7. Stories with Photographs Published by the Two Newspapers .....	66
4.2 Discussion of Findings .....	67
4.2.1 Frequency of Stories covered by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide related to the Female Vice-Presidential Candidate .....	67
4.2.2 Placement of Stories related to the Female Candidate by the Two Newspapers ....	<b>Error!</b>
	<b>Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.2.3 Types of Stories Published by the Two Newspapers on the Female Candidate .....	<b>Error!</b>
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4.2.4 Type of Gender Stereotype Given to Stories Published by the Two Newspapers on the Female Candidate .....	72
4.2.5 Gender of Reporters who Covered Stories Related to the Female Candidate for the Two Newspapers .....	73
4.2.6 Focus of Stories Published by the Two Newspapers on the Female Candidate .....	74
4.3 Chapter Summary .....	76
CHAPTER FIVE .....	77
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	77
5.0 Introduction .....	77
5.1 Summary of Key Findings .....	77
5.2 Conclusions/Implications .....	78
5.3 Limitations of the Study .....	79
5.4 Recommendations for Future Studies .....	80
5.5 Recommendations for Policy and Practice .....	81
REFERENCES .....	82
APPENDIX A .....	90

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table1: Number of Stories Covered.....59

Table2: Placement of Stories.....60

Table3: Format of Stories.....61

Table4: Gender Stereotype Stories.....62

Table5: Gender of Reporters.....63

Table6: Focus of Stories.....64

Table7: Stories with Photographs.....65



## ABSTRACT

This study examined the media framing of the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of a major political party in Ghana's 2020 general elections. Specifically, the study examined the prominence, gender stereotypes in media reporting and the framing of stories related to the candidate. The quantitative content analysis was employed in conjunction with a coding guide to gather stories related to the candidate in the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide newspapers. Guided by the framing and liberal feminists' theories, findings suggest variation in the frequency of reporting of the first female Vice-Presidential candidate in the two newspapers. While the Daily Graphic provided greater coverage, the Daily Guide lagged in reporting on the candidate. Additionally, stories on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate were mostly placed on pages other than the front page, back page, and center page, with most stories having positive gender stereotypes. Significantly, male reporters covered more stories on the candidate than their female counterparts. The study concluded that women politicians receive less coverage during elections and their stories less prioritized on prominent pages by Ghanaian newspapers. The study recommended that the Ghanaian media, particularly the print media, increase their coverage of female politicians during any general elections. The study also proposed that Ghanaian media outlets and practitioners step up efforts to combat gender inequality through increased public awareness and the design of gender transformative programmes that seek to promote gender transformative change at the individual, societal, and systemic levels across all spheres of life, particularly in the political arena.



## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 Introduction

Ghana has a reputation for being an established democracy in sub-Saharan Africa and has been celebrated for peaceful democratic transitions from one political party to another. Since the founding of the Fourth Republic in 1992 and the re-establishment of multi-party politics, Ghana has successfully organized six democratic elections. The presidency of the country has changed parties three times (Madsen et al., 2020), with power alternating between the two major political parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

These elections have seen women's participation, with some being elected to positions in Parliament. Additionally, some women have been nominated as running mates for presidential candidates; nevertheless, these nominations have, however, primarily come from small political parties (Amenyedzi, 2021). Mrs Akua Donkor of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP), Ms Brigitte Dzogbenuku of the Progressive People's Party (PPP), and Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings of the National Democratic Party (NDP) were the three women that ran in Ghana's presidential election on December 7, 2020. The latter, however, was the most viable among them, serving as Ghana's First Lady from 4 June 1979 to 24 September 1979 and from 31 December 1981 to 7 January 2001 (Henaku, 2020).

According to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) estimates for 2022 on gender equality in Ghana, there are only 16% of women parliamentarians (40 out of 275 seats in Parliament) in the 8<sup>th</sup> parliament. Similarly, just 21% of ministerial appointments and 14.55% of Municipal and District Chief Executives are women.

Again, when judged against the UN's Women Agenda 2030 criteria, Ghana falls short in efforts to bridge the gap in the representation of women in decision-making bodies. The Women's Agenda 2030 of the UN, according to Dzradosi et al. (2018) posits that women should hold about 60% of ministerial positions, 50% of Professorial and Vice-Chancellor positions in different universities, and 60% of Chief Executive Positions in state institutions. However, this is not the case in Ghana

Although Ghana has a female population of 52%, the country lags behind many other African countries like South Africa (48.6%), Rwanda (51.9%), and Ethiopia (47.6%) in terms of gender equality (Musau, 2019) and is significantly below the continental average of 24% (Madsen et al, 2020). Not surprisingly, the country was ranked 107 out of 153 countries on the gender index on politics according to the Global Gender Gap Report (2020).

The persistency of low representation of women in critical decision-making positions hinders the effectiveness of women to contribute to the development of Ghana. The figures for women's representation are extremely low even though Ghana is a signatory to several international conventions and protocols, with a pledge to ensure that there is 30 to 40% representation of women (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013). Globally, this includes Ghana's commitment to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly, SDG 5, which emphasizes women's empowerment and gender equality. At the national level (African Union), Ghana's commitments include the Protocol on Women's Rights of 2004 and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality of 2004. The Representation of the People's Act of 1959, Articles 17; 35 (5), (6) and 40 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution also makes provisions for women's

representation. The slow progress on closing the gender gaps has generally been associated to noncompliance of government to the dictates of the conventions, lack of political will and the patriarchal nature of the Ghanaian society.

Until recently, neither of the two major parties had ever nominated a woman to run on their tickets either as a candidate or as a running mate in the presidential contest although there have been calls over the years for this to be changed. However, in 2020, one of the country's two largest political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), nominated a female Vice-Presidential candidate, Professor Naana Opoku-Agyeman Opoku, for the year's election, becoming the first woman to hold the position of a Vice-Presidential candidate of a major Ghanaian political party. A woman taking a central role in Ghana's politics was significant. Her candidacy spurred optimism for gender equality, but also sparked 'anti-feminist and misogynistic rhetoric.' It shifted the election dynamics from a presidential race between two "big men" to an emphasis on gendered aspects of politics (Madsen et al., 2020, pp. 2-3).

According to (Thu, 2012) several studies have shown that during elections, the media covers fewer stories about female politicians as compared to their male counterparts. Likewise, female politicians receive little prominence from the media, which reduces their prospects of winning an election. As a result, this study was conducted to investigate how the first female Vice-Presidential candidate was covered in two Ghanaian newspapers in the 2020 general elections.



## 1.1 Background to the Study

### 1.1.1 Media and Politics in Ghana

In today's culture, the media is regarded to serve a variety of purposes. It provides the citizenry with news and information, which acts as the cornerstone for social dialogue. The media has a significant impact on molding political reality by selecting and displaying news. The amount of information in a news piece and its position teach readers not just about a given issue, but also how much priority to place on that issue. The mass media, by reflecting what candidates say throughout a campaign, can decide the salient issues—that is—the media may establish the campaign's "agenda" (McCombs & Shaw, 2017). Due to the media's role in controlling the information available to the citizens, the media is known as 'gatekeepers.' As a result, the role of the media in disseminating information and mediating between the state and all areas of civil society is critical, particularly in the political arena (Ansah, 1996).

In the context of assisting democratic transitions, the media generally serves as a conduit for citizens to obtain the information they require to make informed decisions and participate in the electoral process. The media informs voters about their democratic rights, provides timely election campaign updates, and provides a forum for political candidates and parties to express their ideas and thoughts to the general public and debate one another (Open Society Initiative for West Africa, 2010).

As elections approach, the media give opportunities for politicians running for Parliamentary and Presidential seats to present their manifestos and programs to the general public to persuade electorates to make well-informed, independent decisions on who to put into power. Similarly, they provide a means for the general public to communicate their opinions and

concerns to political parties. Most notably, the media play a vital role in election coverage by focusing on subjects or people that are likely to achieve notoriety (Kleinnijenhuis, 2001).

Ghana has made tremendous progress toward freedom of expression and use of democracy since 1992 when the country accepted democratic administration after years of being rocked by a series of coups d'états and military regimes (Arthur, 2010). Since the country's return to democracy, journalism and media operations have improved significantly.

The media's role as watchdogs over the various arms of government, as well as giving accurate and timely information on what's going on in the country, has been elevated to new heights (Yovonoo, 2016). In Ghana's 1992 Constitution, free expression and journalism practice are boldly enshrined, with other fundamental human rights that guarantee the constitutional rights of Ghanaians such as the right to vote and freedom of association (Nyarko, 2017). The country's return to democracy opened the mediascape leading to media plurality.

According to the National Communication Authority (NCA), there are over a thousand print and electronic media houses in the country. In general, the country can be said to be performing well in terms of media pluralism and diversity. As of 2021, the NCA has given frequency authorizations to 684 FM Broadcasting Stations in Ghana. From the total number of authorizations, 489 stations are in operation (NCA, 2021). On the part of television, the media commission has authorized 141 stations to operate fully (NCA, 2021).

The plurality of media in Ghana has infused some diversity and vibrancy into the reporting of news, with some media companies, particularly the electronic media, broadcasting in numerous indigenous Ghanaian languages. Consequently, the significant expansion of media houses in Ghana is likely to help broaden the media coverage of politicians, especially female candidates, during election periods. However, literature on women's portrayal in the media has

revealed that women in media as well as in politics face various degrees of stereotyping (Gadzekpo, 2013; see also Lindner, 2004; Mann, 2011; Many, 2013).

### **1.1.2 Gendered Media Coverage**

Gender disparities have an impact on both access to and coverage of the media. Gender researcher, Donkor's (2016) study titled "Mediating gendered politics: Ghanaian politicians and news discourse" reveals that the picture created by the media for female politicians is contradictory and mostly negative. Women are thus discouraged from actively participating in politics as a result. They are typically hesitant to expose themselves, their colleagues, and their families to greater harassment and/or risk because patriarchal systems are already discriminatory.

The political debates in Ghana are frequently nasty, anti-social, misogynistic, and threatening in nature. According to the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), which monitored the media during the 2020 Ghana election season, obscene language has become more prevalent, as has digital vigilantism, a new threat in Ghanaian politics. Partisan bullies, often on the payroll of established politicians, use social media to propagate falsehoods, innuendoes, and rumors against their political opponents (Madsen et al., 2020).

As a result, social media has become a manipulation tool used to intimidate women, and prevent these women from running for public office. Despite the existence of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act from 2019, social media also adds to the normalization of violence that has been accepted as a part of political debate.

Akapule and Kwode (2020) analyzed media coverage of female parliamentary candidates in the 2016 general elections in Ghana and found that female candidates received different

quality and quantity of newspaper coverage than male candidates. Women candidates have minimal visibility, according to Goodyear-Grant (2013), with some women generating headlines solely because of their unique accomplishment or their association with powerful men. Consequently, males have been found to dominate the front and political pages, with females appearing on less prominent political pages (GMMP, 2020).

Studies on the coverage of gendered issues have been undertaken at both the local and international levels for decades, with the Global Media Monitoring Project conducting the most extensive of these studies (GMMP 2020). The GMMP (2020) concludes that women account for 24% of subjects seen, heard, and read about in the media—16% of the articles were about women explicitly, 48% reinforced gender stereotypes, and only 8% challenged them.

Around the world, women's politics and media coverage continue to spark fierce controversies. Female politicians are commonly misrepresented in the media, according to Anderson et al. (2011) thus calling into question these women's ability to rule their countries. Gadzekpo (2011) supports this assertion by claiming that the Ghanaian media "trivializes women's issues in the same way that women in politics are trivialized abroad" (Gadzekpo, 2011 as cited in Akapule, 2020, p.12).

### **1.1.3 Women in Politics**

Women who are in politics are no longer a novelty in elections, as more women are elected around the world. According to research (Donkor, 2016), there are gendered variations in the way the media cover political candidates. Kittilson and Fridkin (2008) found that women, regardless of where they live, are subjected to systematic stereotypes. Female candidates receive

less publicity, with the focus generally being on their style, age, attractiveness, and marital status (Ross, 2010).

Studies have also shown that biased reporting due to the agenda-setting function of the media helps create and perpetuate obstacles to political ambition among female candidates in any election (Bystrom & Dimitrova, 2014). The 2014 political reform in Mexico inculcated the idea of parity in gender in the composition of candidates' lists in both local and federal elections (Article 41) into the constitution. This initiative aimed to boost the number of women in politics by encouraging political parties to select equal numbers of women and men (Vidal-Correa, 2020).

Similarly, Ghana is still working to develop an Affirmative Action Law (AA Law) since 1998. The Bill aims to end discrimination against marginalized groups (women) and the negative consequences for long-term development. It presents a framework to help eliminate prejudice based on Article 17 of the 1992 Constitution, which states that all citizens have equal rights to self-development and women have equal chances irrespective of gender. The purpose of the AA Law is to promote full and active participation of women in public life by establishing a more equal representation system in governance and electoral politics, in line with international and constitutional commitments, and the national development goals of Ghana (ABANTU for Development, 2022).

However, increased electoral success does not mean that gender prejudice in the electoral process and a hostile political atmosphere for women are no longer a reality. Notwithstanding gender inequities and patriarchal society, women have achieved success in various leadership roles (Rodelo, 2016; Vega-Montiel, 2010; Ruiz and Muiz, 2017). Research on the experiences of

women still reveals a political atmosphere replete with bias and prejudice where women and men still have different political experiences (Vidal-Correa, 2015; Rodelo, 2016).

#### **1.1.4 Women in Politics in Ghana**

Since Ghana's independence, women have played major roles in the country's politics. Throughout the period 1957 to 1992, a lot of women carved out political roles for themselves against the backdrop of this socio-political philosophy. Numerous women exposed the fallacy of gender stereotypes and showed that women can have equal performance just as men when they are given the chance (Nketiah, 2007).

The proclamation of the Atlantic Charter in 1945 was largely responsible for the extensive anti-colonial activities around the world aimed at the abolition of colonialism. The United Gold Coast Convention and the Convention People's Party became political movements that were utilized as vehicles for anti-colonial operations in what would later become Ghana. The latter rose to prominence, attracting women such as Hannah Cudjoe, Akua Asabea Ayisi, and Sophia Oboshie Doku, among others. These women made significant contributions to the country's independence (Vieta, 2000).

Upon Ghana's independence, President Nkrumah successfully lobbied for the passage of the affirmative action laws to ensure that women were elected to the Republic's first parliament. Despite being criticized, this allowed the House to benefit from the ideas, proposals, and contributions of the more equal gender. When the one-party system became existent in Ghana in 1965, opposition parties were outlawed, Dr. Nkrumah's experiment was expanded, and the number of women increased (Arhin, 1991).

The fall of Nkrumah in 1966 destroyed the foundation that was put in place for women. Within the three years of his tenure, the inclusion of Akua Asabea Ayisi was the closest to a

woman being included in the government of the National Liberation Council. As members of the National Advisory Committee of the National Liberation Council, Ayishetu Ibrahim and Ruby Quartey-Papafio achieved little to liberate Ghanaian women (Ninsin et al., 1989).

In terms of access, representation, and engagement in government and politics, the Second Republic became one of the worst eras for women. The only female Members of Parliament were Lydia Akanbodiipo-Kugblenu and Catherine Katuni Tadam. The latter was elected to represent Chiana-Paga, while the former was elected to represent Sandema. They did, however, make numerous useful contributions to the House's debates (Danquah, 1969).

The National Redemption Council was perhaps the worst military administration for women in terms of recognition and nomination of women to hold political offices (Nketiah, 2007). This dictatorship did not appoint a single woman to a position of national leadership. Ironically, this was a government that had a lot of females backing in Ghana. The Supreme Military Council, on the other hand, nominated Gloria Nikoi to lead the Foreign Affairs Ministry (Nketiah, 2007).

Ghana's parliamentary democracy was reborn during the third republic. Five courageous women were elected to parliament in the 1979 elections. They contributed to debates on diverse issues of national interest, therefore their participation in the House was justified. The Provision National Defence Council, the last military government of Ghana (and probably the last in the country's history), saw a resurgence of active women in politics. Women like Joyce Aryee, Ama Ata Aidoo, Esi Sutherland Addy, Aanaa Enin, Gertrude Zakaria, Vida Yeboah, and Mary Grant, influenced and contributed to the Council's survival (Adu-Boahen, 2000).

Women's participation in politics can also be viewed through the lens of their participation in mass movements of women, which had a symbiotic connection with the many

regimes whose reign coincided with their existence. The National Council of Ghana Women and the 31st December Women's Movement of the First Republic and Provisional National Defence Council regimes respectively, were the two most prominent women's mass movements. The former was unquestionably considered and viewed as a vital part of the system. Despite the idea that it was at the beck and call of the government, the latter retained its independent status (Pellow, 1977).

It is worth noting that in Ghana (especially in the post-colonial era), there has never been any legislation prohibiting women from participating in politics. Equality of sexes in terms of the enjoyment of rights, which include the right to engage in politics, has been guaranteed in all instances of constitutional governance. There was also no distinction between women's and men's rights in military administrations.

With the notable exceptions of Kwame Nkrumah's and Jerry John Rawlings' governments, there were essentially no official efforts to include women into the mainstream of national political engagement from 1957 to 1992. As a result, it can be asserted that both conventional and post-colonial political institutions have failed to encourage women to participate in active politics to a significant degree.

Other feminist-oriented and Non-governmental organizations' actions, particularly after 1975, played a significant role in the re-awakening of both the government and women themselves in terms of political involvement. This is one of the possible explanations for the rise of women in politics between 1981 and 1992. Another component of the subject of women's political participation in Ghana from 1957 to 1992 that explains inequalities in women's treatment is the distinctive nature of the regime or administration. Women's treatment under

various regimes was thought to be dependent on the level of elitism in the administration (Brown et al., 1996).

Women were not made an integral part of the government in the elitist military regimes of the National Redemption Council, National Liberation Council, and Supreme Military Council, and this had an impact on their political standing. This was due to the fact that, under those regimes, the only way to participate in politics was to be a part of the government, either directly or indirectly. This is because, under those regimes, political opposition was not tolerated. Opposition to the government was outlawed (Drah, 1993). From another perspective, the second and third republican regimes had semblances of elitism in that only those in government were allowed to participate in politics.

The former was dominated by the intellectual elite, while the latter was dominated by the old political class. The presence in those regimes of parliaments that allowed all citizens, including women, to occupy seats and participate in deliberations may have given some alleviation for women. Some females took advantage of these opportunities. The disparity between all the governments mentioned above on one hand and the governments of Nkrumah and Rawlings' PNDC on the other, supports this notion of elitism accounting for women's treatment (Shillington, 1992).

These two past Ghanaian presidents viewed their regimes as revolutions and decided to bring in a diverse group of people to help them. It was not necessary to be an intellectual to hold a position in Nkrumah's cabinet. The same could be said of Rawlings' government, which was led by the Provisional National Defence Council. As a result, women occupied a prominent position in these two administrations and made a significant contribution to the country's political and governmental activities (Tsikata, 2001).

During the first parliament in the Fourth Republic in 1993, the number of women was sixteen (16). In the Third Parliament, the number of women had climbed from 16 to 19 when the parliamentarians were sworn in to assume office in 2001. In the Fourth Parliament of the Fourth Republic, 25 women were sworn in as legislators in the 2004 elections. Out of the total number of women, 20 were appointed as cabinet ministers. However, between 2008 and 2012, the number of female cabinet ministers was reduced to 12.

Although there has not been any female president in Ghana, three women have had the nomination of Vice-Presidential candidates in the 4th Republic on the tickets of the Convention People's Party (CPP), Peoples National Convention (PNC), and Peoples Popular Party (PPP) (WiLDAF 2009). However, none got into power.

For the first time in Ghana's history, two female presidential candidates ran in the 2012 general elections: Akua Donkor of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP) and Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings of the National Democratic Party (NDP). However, both women withdrew from the campaign before the final election on December 7, 2012.

In Ghana, several women have played significant political roles. This is especially true when one rejects the urge to analyze women's political roles in isolation, instead of examining the issue in light of all the previously identified restrictions.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Today's politics is highly mediatized and voters rely heavily on the media for their political information. Unfortunately, there is a significant problem in the volume and type of coverage women politicians receive due to gender bias (Rao & Taboada, 2021). Media coverage that is biased against women politicians can undermine their election chances. Aside from

impacting women's political career prospects, media portrayals of women and men in politics are likely to reinforce the political perceptions of people as a masculine domain. This, in turn, may dampen the political ambitions of young women and dissuade political elites from picking women, resulting in future underrepresentation of women. Media coverage of female politicians, in general, has been found to represent women in unfavorable gender frameworks (Pas der Van & Aaldering, 2020). According to a statement that was issued by the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) in commemoration of International Women's Day 2021, there has been a marginal increase in the representation of females in the 8<sup>th</sup> parliament which is approximately 15% when compared to the previous figure of approximately 13% in the 7<sup>th</sup> Parliament. This current figure is the highest in the Fourth Republic and represents a doubling of the representation of females during the first Parliament in 1992. Despite this improvement, a lot of commitment is needed to enable us to achieve equality not only in politics but at all levels of the country's governance structure by tackling the deep-seated patriarchal norms that have influenced the perception of women's roles and capabilities in our society.

Numerous studies have been conducted to analyze the relationship that exists between media, women, and politics, and particularly, the framing of women politicians in the news media. These studies have contributed to our knowledge of the circumstances of women in the media in different parts of the world, though these studies have largely been dominated by North America (Sossou, 2011). As earlier stated, while several sponsored reports exist in Ghana on women and maternal health, economy, education and gender, and a growing number of women working in the media and women's representation in parliament, there is regrettably scant research that review the depiction of political women in the media. Scholars such as Yovonoo (2016) studied women's parliamentary candidates' portrayal in the 2012 general elections. The

study determined the extent and nature of coverage female candidates receive in comparison to male candidates. The findings showed that female reporters covered more female parliamentary candidates whilst male reporters covered more male parliamentary candidates. Furthermore, it was revealed that comparatively, most newspapers had their focus on substantial issues even though there were persistent personality traits, albeit marginal.

WILDALF (2009) analyzed the perception of voters on the idea of having a female parliamentarian or president in the 2008 Ghanaian general elections. After the interview of selected female candidates on several issues including media coverage of women politicians, the study revealed that most women politicians become disappointed with media coverage. The media are biased toward women. Also, there are a lot of hidden practices that deter women from contesting fairly with male politicians.

Dzeble (2006) investigated the media's role in projecting female politicians in the 2004 parliamentary elections in Ghana. The study focused on the number of coverage the media gave to female politicians, and also to find out practices and media policies that influenced news subjects' selection and stories for publication. After quantitative content analysis of the Daily Guide and Daily Graphic newspapers, the study revealed that the Ghanaian media gave less amount of coverage to female politicians when compared to their male counterparts. The findings again showed that private-owned media gave slightly more coverage to female politicians than the state-owned media.

Benneh (2005) on the other hand, studied the challenges of media coverage of Ghanaian women parliamentarians. Her focus was to find out whether media coverage of women parliamentarians reinforced or challenged the dominant culture, and also contributed to women's marginalization. After conducting in-depth interviews with 8 female parliamentarians, it was

revealed that the women felt the media gave them an unprecedentedly low level of attention, but the coverage was positive. Some of the women parliamentarians had the perception that there was discrimination by the media against women and that most of their contributions during parliamentary debates were not covered. The women parliamentarians confessed that the state media failed in the coverage of a lot of their activities, especially at the constituency level. The findings again indicated that many of the interviewees had to depend on private FM stations and were however pleased that the media portrayed them as expert authorities and leaders but not wives or mothers.

Moreover, Danso (2012) investigated the focus of newspaper stories, and to find out whether priority was given to issues and personalities of political candidates involved in the 2004 and 2008 general elections. The study adopted a quantitative content analysis, and stories were sampled on the campaign activities of political parties and presidential candidates from the Daily Guide and Daily Graphic. The study revealed that the relative influence of personalities as compared to the relative influence of issues was at play in the campaign coverage by the two newspapers. However, it was brought to light that the coverage of elections by the two newspapers in both 2004 and 2008 predominantly focused on issues. Though the stories covered were mostly issue-based, they were framed to integrate elements that highlighted the personalities of the candidates.

In analyzing the trends of the studies reviewed above, the focus was on media coverage of women in the political space as well as elections. In the 2020 general elections, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) presented its first female as a running mate to the party's flagbearer. However, this instance has not caught the attention of scholars to study how this female Vice-Presidential candidate was covered by the Ghanaian media. The researcher points

this out as an area of interest that needs to be studied since she is the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of one of the major political parties in Ghana. Therefore, this study sought to investigate how Ghanaian newspapers, precisely Daily Guide and Daily Graphic, covered stories that were related to Jane Naana Opoku Agyemang, the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Party in the 2020 general elections of Ghana.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the framing of the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of a major political party in two Ghanaian newspapers. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the prominence given to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide.
2. To identify gender stereotypes in media reporting on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate in Daily Graphic and Daily Guide
3. To examine the framing of stories that were related to the female Vice-Presidential candidate by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the research objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. What is the prominence given to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of NDC by Daily Graphic and Daily Guide?

2. What type of gender stereotypes were given to stories published by the two newspapers on the female candidate?
3. What was the gender of reporters who covered stories related to the female candidate for the two newspapers?
4. How did Daily Graphic and Daily Guide frame news stories about the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of NDC in their coverage?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

There have been several studies conducted on media and gender. Such studies have covered both the public and political lives of women. Some have looked at women in leadership positions in general. Others have focused on women in politics broadly, looking at both elected and non-elected positions. Interestingly though, literature on media coverage of female presidential candidates is little, especially, in Ghana. This is alarming because it is the highest position in the country, and one that, until recently was male-dominated.

In light of the above discussion, this research project aims to contribute to the process of more accurately documenting the role of the media in mainstreaming women in politics in Ghana

The findings of this study will directly benefit the media owners, media personnel, and the industry at large in assessing their progress with regard to gender (female) reportage. It will also be a great benefit to organizations such the Civil Society Organizations and Gender Activists in arguing their cases on the role of the media in gender bias. It will also greatly benefit Civil Society Organizations and media/gender activists by drawing their attention to empowering young females to pursue their political ambitions regardless of the circumstances these young females face. Broadly, this research project aims to contribute to the process of more accurately

documenting the role of the media in the push for gender equality and women empowerment in politics, specifically, at the highest levels.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study together with the background of the study as well as the statement of the problem, the study's objectives, and research questions. Included in the chapter are the significance of the study, the organization of the study, the operational definition of key terms, and the chapter summary. Chapter two presents the literature review and the theoretical framework of the study. The literature provides a discussion on the various themes that were generated after reviewing scholarly related articles. The theoretical framework, on the other hand, provides a discussion on the theories and their tenets that underpin this current study. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study, focusing on how the population and sample were generated as well as how the data were collected. Chapter four presents the findings of the research questions that were asked, together with the discussion of the findings in relation to the relevant literature reviewed. The final chapter of the research concludes the whole research by summarizing the key findings, providing limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies.

## **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

This section provides a brief explanation of the key terms in this chapter.

**Gender representation:** This describes the portrayal of males and females in society based on certain characteristics such as sexuality, behavior, emotions, and societal roles among others.

**Gender equality:** The state of equal rights and access to resources opportunities, economic participation, and decision-making regardless of the gender of an individual.

**Anti-feminist:** A person who opposes feminism. Anti-feminists do not believe in the social, economic, or political equality of men and women.

**Misogynistic rhetoric:** People who resent women and have the ideology that violence is the prescribed form of correcting women.

**Mediascape:** The various forms of mass media within an area are considered as a whole.

**Gendered media coverage:** This describes the media's influence on how stories related to men and women are covered.

**Patriarchal system:** This is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate over women.

### 1.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter set the foundation by introducing the study, discussing the background with emphasis on media and politics in Ghana, gendered media coverage, women in politics, and the profile of the first female vice-president of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The problem statement has been presented, and objectives have also been outlined based on the research questions that were developed. The significance of the study, organization of study, and definition of key terms were captured in this chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

The media representation of women has given rise to debates on gender stereotyping using ‘them’ and ‘us’ to create distinctions between both sexes. In this, the media frame women and men differently. One area of life in which the media have emphasized differences between men and women is political participation. In view of this, this current study seeks to analyze the framing of the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of a major political party in Ghana in the 2020 general elections.

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section reviews literature that is related to this study. In the review of literature, three themes emerged, and these themes are media framing and gender stereotyping of female political candidates, visibility of female politicians in the print media, and factors influencing participation and representation of women in politics. The literature review concludes with the gap identified in literature which explains the researcher’s interest in studying how the Ghanaian newspapers framed the female Vice-Presidential candidate of National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the 2020 general elections.

The second section of this chapter also presents a discussion of the theories that underpin this study. In this section, the tenets of the various theories, the relevance of the theories to the study, and the relationship between the theories are all discussed.

## **2.1 Literature Review**

This section provides a discussion of the academic literature that is related to this current study. The works and ideas of scholars have been presented under the related themes in this section.

### **2.1.1 Media Framing and Gender Stereotyping of Female Political Candidates**

The media play a very important role in electoral democracy. In electoral politics, the media cover and frame stories that are related to political candidates to appeal to the audience's expectations. Framing of stories related to political candidates is very important as far as elections are concerned. Framing of political candidates by the media enhances the image of such candidates positively or negatively. According to Heldman (2000), framing explains what the media want a politician's image to be in the eyes of audiences. The media have the power to frame stories of candidates positively or negatively which will eventually enhance or tarnish the candidates' image.

Over the years, female political candidates have been represented by different political images and framing (Shoop, 2006). In reporting stories, sometimes, the media frame women in leadership positions who conform to the traditional female roles as too soft to be effective whilst those women who defy society's norms as too tough. Consequently, the media frame female politicians in a way that limits the capabilities of these females when occupying any leadership role (Myers, 2008).

In campaign processes, the media frame and evaluate female politicians differently from male politicians leading to low coverage of women (Thujo, 2012). Due to the influence of the media, voters on the other hand develop different perceptions of both male and female politicians with the latter frequently incurring the greatest unfavorable impact (Myers, 2008). Voters focus on female politicians' performance, personal presentation, and knowledge of issues (Fox, 2010). Voters sometimes highly evaluate the performance of female politicians and become less-forgiving of their mistakes than they are of male politicians. In other words, voters assume men are tough enough, but women need to prove it (Myers, 2008). Sometimes, how female political candidates are framed in the media makes it impossible for these candidates to fulfill the role of an acceptable candidate (Myers, 2008).

Fox (2010) investigated how Sarah Palin and Hilary Clinton were portrayed and framed in a study on the framing of female candidates in the 2008 United States presidential race in print media. Articles on the two candidates were selected and analyzed from three prominent newspapers – *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Washington Post*. In understanding how these women were framed, the articles revealed patterns of phraseology, article subject, and article placement, negative and positive descriptors. The study found that whilst the coverage of female candidates by the media has improved, the three newspapers applied different standards to news coverage that were related to the female candidates than their male opponents. The two candidates were usually represented using extreme figures, which fell in the category of “too hard” or “too soft.” Also, the newspapers framed these women with their families inclusive.

Moreover, the media are significant institutions that facilitate framing and the activation of voters' interest in particular issues about politicians (Fox, 2010). Research has shown the media play a significant role in predicting political outcomes (Bystrom, 2005). By this, the

framing of political candidates allows voters to learn a lot of information about these candidates. Sometimes, the media focus on the appearance, gender, and marital status of female candidates instead of focusing on pertinent political issues that are related to these female politicians. The stories provided by the media about female candidates' personalities affect electoral outcomes (Peterson, 2018). When the media frame political candidates, especially female candidates in a positive manner, their chances of winning an election increase whilst in a negative way, it affects their chances of winning an election (Peterson, 2018).

Another typical way the media frame political candidates is through the combination of image and perception (Peterson, 2018). The image describes the media's portrayal of a candidate's personality, whilst perception, on the other hand, explains the attitudes audiences or voters have towards a candidate based on his or her personality (Peterson, 2018). The media focus on publishing stories that can create a positive or negative image for female politicians, and on the other hand, such stories when received by audiences or voters help them to create an impression whether positive or negative about the politicians in their minds. According to Dianne et al. (2004), the differences in media framing of male and female candidates may entangle with gender biases. Media framing based on gender biases creates an untenable position for women candidates in electoral processes.

Furthermore, how the media frame women candidates limit their capabilities as female candidates. According to Thuo (2012), the media work against the interest of female candidates by failing to give credence to matters that concern these candidates and their achievements. The media show no concern for what female candidates are capable of doing but mostly focus only on the candidates' weaknesses as leaders.

The presence of female politicians is important, yet much attention has not been given to these women. Instead of the media framing stories about female politicians in a way that positions them on par with male politicians, the media frame female politicians as women who have neglected their traditional roles in society. The framing of female politicians in such a manner discourages the love other women have in contesting for political and public positions (Thuo, 2012).

According to Thuo (2012, p. 34), “concerns over how women in politics globally are portrayed by the media and the possible effects that have had on women’s participation in politics have been raised and have attracted several studies.” Gender differences in the coverage of political candidates have been a major driver of decision-making by voters (Oates, 2008).

#### **2.1.1.2 Gender Stereotyping in News Coverage**

Gender stereotyping is prevalent in most societies and, one of the most readily observable cues that are mostly used in stereotyping people is the sex of an individual. According to Dolan (2004a, p.14), “gender stereotypes involve ideas, shaped by gender considerations, about what is proper or expected from women and men.” In gender stereotyping, people’s ideas or expectations are formed based on gender considerations. Over the years, people have developed a set of expectations about how women think and behave which are different from men. Gender stereotyping influences the expectations of people when they take stance on gender-related issues.

The issue of gender bias or gender stereotypes is not far from the media space. The media space is considered one of the avenues where gender stereotypes are very prevalent including the

Ghanaian media. Gender stereotypes in the media space exist among media houses, media practitioners as well as media coverage of news items that are related to both male and female politicians. Over the years, gender stereotype has been predominant in the news coverage of female politicians (Bystrom et al. 2001). According to Bystrom et al. (2001, p. 2), different “studies have shown that media coverage tends to stereotype female candidates by emphasizing the feminine traits and feminine issues” rather than the actual message of the female candidates. In her study, "Mediating Politics: Ghanaian Politicians and News Discourse," Donkor (2016) affirms these assertions.

The media have been criticized for the stereotypical coverage of news items that are related to female politicians, yet the media are still in contention of curbing the issue of stereotypes in their reportage on women. “The problem becomes critical when this stereotyping comes off as negative, even when the report is positive” (Major & Coleman, 2008, p. 5). Bystrom et al. (2001) conducted a study to explore the media coverage differences of male and female politicians in the primary races for U.S. Senate and governor in 2000 using the print media. After a quantitative analysis of newspaper coverage, the study revealed that newspaper reporters dedicated more attention to the personal lives, appearances, and personalities of female politicians as compared to male politicians. Journalists asked female politicians questions that they do not ask male politicians. The study also revealed that female politicians received more coverage on their marital status and children than male politicians.

Moreover, in media coverage of news, journalists claim to report news in an unbiased and balanced manner. Yet, previous research has shown that stereotyping still exists in the coverage of women by the media (Van der Pas & Aaldering, 2020; Major & Coleman, 2008). The stereotypes often occur unintentionally; others are also embedded in a person’s thought process

that is not possible to avoid. However, “conscious slanted coverage is sometimes encouraged by outside sources such as advertisers, businesses, government, newsroom policies, the political elite, or economics” (Major & Coleman, 2008, p. 7). As a result, many journalists believe that disseminating stereotypical stories in the media and to their viewers will help them keep their jobs. However, there are some that are only interested in conveying the images that are constructed and provided by female candidates themselves (Major & Coleman, 2008).

Gender stereotypes in news coverage of women can particularly cripple women who are seeking high leadership positions in public life, and politics (Shoop, 2006). There are several ways the media stereotypes women in the news. When the media cover women aspiring for high positions in politics in a negative way such as reporting these women as busy mothers who need to take care of their homes, their chances of winning those positions become low. The media cover stories in a way that renders these women incompetent to occupy positions in politics. The instances of female politicians being covered as busy mothers affirm Shoop’s (2006) assertion.

According to Braden (1996), the media project gender stereotypes into the minds of audiences for the audiences to have the belief that women should not be allowed to hold public offices, by using gender as the basis for their selection to hold any position. In the coverage of news by the media, selection of facts, framing of stories, and choices of language in describing female politicians contribute to the heightening of gender stereotypes (Shoop, 2006).

In 2002, Devitt explored the media coverage of news that were related to female gubernatorial candidates in the U.S.A. Devitt (2002) compared whether male and female candidates were given the same attention, and also whether the media were biased in the reporting of news that was related to the candidates. After a quantitative content analysis was employed to gather and analyze newspaper content, the study revealed that male and female

candidates were covered equally in terms of frequency but differed in terms of quality. The coverage of female candidates was more on their personal life and less on political issues, and this was the opposite for male candidates. Moreover, the gender of reporters influenced the coverage of the candidates. Male reporters focused on covering more personal issues and less political issues on female candidates. This was the opposite for the coverage of male candidates. Devitt (2002) explains the reason female candidates are normally stereotyped in the coverage of news that is related to contesting for political positions.

The coverage of elections by the media is often portrayed as a male arena where the election is dominated by male candidates (Lawrence & Rose, 2010). The portrayal of elections by the media as a male arena allows voters to largely expect political candidates' masculine characteristics. Voters consider female candidates to be devoid of the masculine characteristics that allow these female candidates to be at par with male candidates.

### **2.1.2 Visibility of Female Politicians in the Print Media**

The media, especially print media in the coverage of stories about political candidates create a lot of visibility and political competition among these candidates during election periods. It is assumed that the higher number of coverages, the greater the visibility, and increase the chances of winning an election (Bappayo & Kirfi, 2019).

Bappayo and Kirfi (2019) studied how well Nigerian newspapers covered women in politics. The study revealed that Nigerian newspapers did not give women in politics the desired coverage required as compared to male politicians. The visibility of women decreased as a result of low coverage. Bappayo and Kirfi (2019, p. 1) further posits that “the mass media are critical to

social change and can increase news coverage of women in politics to increase their chances of winning an election”.

Trimble (2007) also studied whether sex influences the coverage of news which enhances the visibility of female politicians. Trimble (2007) measured the visibility of news that were related to each of the female contenders with their respective rivals who were males. The study revealed that a relationship exists between the sex of the candidates and the prominence of news. The female candidates received more visibility than their male rivals due to high media coverage. Also, the sex of candidates, the nature of the leadership competition, the news value of the party, and the gendered mediation of individual leadership candidates intersected to determine the prominence and amount of news coverage accorded to male and female candidates for leadership positions in their party. However, Wagner et al. (2017) discovered that candidate competitiveness and novelty, rather than candidate gender, influence the media visibility of party leadership candidates by examining six textual and visual elements in Globe and Mail reporting of eleven Canadian national leadership campaigns held between 1975 and 2012.

Previous studies have shown that female politicians receive less attention from the media than male politicians do (Heldman et al., 2005 also see Van der Pas & Aldering). Mostly the frequency of media coverage of female politicians is less than that of male politicians. Norris (1997) suggests that the only situation whereby female aspirants receive a high amount of coverage is related to females' place in the race, proximity to power, perceived ability to win as well as the status of the post. In this, when the media see a greater chance of the female aspirant winning an election, the attention the media give increases the aspirant's visibility, thereby increasing the information voters have about the candidate.

In another study, Ross et al. (2013) investigated the visibility of women candidates during the 2010 general elections in Britain. The main interest of the study was to investigate the differences in the coverage of news that are related to women and men candidates by focusing on both content and frequency. The study monitored articles that were published within the four weeks prior to the day of elections across twelve (12) newspapers. Ross et al. (2013) combined dailies, weekend editions, midmarket and broadsheets, and titles of tabloids. The study revealed that women candidates received less feature in news stories than men candidates. Women candidates were often mentioned or quoted in feature stories that focused explicitly on gender issues rather than political abilities and experience.

Heldman et al. (2005) suggest that the visibility of female candidates in the print media can be measured in several ways. Some of the ways visibility is measured include the number of stories that mention candidates, the proportion of stories that are devoted to the various candidates, mention of candidates in headlines and front-page stories. Moreover, in newspaper coverage, the placement of news items on female candidates can increase or decrease the visibility and prominence of such candidates. The placement of candidates can largely determine the standing of female candidates in a political race (Trimble, 2007). When female politicians are in the picture, gender differences can be a central focus of stories, and as a result, journalists and newspaper publishers can deny women politicians to occupy the front pages of newspapers. Stories carried on the front page of newspapers are mostly noticeable by readers (Trimble, 2007). A high number of stories placed on the front pages of newspapers enhances the visibility and prominence of candidates in a political contest.

Literature suggests that “close examination of newspapers that are surveyed sometimes shows a link between the coverage of women candidates and newspaper type” (Ross et al., 2013,

p. 4). For example, some of the newspapers are politically oriented whilst others are mostly for entertainment and lifestyle. The type of coverage that would be given to women in politically oriented newspapers will not be the same as the entertainment and lifestyle newspapers. Women candidates compared to male candidates are given less features in editorials or news articles that mostly focus on policy issues (Ross et al., 2013). “Male candidates are far better covered in feature articles, opinions, and commentaries than women as these stories focus on the political trajectories of individual candidates or their contributions to politics whether at the national or constituency level” (Ayers & Lawson, 2011, p. 12). However, women candidates are mostly denied the opportunity to be covered in politically oriented newspapers.

According to Rapitse et al. (2019) the issue of visibility boils down to the less coverage given to female politicians by most newspapers. The headlines of most newspapers are dominated by male politicians, week in and week out in different parts of the world (Geoff, 2017). Rarely do female politicians feature prominently in headlines and on the front pages of most newspapers as news. Some of the studies that look at prominence show that women politicians tend to be positioned later in the story or in parts of the newspapers other than the front pages and middle pages (Falkn, 2008). Rapitse et al. (2019) suggest that women politicians gain prominence in newspaper coverage only when some mishap has befallen these women.

### **2.1.3 Factors that Influence Representation and Participation of Women in Politics**

Several scholars, as have been previously observed argue that women who have the ambitions to enter into politics are faced with unfriendly or hostile political, cultural, public, social, and media environments. The societal patriarchy, domination of men, and institutional

problems become barriers to the political ambitions of women in different parts of the world (Jalalzai et al., 2010). The media contribute to some of these issues that constantly draw on gender stereotypes in ways that appear to affect women negatively in their chances of being elected (Kahn, 1996). As stated earlier, “the low numbers of women holding political offices have attracted studies to investigate why there is a dismal performance of women in politics” (Thu, 2012, p. 12).

Baxter (2003) highlights the factors proposed by feminist movements to women with political ambitions. These factors include the legal rights of women, structural and economic barriers, and gender construction in everyday social relations. The feminist movement considers women’s under-representation as also a societal problem. According to Phillips (1994), a political system dominated by males cannot represent the experiences of women, and hence, it upholds the dominance of male politicians. Three manifestations are identified by Lovenduski and Norris (1996) on how the men’s dominance in the position of decision-making affects gender equality in political participation. These manifestations are initiatives to redress inequalities women experience are at a financial disadvantage and less prestigious; women are disadvantaged by policies, and issues related to women are regarded as marginal or are sometimes absent from the policy agenda.

On the other hand, Chang and Hitchon (1997) came out with four factors that contribute to women’s under-representation. These are socialization in terms of how surroundings and upbringing encourage girls or women less when political interest is in question; preparation of profession that indicates women by having different career paths often face obstacles to a political career; structural constraints that mean that political institutions are built in a manner to

benefit men; and the media's effect on the responses of voters. The following further throws more light on the factors that contribute to the under-representation of women.

### **2.1.3.1 Political Institutions**

According to Salmond (2006, p. 3), “countries that have proportional representation of electoral systems tend to have a high share of women in parliament than countries having majoritarian electoral arrangements”. When there is proportional representation, there is a higher district magnitude that pave a way for women to be included as the total number of members per district increases. As there is proportional representation, women are added to closed party lists to enable these women to represent political parties in contesting for electable positions. In countries like Denmark and New Zealand where gender equality is keenly considered by the political parties, women are favored and encouraged to contest on the slates of political parties during major elections (Krook et al., 2009; Dahlerup, 2006). Also, political parties sometimes feel compelled to include a few women nominees to balance their lists.

### **2.1.3.2 Legislation and Policies**

A study conducted by Jalalzai and Krook (2010) on the legislative representation of women found that gender quota adoption aimed to increase the number of females that are selected and elected to occupy the political office. Their study again found that national legislatures and parties in over 100 countries have adopted some types of quotas in broad forms. These broad forms include reserved seats for women that prohibit men to contest, party quotas involving voluntary commitments initiated by parties to include a representable number of

women among male candidates, and legislative quotas which mandate parties to select an ideal percentage of women. These measures differ from other types of public policies because they try to influence those policymakers themselves.

According to Thuo (2012), some countries such as Sweden, Rwanda, and Argentina have reserved a certain percentage of parliamentary seats for women. All political parties in Sweden since 1990 had amended most of their policies to include women in every position on their party lists. Rwanda reserves one-third of all seats in the lower house for women and a 30 percent quota for the upper house. The electoral law that exists in Argentina posits that all political parties must select 30 percent of women in positions which make their election possible (Thuo, 2012). The strategy of adopting gender quotas is to increase the numbers of women selected and elected as candidates to hold political offices. Similarly, Ghana's Local Government Act, 2016 demand for a 30% appointment of women into Local Governance system. Unfortunately, various governments have been unable to meet this demand. Also, Article 36(6) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana demand for integration of women in the economic development of the country yet there is no female representation in the current Economic Management Committee of the government.

### **2.1.3.3 Social and Economic Factors**

Studies by Rosenbluth et al. (2006) and McDonagh (2002) on women's representation found that the levels of women's education and participation in the labour force are directly correlated with the levels of parliamentary representation of women. Moreover, women fall below the high socioeconomic status regarded as the eligibility requirement for elective office.

This is as a result of the practices of segregation of sex in many countries channeling women to dominate in occupations with low pay such as education and nursing, and men dominating the occupations with high salaries like management and law. Inglehart and Norris (2003, p. 9) propose “that these are considered to be in low existence in countries with high levels of socio-economic development where modernization process encourages women’s access to education, high-paid jobs, and political positions”. In Ghana, the low socioeconomic status of women has in some instances compelled political parties and the Electoral Commission to reduce filing fees for female Parliamentary and Presidential Primaries aspirants.

#### **2.1.3.4 Cultural Factor**

The effect of under-representation of women in some countries is as a result of the intersection of culture and religion which sometimes prohibit women from engaging in politics, seeking political office, forbidding them from speaking in front of men, or attending political meetings (Thujo, 2012). These cultural norms generate a public-private divide that plays a critical role in the socialization of men and women into specified gender roles, which call into question women’s legitimacy of engaging in politics and conferring private sphere responsibilities on women that prohibit them from occupying public office (Thujo, 2012).

Kittilson (2006), and Lawless and Fox (2005) argue that certain cultural norms cause shifts in the economic and social status of women by negatively influencing the decisions of women to contest as political candidates in elections. Also, Swers (2002) suggests that voter stereotypes sometimes favour women candidates when the feminine traits are considered desirable at a specific point in time.

### 2.1.3.5 Media Effects

The media play role in shaping the attitudes towards women politicians by framing women in certain ways that undermine their capacity to lead. The media sometimes contribute to the affirmatory function of reinforcing the dominant values and norms to the public (Ross, 2010). The media report by filtering, selecting and emphasizing political events of parties. In reporting, journalists and editors adopt frames, shortcuts, and stereotypes to ensure that the story is understandable to the audience. Moreover, journalists report stories of both men and women differently. Certain attributes are likened to men to show their dominance over females by journalists whenever stories are covered. The media use the concept of gender frames to cover events differently in women's and men's public life (Thu, 2012). The gender frames associated with both men and women describe the traits, activities, and traditional behavior in society.

## 2.2 Literature Gap

Several studies reviewed in this section as literature have been conducted in America, Europe, and some parts of Africa. The academic literature on media coverage of women in politics abounds. However, there are limited studies in Ghana. A few scholars have studied media coverage of women politicians in Ghana. Scholars such as Yovonoo (2016) studied the portrayal of women parliamentary candidates during the 2012 elections. The study examined the extent and nature of coverage that were related to female candidates in comparison to their male counterparts. Yovonoo (2016) selected three newspapers – *The Daily Guide*, *Daily Graphic*, and *The Enquirer* to analyze their content on the coverage of female candidates. The study found that

male reporters had their coverage more on male parliamentary candidates whilst female reporters also had their coverage more on female parliamentary candidates. Furthermore, the study revealed that comparatively, the three newspapers had focused on substantial issues even though there was persistency of personality traits, albeit marginal.

WILDAF (2009) analysed the perception of voters on the idea of having a female parliamentarian or president in the 2008 Ghanaian general elections. After the interview of selected female candidates on several issues including media coverage of women politicians, the study revealed that most women politicians become disappointed with media coverage. The media are biased towards women. Also, there are a lot of hidden practices that deter women from contesting fairly with male politicians.

Dzeble (2006) investigated how female politicians were projected by the media in the 2004 parliamentary elections in Ghana. The study focused on the amount of coverage the media gave to women in politics, and also to find out media practices and policies that influenced the selection of stories and news subjects for publication. After a quantitative content analysis of the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide newspapers, it was revealed by the study that the media gave less amount of coverage to female politicians than their male counterparts. The findings also showed that private-owned media covered female politicians more slightly than the state-owned media.

Benneh (2005) on the other hand, studied the challenges of media coverage of women parliamentarians in Ghana. She focused on finding out whether the coverage of women parliamentarians by the media challenged or reinforced the dominant culture, and also contributed to women's marginalization. After conducting in-depth interviews with 8 female parliamentarians, it was revealed that the women felt the media gave them an unprecedentedly low level of attention, but the coverage was positive. Some of the women felt they have been

discriminated against by the media, and that the media failed to cover most of their contributions in parliamentary debates were not covered. The women parliamentarians confessed that the state media failed to cover a lot of their activities, especially at the constituency level. The findings again indicated that many of the interviewees had to depend on private FM stations and were however pleased that the media portrayed them as expert authorities and leaders but not wives or mothers.

In analysing the trends of the studies reviewed above, the focus was on media coverage of women in the political space as well as elections. In the 2020 general elections, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) presented its first female as a running mate to the party's flagbearer. However, this instance has not caught the attention of scholars to study how this female Vice-Presidential candidate of a major political party was covered by the Ghanaian media. The researcher points this out as an area of interest that needs to be studied since she is the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of one of the major political parties in Ghana.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This section of this chapter presents a discussion on the framing and liberal feminist theories that guide this current study. The section provides a detailed account of the theories and their tenets, and how relevant the two theories are to this current study.

### **2.3.1 Framing Theory**

The study of Goffman on frame analysis in 1974 is considered the foundation of the framing theory. The framing theory has become one of the most used theories in the study of

media communication as far as analysis of newspaper coverage of issues related to politics is concerned (Shih et al., 2008).

Scholars have described the framing theory in different ways (Botan & Hazleton, 2006). Goffman (1979) believes that the framing theory is a second-level agenda-setting theory. Framing theory explains the situation where individuals try to deduce meaning from circumstances that decrease how complex an information may be and thus affect how individuals perceive such information (Volkmer et al, 2009). That is, the media in framing issues, do them in a straight and simple way to create an understanding to influence the perception of the audience on such information or story.

Goffman (1979) first used frame analysis to explain how the media sometimes focus on selecting certain aspects of perceived reality to highlight, communicate and interpret political issues to audiences. The frames identified by Goffman (1979) were shaped by using the dominant order. The dominant order was mostly used by advertisers to portray women in adverts to satisfy their audiences' appeal.

Dewulf and Bouwen (2012, p. 5) defined framing “as the forceful portrayal and direction of meaning in ongoing interactions which are temporal communications structures that people build around issues during discussions or debates.” According to Kahneman (2003, p. 4), “framing is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can influence how it is understood by audiences”. On the other hand, Stromback and Luengo (2008), upon considering various arguments of different scholars on framing theory suggested that the theory is basically concerned with the words selection, placement, emphasis, use of images, source of stories, and other methods used by journalists in treating news stories. Peng (2008) posits that in framing, there is a physical space that is dedicated by the media to particular stories

in such a way to attract media audiences. The media frame stories in a way that will be more persuasive to audiences' understanding of such stories.

Marthes (2009) described framing by using two definitions: general definition and operationalized definition. The general definition describes framing without clear guidelines for operationalization whilst the other definition specifies what framing does. Typical examples of general definitions of framing are that of Gitlin (1978), and Gamson and Modigliani (1987). Gitlin (1978, p. 6) explained framing as "principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" whilst Gamson and Modigliani (1987, p. 143) defined it as the "central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events".

According to Snow and Benford (1998, p. 200), framing has three key functions; "diagnose a problem (diagnostic framing); propose solutions and tactics (prognostic framing) and provide guidelines for corrective action". Based on these key functions, Van Gorp (2007) suggests that framing provides an explanation of a problem, events, and results by making some conclusions. As a result, the use of "framing definitions is central to frame validity depending on whether scholars really do measure what they intend to measure" (Marthes 2009, p. 350).

According to Chong and Duckman (2007), framing is related to the agenda-setting theory. Thus, whilst the agenda-setting theory concerns itself with telling the audience what to think about, the framing theory further influences how the audience should think about that thing. Chong and Druckman (2007) suggest that framing is an important theory in media content studies due to the fact that through framing, the media gain the ability to direct and redirect the attention of many audiences from one side of an issue to another side of the same issue. In the political space, Chong and Druckman (2007) argue that the framing of political candidates and

their related issues influence voters' choice of choosing a candidate, thus affecting the outcomes of elections.

According to Scheufele (1999), the basis of framing theory elaborates how the media focus their attention on some events, placing them within a field of meaning. That is, framing theory suggests that the media frequently presents something to the audience which influences the choices made by these audiences in going about their daily activities. These presentations made to the audience according to Scheufele (1999) are referred to as frames. In addition, Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007, p. 11), emphasized that “the framing theory is centered on the assumption that, the issue as characterized in news reports can influence how it is understood by audiences”.

In 1993, Entman studied the framing theory and developed two main sub-concepts under the theory. The two sub-concepts are selection and salience. According to Entman (1993, p. 53), “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, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” Entman's (1993) definition of framing is considered an operationalized definition and is regarded as one of the most acceptable measurable definitions of framing (Umejei, 2013).

Moreover, the theory of framing describes that the media draw their attention to certain pieces of important information in a communication message which is considered salient to the receiver of such information (Shoop, 2006). “Salience is a major aspect of framing because an increase in salience always makes specific information to be noticeable, meaningful, and memorable to audiences” (Entman, 1993, p. 53). To further add, a boost in the salience of specific information through framing projects the likelihood that audiences will notice the

information, make meaning to it and keep it in memory. According to Entman (1993), messages can be made more salient via framing in diverse ways such as by prominence, placement, association with conversant cultural symbols, or repetition of stories.

### **2.3.2 Functions of Framing**

Framing occurs at four levels: in culture, in communication texts, in the minds of professional communicators and elites, and inside the minds of audiences (Entman, 2004). Moreover, framing works through the emphasis of information about a theme of communication item, thereby giving it prominence (Entman, 1993). The functions of framing proposed by Entman (1993) include: Framing defines a problem by determining what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits. This leads to framing being measured in terms of cultural values. In defining the problem, framing identifies the forces that create the problem, makes moral judgments by evaluating the causal agents and their effects, makes recommendations by offering and justifying the problem, and also predicts the future impacts (Entman, 1993).

Another function of framing is that it acts as a tool that can be used by journalists to construct news stories and at the same time acts as a cognitive tool for audiences in their interpretation of news stories (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). In an explanation of this function, framing has the single greatest power with the ability to provide and activate information, influence the opinions of the public, and also direct the audience on how to conceive a specific event or issue (Tewksbury et al, 2000).



### 2.3.3 Types of Media Frames

According to de Vreese (2005), framing research has two acceptable approaches that are used to identify frames. The approaches are the deductive and inductive methods. The deductive approach involves the operationalization of frames prior to the analysis of media content to verify the extent to which they occur in the news. The deductive approach is becoming suitable when dealing with larger samples. The inductive approach on the other hand involves the analysis of media content using an open view to identify possible frames. The deductive approach becomes necessary when dealing with small samples.

Moreover, two broad classes of framing exist. These are the generic and issue-specific frames (De Vreese, 2005). The generic framing finds application in different topics and cultural contexts, whilst issue-specific framing applies to specific events or topics (De Vreese, 2005). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) proposed five generic ways that are adopted by journalists in framing news. The five generic ways are emphasizing the conflict between individuals or parties (conflict); attributing responsibility, credit, or blames given to certain individuals or political institutions (responsibility frame); focusing on individuals as an exemplar of the issues being covered, and/or placing emphasis on emotions (human interest frame); interpreting an event or issue in the context of morality (morality), and focusing on the economic consequence for the audience (economic consequence frame) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

### 2.3.4 Liberal Feminist Theory

Betty Friedman is considered to be the formulator of the Liberal Feminist theory in 1963. Friedman (1963), in her book titled *The Feminine Mystic*, investigated the idea of women finding

fulfillment that goes beyond their traditional roles. She focused on how women can enjoy legal, economic, social, and political rights within contemporary society.

Several feminist scholars have studied and made modifications and additions to the theory after Betty Friedman. According to Mann (2011, p.5), “the theory assumes that sex roles’ stereotyping exists in the mass media, and its constant repetition to audiences reinforces such stereotypes in the broader society.” Strinati (2004) in contribution to the theory, states that the prevailing sexual division in terms of labour is a result of the support and perpetual cultural representations that are constantly portrayed by the media. The traditional roles that distinguish women from men, such as women being regarded as mothers and housewives have accounted for the unequal position of women in many patriarchal societies.

Another argument raised by Marger (2005) in contribution to the theory is that the media have promoted the accepted traditional roles of both sexes and expect men and women to conform to such roles. It is believed that apart from the traditional roles ascribed to women, they have inborn capabilities same as men to handle issues that the media need to consider in women’s portrayal. To object to the media’s portrayal that limits women to only traditional roles, Mann (2011) suggests that there should be a promotion of more women into prominent roles in the mass media. Women must be allowed to prove themselves in the media by exercising their capabilities aside from the traditional roles assigned to them. This opportunity given to women would hopefully solve the issue of negative stereotypes in the portrayal of women by the media.

According to Hutchinson (2011, p.12), “liberal feminists are characterized by the desire to integrate women into pre-existing public institutions, and to guarantee women the same rights that men enjoy.” The basic concern of the liberal feminist theory is to attain a level playing field for both women and men in the media space and within society. Hutchinson (2011, p. 12) added

that “in achieving true equality, women need to infiltrate the public spheres from which they have been excluded traditionally”.

### **2.3.5 Relevance of the Framing and Liberal Feminist Theories to the Study**

The framing theory has been used by several scholars to inform their studies. Scholars such as Robbins (2020) used the theory as a guide to her study on media framing and female political candidates in the U.S.A. The study explored how the media covered the 2020 presidential election between Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. After the evaluation of articles published online by *The New York Times*, it was revealed that the media failed to describe each candidate’s personality more frequently or differently. Also, Sanders had been described more often as an extravert whilst Warren had also been described as a conscientious candidate, and these descriptions were based on gender differences.

In Nigeria, Ojebuyi and Chukwunwike (2018) studied gender bias in media representation of political actors, citing examples from the 2015 presidential elections. Guided by the theory of framing, they examined how newspapers in Nigeria reported campaign events of major presidential candidates. After employing content analysis on 194 editions of *The Punch*, *The Daily Sun*, and *The Guardian*, the study brought to light that the Nigerian newspapers marginalized female politicians but gave intense coverage and prominence to male presidential candidates as opposed to their female opponents.

Thuo (2012) adopted the framing theory to guide his study on media framing of women in politics in Kenya. The study explored how twenty-two (22) women parliamentarians were framed by the Kenyan newsprint media in the tenth parliament. Thuo (2012) employed content

analysis to collect data from two major newspapers that are published by Nation Media Group and the Standard Group. The study revealed that the women politicians' coverage by print media was very low. Stories related to these women were placed on the inside pages and hardly do their names make it to the headlines which make them invisible to voters.

In Ghana, Yovonoo (2016) employed the framing theory to underpin her study on the portrayal of women parliamentary candidates during the 2012 elections. The study determined the extent and nature of coverage that are related to female candidates when compared to male candidates. Yovonoo (2016) selected three newspapers – *The Daily Guide*, *Daily Graphic*, and *The Enquirer* to analyze their content on the coverage of female candidates. The study revealed that male reporters had more coverage on male parliamentary candidates whilst female reporters also had more coverage on female parliamentary candidates. Furthermore, it was comparatively shown that the three newspapers focused substantially on issues even though there were persistent personality traits, albeit marginal.

This current study adopted the framing theory as its main theory since it is a mass communication theory that has been widely used by many scholars to study news coverage and framing of political candidates by the media. Most scholars whose studies influenced this work adopted the framing theory in their content analysis studies. Since this current study also seeks to analyze Ghanaian newspaper coverage of women in the 2020 presidential elections of Ghana, it deems fit for the framing theory to underpin this study. The framing theory also helps to explain how the media presents news to influence audiences.

On the other hand, the liberal feminist theory which is the supporting theory to the framing theory has been used by Yonovoo (2016) to support the framing theory in her study on the portrayal of women parliamentary candidates during the 2012 elections. Yonovoo's (2016)

study was related to gender since women were the focal point of the study. Moreover, this current study has women as its focal point and the liberal feminist theory is the best fit to underpin this study. The theory is suitable for this study because it helps assess the media's role in the representation of women and issues that were associated with gender stereotypes during the 2020 general elections. The reason for adopting the framing theory is because this study is interested in the media framing of the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of a major political party in Ghana

#### **2.4 Relationship between the Framing and Liberal Feminists' Theories**

The two theories discussed in this section have helped in explaining the nature of gender and how people come to know about it through a social institution like the media. The two theories have helped to recognize the existence of different forms of inequalities between men and women as far as media coverage and contesting for public or political positions are concerned in society. Several studies on media coverage between men and women have revealed that men receive more media coverage whilst women receive less coverage, indicating a sign of inequality.

#### **2.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has discussed the three themes that were generated in the review of the literature. The themes that were discussed in the literature are media framing of female political candidates, gender bias/gender stereotypes in news coverage, and visibility of female politicians in the print media. The literature review was concluded by identifying the gap. The chapter also

provided a detailed account of the framing and liberal feminist theories, their relevance to the study, and the relationship between the two theories.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This study examined how the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide covered the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the 2020 general elections of Ghana. The specific objectives this study sought to achieve were to identify the frequency of the coverage of campaign activities, identify how the female candidate was framed, examine the prominence of stories, and identify the placement of stories that were related to the female candidate by the two major newspapers during the 2020 general elections.

This study is a quantitative research that employed content analysis as a method for addressing the research objectives and questions that were raised. The content analysis method helped in categorizing the content of stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the NDC based on the type of coverage of the two newspapers.

This chapter presents a discussion on the research design, profile of selected newspapers for the study, population and sample size, unit of analysis, sampling technique, and data collection instrument.



### 3.1 Research Approach

Research design has three approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The mixed methods approach combines both the quantitative and qualitative approaches in one study. The qualitative research approach takes the form of induction, exploration, discovery, theory or hypothesis generation, and qualitative analysis. For this approach, the researcher becomes the primary instrument of data collection. The researcher observes and interviews people for the study but supplements this approach with closed-ended instruments to measure systematically measure certain factors which are considered to be important in the research literature (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004b). The qualitative approach becomes useful when a researcher studies a limited number of in-depth cases, and the data are based on the participants' own categories of meaning. Also, the approach presents a comprehensive description of a participant's personal experiences of phenomena.

The quantitative approach, on the other hand, focuses on the confirmation, deductions, explanation, hypothesis testing, or theory prediction of standardized collection of data, and statistical analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The quantitative approach tests and validates already constructed theories about the reasons phenomena occur. The approach provides precise, quantitative, and numerical data. In this approach, the research results are relatively independent of the researcher and are useful in the study of a large number of people (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

This study adopted the quantitative research approach. According to Neuman (2014), the quantitative research approach involves the use of data which are in the form of numbers and statistics. To Wimmer and Dominic (2011), quantitative research is concerned with the gathering of data using numbers. The approach requires that a phenomenon under study must be measured

using numbers. Quantitative research became necessary for this study since it provided numerical data for the content of newspapers to be measured. Moreover, the research was interested in measuring the frequency of media reporting on the Vice-Presidential candidate and this is only possible using a quantitative method. The numerical nature of the data gathered using the quantitative approach allowed for the results of data collected to explain the newspaper coverage of the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the NDC Party.

### **3.2 Content Analysis**

A quantitative content analysis method was employed in the collection of data for this study. Content analysis is explained by Wimmer and Dominic (2011, p. 156) as a “method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.” Palmquist (2005) considered content analysis as a method that is used to determine the presence of certain words, phrases, concepts, themes, or any communicative language within texts in an objective manner. Krieger et al. (2011) on the other hand, posit that quantitative content analysis is designed to assign numbers to texts and symbols in communication to describe a phenomenon in communication. The method allows results to be easily summarized as well as make concise analyses. According to Zhang and Wildermuth (2009, p. 1), the content analysis method allows “researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner.”

Most of the existing research works that investigate newspaper coverage of political candidates have employed the content analysis method. Scholars such as Shoop (2006) employed content analysis to examine how news media covered female political candidates in the 2000 and

2004 presidential primary elections in the U.S.A. Bappayo and Kirfi (2019) adopted content analysis to investigate how the Daily Trust and Punch Newspapers covered women in politics in Nigeria. In Ghana, Dzeble (2006) used the method in her study to examine the role played by the media in projecting female politicians during the 2004 general elections. Danso (2012) adopted the same method to examine issues and personalities covered during the 2004 and 2008 general elections. Yovonoo (2016) used the method to collect data in her study which investigated the portrayal of women parliamentary candidates during the 2012 elections.

The employment of the content analysis method by the aforementioned scholars implies that content analysis is the ideal method for studying the coverage of media stories. Besides, this study adopted the content analysis method since it is also interested in analyzing the content of newspaper stories that are related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the NDC Party.

### **3.3 Profile of the First Female Vice-Presidential Candidate of the NDC Party (Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyeman)**

In July 2020, John Dramani Mahama, the presidential candidate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC), chose Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyeman, the first female vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Coast and Ghana's former Minister of education, as his running mate, which potentially challenged the patriarchal structures of Ghanaian politics. This was unprecedented as a woman was nominated for the first time as a Vice-Presidential candidate by a major political party (NDC) in Ghana. Since the first elections of the Fourth Republic took place in 1992, power has alternated between the two major parties, the NDC and the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) (Amenyedzi, 2021). In the 2016 elections, these two parties received more

than 98 percent of the vote, effectively making Ghana a duopolistic system (Madsen, et al., 2020).

Professor Nana Opoku Agyeman's announcement on July 6, 2020, received a lot of positive reactions from Ghanaian media outlets and social media platforms. A former university scholarship holder had been nominated as the Vice-Presidential candidate of the main opposition party in Ghana. "History has been made" was the chant of the day (Madsen et al., 2020). The selection of Prof Opoku-Agyeman as Vice-President was symbolic as this was the first time that the expectation of Ghana to get a female vice-president seemed realistic as neither of the two major political parties (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) has previously appointed a woman to this role in the political history of Ghana.

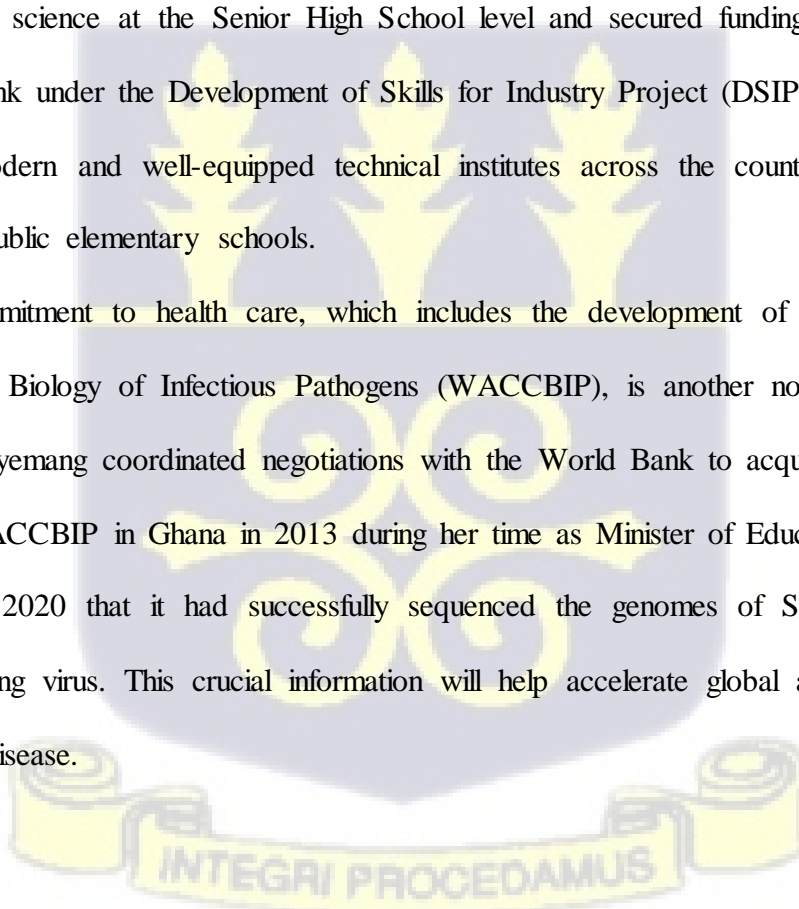
Announcing her nomination and subsequent outdoor appearance, former President John Mahama (flag bearer) described Prof. Opoku-Agyeman as a respected scholar, a conscientious civil servant, and a role model who helped break down the many glass ceilings that have held women down for generations. According to a University of Bath blog post on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, many Ghanaians believe that Prof Opoku-Agyeman's nomination not only brings integrity to the NDC ticket but also the broader political discourse, from insults to issue-based discussions and policies. It is therefore not surprising that her announcement sparked such excitement in Ghana and was met with a sea of endorsement and congratulatory messages from notable women's groups such as African Women in Leadership Organization (AWLO), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana), The African Centre for Women in Politics (ACWP).

Prof. Opoku-Agyemang was born on November 22, 1951, in Cape Coast, Ghana, and received her master's and doctorate degrees from York University in Toronto, Canada, in 1980

and 1986, respectively. She has received four honorary doctorates, as well as other national and international prizes. She is on several committees, boards, and councils, including UNESCO, and has authored numerous articles and books. She has been awarded Fulbright Scholar twice and is currently a Commonwealth of Learning Fellow (COL).

Prof. Opoku-Agyemang received an appointment as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast in 2008, making her the first female Vice-Chancellor of a public university in Ghana and later Minister of Education in 2013 (Osei Fordjour & Sikanku, 2022). Among her outstanding achievements as Ghana's Minister of Education, Prof. Opoku-Agyemang reduced teacher absenteeism from 27% to 7%, abolished the quota system in the teacher training colleges, resulting in an increase in enrollment from 9,000 to 15,400, recruited 2,400 mathematics and science at the Senior High School level and secured funding from the African Development Bank under the Development of Skills for Industry Project (DSIP), which was used to build 13 modern and well-equipped technical institutes across the country, eliminating the shift system in public elementary schools.

Her commitment to health care, which includes the development of the West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACCBIP), is another notable achievement. Prof. Opoku-Agyemang coordinated negotiations with the World Bank to acquire funding for the formation of WACCBIP in Ghana in 2013 during her time as Minister of Education. WACCBIP stated in April 2020 that it had successfully sequenced the genomes of SARS-COV-2, the coronavirus-causing virus. This crucial information will help accelerate global attempts to find a vaccine for the disease.



### 3.4 Profile of Selected Newspapers for the Study

Newspapers of which the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide are non-exempted report political issues to abreast the public with political information (Brodie et al., 2003). The selection of the two newspapers for this study was based on two reasons. The first reason is the two newspapers, Daily Graphic and Daily Guide have daily publications, are circulated nationwide, and cover different political stories. The second reason is the two newspapers have different orientations. The Daily Graphic is state-owned whilst the Daily Guide is private-owned. The researcher was interested in comparing how the state-owned and private-owned newspapers covered political issues.

#### 3.4.1 Daily Graphic

The *Daily Graphic* is among the six newspapers that are published by the Graphic Communication Group Limited (Graphic Annual Report, 2012). It was established in 1952 by the Daily Mirror Group in Britain. After Ghana's independence, the then government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah bought the company which later became a national asset (Asante & Gadzekpo, 2000). The *Daily Graphic* is the oldest and leading state-owned newspaper in Ghana. It has the highest circulation rate and is highly influential due to its preference by a wider section of the Ghanaian populace. The content of the newspaper has sections that cover stories on politics, health, education, finance, science and technology, international affairs, and developmental issues. The newspaper is published on Mondays to Saturdays except for Sundays and has a distribution of about 200,000 copies daily (Azanu, 2012).

### 3.4.2 Daily Guide

*Daily Guide*, on the other hand, is a leading privately-owned newspaper in Ghana and is published by Western Publications Limited. Its publication began in 1991 as a four-page weekly paper with a focus on sports and political issues. The newspaper is second to the *Daily Graphic* in terms of circulation with daily publications of about 45, 000 copies (Yovonoo, 2015). The newspaper also serves as a competitive alternative to the *Daily Graphic*. It is published six times a week, from Monday to Saturday. The *Daily Guide* has sections that cover stories on health, business, politics, international news, entertainment, and sports.

### 3.5 Population and Sample for the Study

The population for this study comprised the total editions of the two newspapers that were published from 1<sup>st</sup> August to the day before the elections on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020. This time frame was selected because it was an election year on the political calendar of Ghana, and within this period, the campaign activities of political parties in Ghana typically peaked. Moreover, media coverage of political activities was intensive.

A total of two-hundred and eighteen (218) publications of *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* formed the population of the time frame that was selected for the study. To break it down, each newspaper had one-hundred and nine (109) publications within the selected frame.

The sample size that was selected for this study was 150 publications from both newspapers. Each newspaper had 75 publications as its sample size. The sample size selected was ideal since it gave a fair representation of the entire population under study. According to

Yemane (1967), a sample size more than half of the total population presents a clear reflection of the population.

### **3.6 Unit of Analysis**

The study was interested in analyzing political news content that was related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the NDC party. According to Wimmer and Dominic (2003), a unit of analysis is considered to be the smallest element of content analysis. Babbie (2014, p. 163) described a unit of analysis as “those things we examine to create a summary description of all such units and to explain differences amongst them.” The unit of analysis for this study was all stories and activities covered on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the NDC party in the 2020 general elections.

### **3.7 Sampling Technique**

In sampling, Babbie (2014) suggests that researchers must pay attention to particular elements that can be used to describe a phenomenon. In a process of describing a phenomenon, samples must be generated to represent an entire population. The process of selecting certain elements (samples) to study is termed sampling. The simple random technique was used to select the samples for this study. There were one-hundred and nine (109) days which represented the publication days of each newspaper within the time frame (1<sup>st</sup> August to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020) of this study. In selecting the samples for the Daily Graphic, 109 pieces of paper were labeled with numbers to represent the entire publication days (from day 1 to day 109). After this process, the pieces of paper were shuffled. This was done to avoid biases and ensure that all the publication

days had equal chance of being selected. Seventy-five (75) pieces of papers representing seventy-five (75) publication days were randomly selected as the samples for the Daily Graphic. This same sampling process was repeated to select seventy-five (75) publication days as samples for the Daily Guide. The total sample size for both newspapers was one-hundred and fifty (150).

### **3.8 Data Collection Instrument**

The coding guide was employed as an instrument for data collection in this study. The coding guide was designed using the categories and frames examined in the studies of Dzeble (2006), Danso (2012), and Yonovoo (2016). The dependence on the categories and frames of the aforementioned scholars provided the basis for this study to compare findings with other contexts. The main categories adopted in the coding guide were name and date of publication of the newspaper, frequency of political stories type of story (features, straight news, opinions, and editorials), the focus of the stories, subject of stories, and placements of stories. After the operationalization of the categories and frames, a coding sheet was designed to code the stories accordingly.

### **3.9 Data Collection**

Data for this study was collected from the P. A. V Ansah Library at the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Ghana. Archives for all editions of various newspapers including the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide can be found in this library. The total editions selected within the time frame for this study were gathered and sampled.

The collection of data for this study focused on stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the NDC party during the 2020 general elections. In gathering the data, the researcher read through all the pages of the sampled editions of the two newspapers and marked all stories that were related to the Vice-Presidential candidate. The stories were spotted by the headlines and content that bore the name of the vice candidate. The code for each observation of a content category was recorded on the coding sheet.

### **3.10 Inter-coder Reliability Test**

Inter-coder reliability test was conducted to ensure the reliability of the data collected. This test was run by employing Cohen Kappa's inter-coder reliability test. The test was carried out after two independent coders did a trial coding for one newspaper that was randomly selected. The results of the trial coding were entered in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23.0). In using SPSS Version 23.0 to run the inter-coder reliability, the Cohen's Kappa value must be above 0.60. A value as such is deemed substantial and indicates a high level of agreement between the codes. Kappa's value also indicates that the guidelines for coding are reliable for the actual coding of stories.

### **3.11 Data Analysis and Analytical Tool**

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 23.0) was employed to quantitatively analyze all coded categories for various stories gathered. The data gathered were entered into SPSS Version 23.0 and analyzed. After the analysis, descriptive statistics were used to address the research questions that were raised in this study. The results were presented by using frequency distribution tables and charts.

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented the methodology adopted for the study. The chapter has provided a detailed discussion on the specific methods that were employed by the researcher in the collection of data. The rationale behind each method has been explained. Additionally, the analytical processes of the data collected, and the inter-coder reliability test have been elaborated.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This study investigated how the Ghanaian newspapers covered stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The study employed a quantitative content analysis with the coding guide as a data collection instrument to collect data from the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. The study sampled 150 editions from a population of 218 publications of both Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. SPSS Version 23.0 as an analytical tool was employed to analyze the data.

This chapter is made up of two sections. The first section presents the findings of data obtained from the content analysis, and the second section discusses the findings. The findings are presented based on the research questions that were raised in the study.



#### 4.1 Presentation of Findings

The findings of this study are presented based on the research questions that were asked in the study.

##### 4.1.1 Frequency of Stories Covered by the Two Newspapers

**Table 1: Number of Stories Covered**

Name of Newspaper	Number of Stories	Percentage
Daily Graphic	35	54
Daily Guide	30	46
Total	65	100

Table 1 above presents the number of stories that were covered on the female Vice-Presidential candidate by the two newspapers. Out of the 150 editions of both Daily Graphic and Daily Guide sampled for the study, a total of 65 editions published stories that were related to the female Vice-Presidential candidate. From the table, the Daily Graphic published 35 stories related to the Vice-Presidential candidate, representing 54%, whilst the Daily Guide published 30 stories representing 46%.

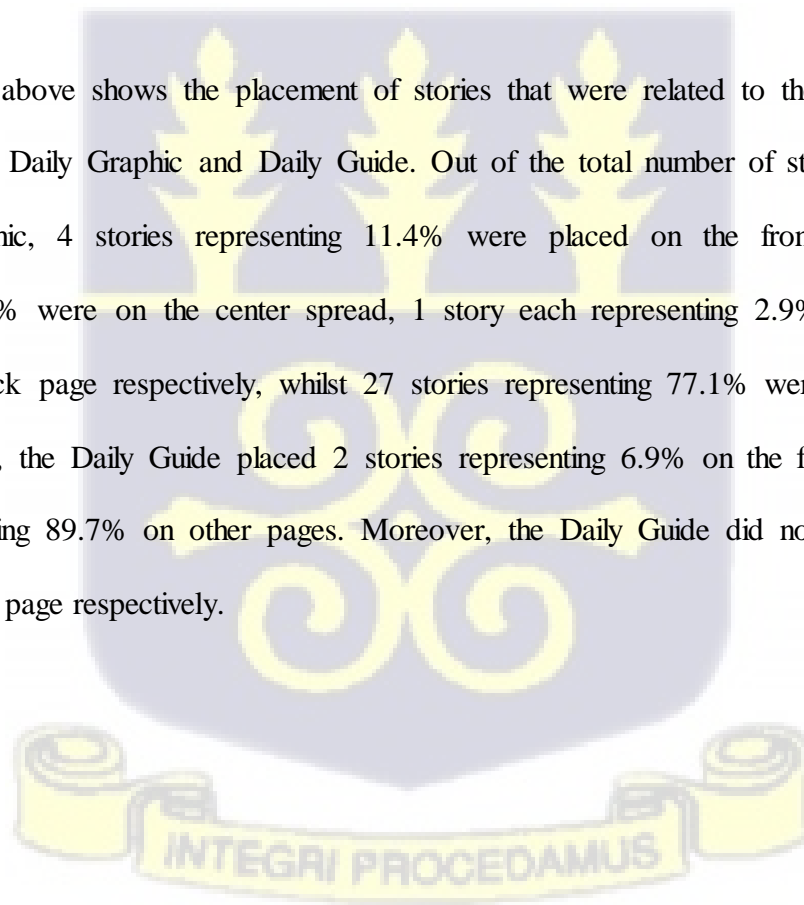


#### 4.1.2 Placement of Stories in the Two Newspapers

**Table 2: Placement of Stories**

Name of Newspaper	Placement of Stories					Total
	Front Page	Center Spread	Page 3	Back Page	Other Pages	
Daily Graphic	4 (11.4%)	2 (5.7%)	1 (2.9%)	1 (2.9%)	27 (77.1%)	35 (100.0%)
Daily Guide	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (89.7%)	29 (100.0%)
Total	6 (9.4%)	3 (4.7%)	1 (1.6%)	1 (1.6%)	53 (82.7%)	64 (100.0%)

Table 2 above shows the placement of stories that were related to the Vice-Presidential candidate in the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. Out of the total number of stories published by the Daily Graphic, 4 stories representing 11.4% were placed on the front page, 2 stories representing 5.7% were on the center spread, 1 story each representing 2.9% were placed on page 3 and back page respectively, whilst 27 stories representing 77.1% were placed at other pages. However, the Daily Guide placed 2 stories representing 6.9% on the front page, and 26 stories representing 89.7% on other pages. Moreover, the Daily Guide did not place stories on page 3 and back page respectively.

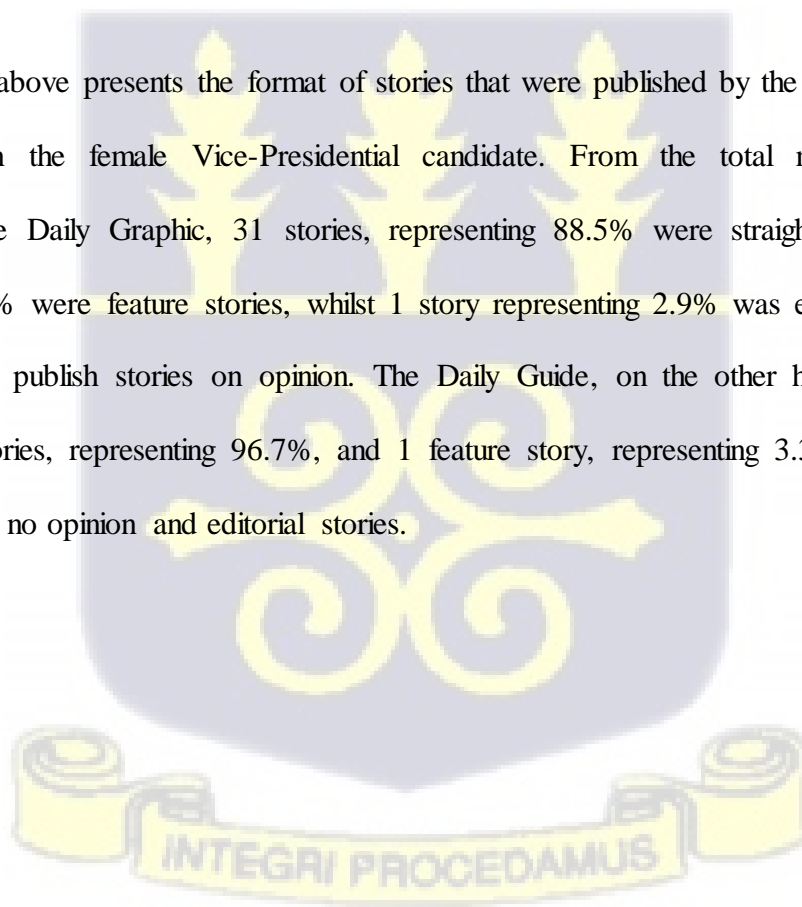


#### 4.1.3 Format of Stories Covered by the Two Newspapers

**Table 3: Format of Stories**

Name of Newspaper	Format of Stories Published				Total
	Straight News	Feature Stories	Opinion	Editorial	
Daily Graphic	31 (88.5%)	3 (8.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.9%)	35 (100.0%)
Daily Guide	29 (96.7%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	30 (100.0%)
Total	60 (92.3%)	4 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.5%)	65 (100.0%)

Table 3 above presents the format of stories that were published by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide on the female Vice-Presidential candidate. From the total number of stories published by the Daily Graphic, 31 stories, representing 88.5% were straight news, 3 stories representing 8.6% were feature stories, whilst 1 story representing 2.9% was editorial. The Daily Graphic did not publish stories on opinion. The Daily Guide, on the other hand, published 29 straight news stories, representing 96.7%, and 1 feature story, representing 3.3%. However, the Daily Guide had no opinion and editorial stories.

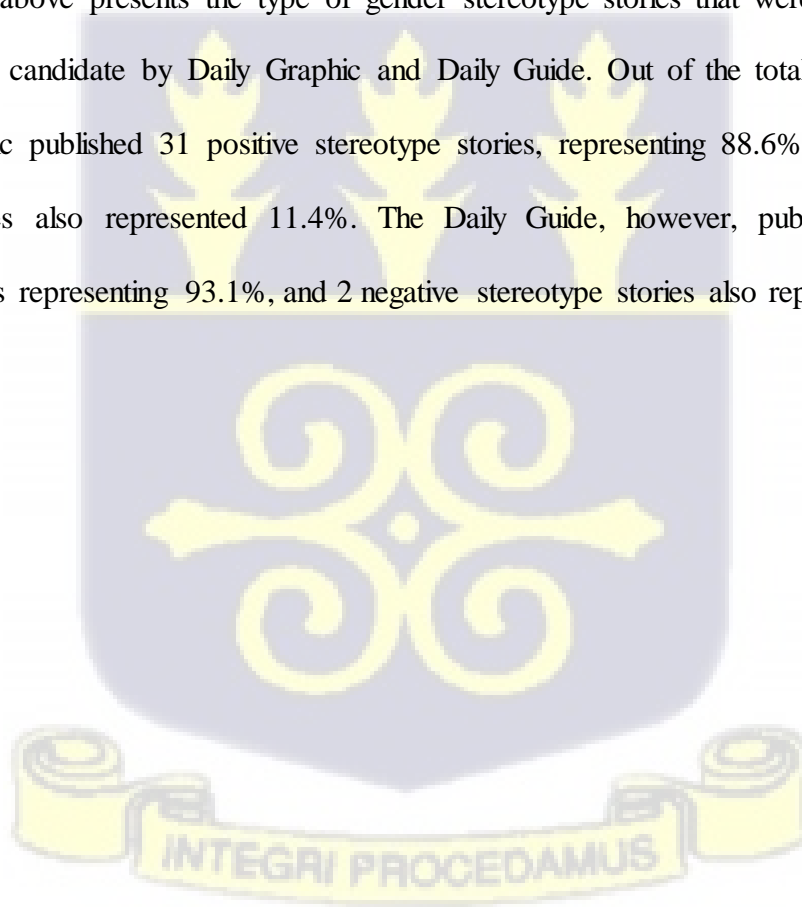


#### 4.1.4 Gender Stereotype Stories Published by the Two Newspapers

**Table 4: Gender Stereotype Stories**

Name of Newspaper	Gender Stereotype Stories		Total
	Positive Stereotype	Negative Stereotype	
Daily Graphic	31 (88.6%)	4 (11.4%)	35 (100.0%)
Daily Guide	27 (93.1%)	2 (6.9%)	29 (100.0%)
Total	58 (90.6%)	6 (9.4%)	64 (100.0%)

Table 4 above presents the type of gender stereotype stories that were published on the Vice-Presidential candidate by Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. Out of the total stories published, the Daily Graphic published 31 positive stereotype stories, representing 88.6%, whilst 4 negative stereotype stories also represented 11.4%. The Daily Guide, however, published 27 positive stereotype stories representing 93.1%, and 2 negative stereotype stories also representing 6.9%.

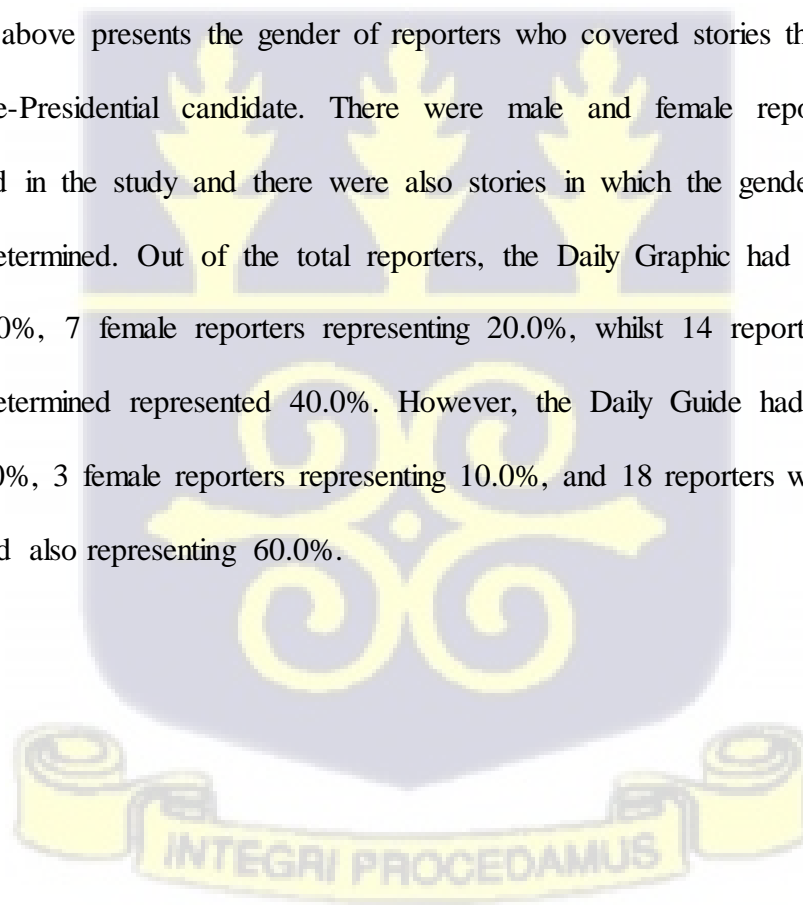


#### 4.1.5 Gender of Reporters by the Two Newspapers

**Table 5: Gender of Reporters**

Name of Newspaper	Gender of Reporters			Total
	Male Reporters	Female Reporters	Cannot Determine	
Daily Graphic	14 (40.0%)	7 (20.0%)	14 (40.0%)	35 (100.0%)
Daily Guide	9 (30.0%)	3 (10.0%)	18 (60.0%)	30 (100.0%)
Total	23 (35.4%)	10 (15.4%)	32 (49.2%)	65 (100.0%)

Table 5 above presents the gender of reporters who covered stories that were related to the female Vice-Presidential candidate. There were male and female reporters in the two newspapers used in the study and there were also stories in which the gender of the reporters could not be determined. Out of the total reporters, the Daily Graphic had 14 male reporters representing 40.0%, 7 female reporters representing 20.0%, whilst 14 reporters whose gender could not be determined represented 40.0%. However, the Daily Guide had 9 male reporters representing 30.0%, 3 female reporters representing 10.0%, and 18 reporters whose gender could not be determined also representing 60.0%.

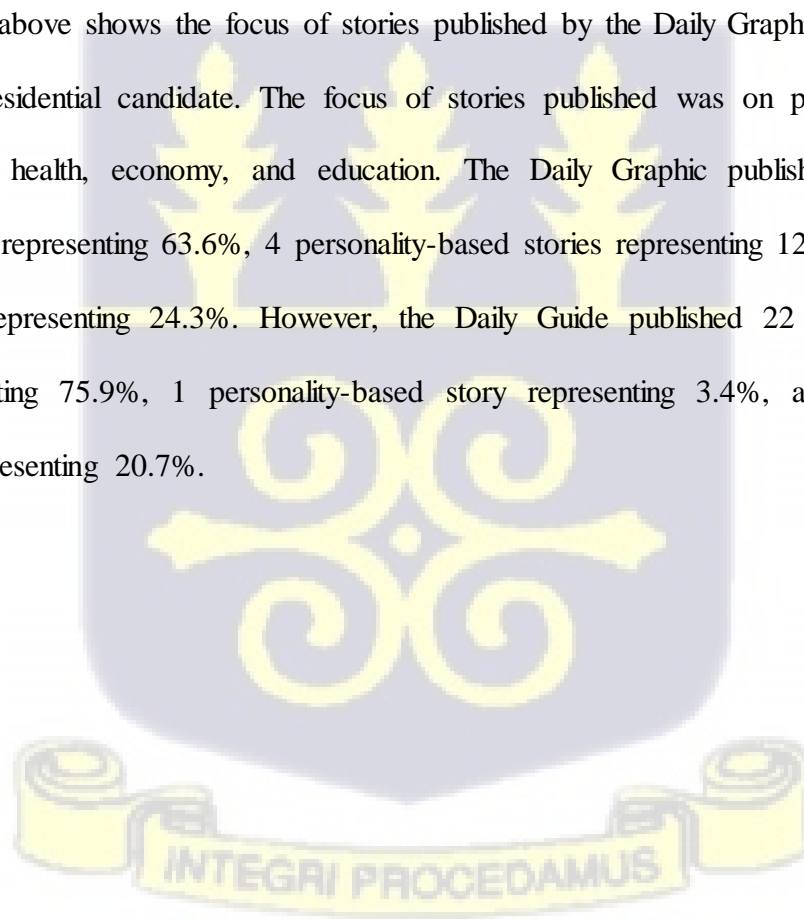


#### 4.1.6 Focus of the Stories Covered by the Two Newspapers

**Table 6: Focus of Stories**

Name of Newspaper	Focus of Stories Covered			Total
	Politically-oriented	Personality-based	Issue-based	
Daily Graphic	21 (63.6%)	4 (12.1%)	8 (24.3%)	33 (100.0%)
Daily Guide	22 (75.9%)	1 (3.4%)	6 (20.7%)	29 (100.0%)
Total	43 (69.4%)	5 (8.0%)	14 (22.6%)	62 (100.0%)

Table 6 above shows the focus of stories published by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide on the Vice-Presidential candidate. The focus of stories published was on politics, personality, and issues like health, economy, and education. The Daily Graphic published 21 politically-oriented stories, representing 63.6%, 4 personality-based stories representing 12.1%, and 8 issue-based stories representing 24.3%. However, the Daily Guide published 22 politically-oriented stories representing 75.9%, 1 personality-based story representing 3.4%, and 6 issue-based stories, also representing 20.7%.

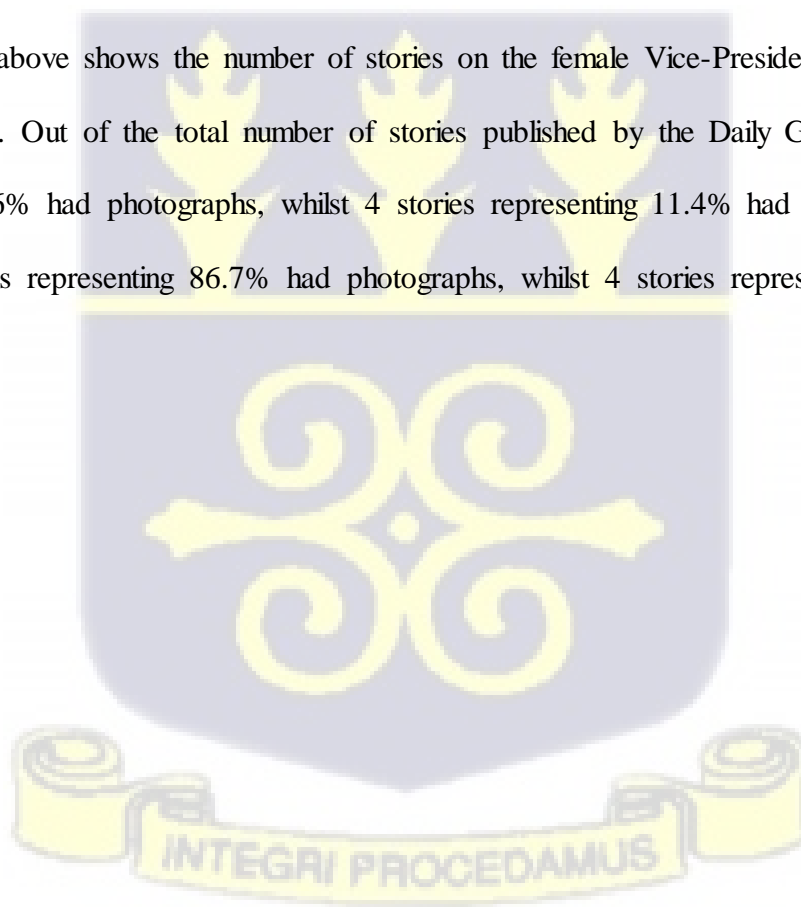


**4.1.7. Stories with Photographs Published by the Two Newspapers**

**Table 7: Stories with Photographs**

Name of Newspaper	Stories With/Without Photographs		Total
	Stories with Photographs	Stories Without Photographs	
Daily Graphic	31 (88.6%)	4 (11.4%)	35 (100.0%)
Daily Guide	26 (86.7%)	4 (13.3%)	30 (100.0%)
Total	57 (87.7%)	8 (12.3%)	65 (100.0%)

Table 7 above shows the number of stories on the female Vice-Presidential candidate that had photographs. Out of the total number of stories published by the Daily Graphic, 31 stories, representing 88.6% had photographs, whilst 4 stories representing 11.4% had not. For the Daily Guide, 26 stories representing 86.7% had photographs, whilst 4 stories representing 13.3% had no photographs.



## 4.2 Discussion of Findings

This section of chapter four presents a discussion on the findings in relation to the literature that was reviewed and the theories underpinning this current study. The findings are discussed based on the research questions that were raised in the study. The following are the study's research questions.

1. What is the prominence given to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of NDC by Daily Graphic and Daily Guide?
2. What type of gender stereotypes were given to stories published by the two newspapers on the female candidate?
3. What was the gender of reporters who covered stories related to the female candidate for the two newspapers?
4. How did Daily Graphic and Daily Guide frame news stories about the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of NDC in their coverage?

### 4.2.1 Prominence given to the Female Vice-Presidential Candidate by Daily Graphic and Daily Guide

Firstly, the study revealed the prominence given by newspapers to the female Vice-Presidential candidate by using three indicators of prominence. These are frequency of coverage, placement of stories, and types of stories. For the frequency of coverage, the study revealed that the first female Vice-Presidential candidate received less coverage from the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. Out of the total sampled editions for both newspapers (150 editions), only 65 stories representing 43.3% were related to the female Vice-Presidential. To further break it

down, out of the 65 stories covered, the Daily Graphic had 35 (54%), whilst the Daily Guide had 30 (46%). Though, the female candidate received less coverage from both newspapers, the Daily Graphic which is state-owned published more stories than the Daily Guide which is also a private-owned newspaper.

This current finding can be explained by the framing theory which explains that the media frame stories to audiences through the selection of words, emphasis, placement, use of images, sources of stories, and other methods used by journalists in treating news stories (Stromback & Luengo, 2008). According to Chong and Druckman (2007), the media have the power to direct and redirect the attention of many audiences from one side of an issue to another side of the same issue, and also have the discretion to publish the number of stories they want. In this study, the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide, due to the power they have in the publication of stories, covered less number of stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Bappayo and Kirfi (2019). Bappayo and Kirfi (2019) studied how well Nigerian newspapers covered women in politics. The study also examined the role of mass media in the promotion of women in Nigerian politics. The study revealed that Nigerian newspapers did not give women in politics the desired coverage these women required. The visibility of these women decreased as a result of low coverage.

However, this finding contradicts that of Devitt (2002) and Trimble (2007). Devitt (2002) determined the amount of coverage female candidates received during the 2002 gubernatorial elections in the U.S.A. The study revealed that female and male candidates were covered equally in terms of frequency but differently in terms of quality. Trimble (2007) also studied whether sex influences the coverage of news which enhances the visibility of three female contenders who

were interested in leading the Conservative Party of Canada in 1976, 1993, and 2004 respectively. The study revealed that there was a relationship between the sex of the candidates and news prominence. The female candidates received more visibility as a result of high media coverage. Also, the sex of candidates, the news value of the party, the nature of the leadership competition, and the gendered mediation of individual leadership candidates intersected to determine the amount and prominence of news coverage accorded to female candidates for party leadership positions.

For the placement of stories, the study found that stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate were mostly placed on different pages other than the front page, back page, page 3, and the center spread which are considered the prominent pages of newspapers. When the stories placed on the prominent pages were combined, the Daily Graphic recorded a total of 8 (22.9%), whilst the Daily Guide also recorded a total of 3 (10.3%) stories. On the other hand, stories placed on other pages in the Daily Graphic were 27 (77.1%), whilst that in the Daily Guide was 26 (89.7%). This indicates that both newspapers gave less prominence to the female candidate by failing to place stories that were related to her on the prominent pages of the newspapers.

This finding can be well understood by the framing theory which posits that the placement of stories by the media is key in maintaining the prominence of an issue (Stromback & Luengo, 2008). Entman (1993) suggests that the sub-concepts of framing theory which are selection and salience are important in enhancing prominence. The media select stories and make these stories salient by placing them on prominent pages that will be easily noticeable, meaningful, and memorable to the audience (Entman, 1993). In the case of this study, the female

candidate received less prominence as a result of the newspapers not placing stories related to her on the prominent pages.

This finding is consistent with the finding of Rapiitse et al. (2019) who explored and established the reasons coverage of women politicians is less in Lesotho. Findings of the study indicated that female politicians were given less prominence by the print media. The prominence and visibility did not take effect when female politicians were not featured in headlines and on the front pages of most newspapers.

The finding is also in consonance with the assertions of Heldman et al. (2005), Trimble (2007), Geoff (2017), and Falkn (2008). Heldman et al. (2005) suggest that in newspaper coverage, the placement of news items of female candidates can increase or decrease the visibility and prominence of such candidates. However, the mention of candidates in headlines and front-page stories increases the visibility and prominence of the candidates, whilst placement on other pages decreases the visibility and prominence of such candidates. According to Trimble (2007), the placement of candidates can largely determine the standing of female candidates in a political race. When female politicians are in the picture, gender differences can be a central focus of stories, and as a result, journalists and newspaper publishers can deny women politicians to occupy the front pages of newspapers. Stories carried on the front page of newspapers are mostly noticeable by readers (Trimble, 2007). The high number of stories placed on the front pages of newspapers enhances the visibility and prominence of candidates in a political contest. Geoff (2017) argues that the headlines of most newspapers are dominated by male politicians, week in and week out in different parts of the world, rarely do female politicians feature prominently in headlines and on the front pages of most newspapers as news. In some

newspapers, women politicians tend to be positioned later in the story or in parts of the newspapers other than the front pages and middle pages (Falkn, 2008).

Also, on the types of stories, the study revealed that the type of stories that were published by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate was mostly straight news. The two newspapers published a total of 60 (92.3%) straight news. The types of stories that were less published were the opinions and editorials. This reveals that the two newspapers showed a great interest in publishing straight news more than the other types of stories which are feature stories, opinions, and editorials.

This finding can be understood by the framing theory which explains that individuals try to deduce meaning from circumstances that decrease how complex an information may be, thus, affecting how individuals perceive such information (Volkmer et al, 2009). That is, the media in framing issues, do them in a straight and simple way to create an understanding to influence the perception of the audience on such information or story. For this study, the two newspapers were interested in publishing straight news stories that were related to the female candidate to create a simple understanding for readers.

This current finding is supported by the findings of Ross et al. (2013) who investigated the visibility of women candidates during the 2010 British general elections. The main interest of the study was to explore the differences in the news coverage of women and men candidates by looking at both content and frequency. The study revealed that women candidates received less feature in news stories. Women candidates were much more likely to be mentioned or quoted in

feature articles that focused explicitly on gender issues rather than their political abilities and experience.

Moreover, the finding is in concordance with the arguments of Ross et al. (2013), and Ayers and Lawson (2011). According to Ross et al. (2013), the type of coverage that would be given to women in politically-oriented newspapers will not be the same as the entertainment and lifestyle newspapers. Women candidates are often given less features in news articles or editorials that mostly focus on policy issues. On the other hand, Ayers and Lawson (2011) argue that female candidates are far less covered in feature articles, opinions, and commentaries as these stories focus on the political trajectories of individual candidates or their individual contributions to politics whether at the national or constituency level.

#### **4.2.4 Type of Gender Stereotype Given to Stories Published by the Two Newspapers on the Female Candidate**

The study revealed that the majority of the stories published by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide had positive gender stereotypes. Both newspapers had 58 (90.6%) positive gender stereotype stories. On the other hand, the newspapers had only 6 (9.4%) negative gender stereotype stories. This indicates that the two newspapers were circumspect and interested in publishing more positive gender stereotype stories. The newspapers avoided publishing stories that focused on or attacked the female candidate based on her gender. The two newspapers were firm in publishing stories that promoted the capabilities of the female candidate and were devoid of publishing stories that strongly criticized the female candidate based on her gender.

This finding is well elaborated by the framing theory which explains that the framing of stories is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can

influence how it is understood by audiences (Kahneman, 2003). According to Peng (2008), there is a physical space that is dedicated by the media to particular stories in such a way to attract media audiences. In this study, positive gender stereotypes were portrayed by the newspapers to positively influence the perceptions of media audiences on sensitive gender-related issues. On the other hand, the supporting theory, liberal feminist theory explains this finding that sex roles' stereotyping exists in the mass media, and its constant repetition to audiences reinforces such stereotypes in the broader society (Mann, 2011). The constant portrayal of positive gender stereotype stories by the two newspapers reinforced a positive perception of gender-related issues.

This finding is supported by the assertion of Dianne et al. (2004), but not that of Shoop (2006). According to Dianne et al. (2004), the media framing of female candidates may entangle with gender biases. Media framing based on gender biases creates an untenable position for women candidates in electoral processes. However, Shoop (2006) suggests that when the media cover women aspiring for high positions in politics in a negative way such as reporting these women as busy mothers who need to take care of their homes, their chances of winning those positions become low. The media cover stories in a way that renders these women incompetent to occupy positions in politics.

#### **4.2.5 Gender of Reporters who Covered Stories Related to the Female Candidate for the Two Newspapers**

Another finding of this study was that male reporters of the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide covered more stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate than their female counterparts did. Apart from those stories whose reporters' gender could not be

determined, 23 (35.4%) male reporters covered stories on the female candidate whilst 10 (15.4%) female reporters also did the same. The male reporters were interested in reporting stories on the female candidates more than the female reporters.

This finding is well understood by the liberal feminist theory which states that the prevailing sexual division in terms of labour is a result of the support and perpetual cultural representations that are constantly portrayed by the media (Strinati, 2004). This instance was not the same for this study. Male reporters were found to have reported more stories related to the female Vice-Presidential candidate than their female counterparts did.

This finding is inconsistent with that of Devitt (2002) and Yovonoo (2016). Devitt (2002) explored whether female and male candidates received an equal amount of coverage, and also whether the media were biased in the reporting of news that was related to the candidates in the 2000 gubernatorial elections in the U.S.A. One of the findings indicated that the gender of reporters influenced the coverage of the candidates. Male reporters focused on covering more personal issues and less political issues on female candidates. Moreover, Yovonoo (2016) studied the portrayal of women parliamentary candidates during the 2012 elections in Ghana. The study determined the nature and extent of coverage given to female candidates. The findings showed that female reporters covered more female parliamentary candidates than the male reporters did on female candidates.

#### **4.2.6 Framing of Stories Published by the Two Newspapers on the Female Candidate**

Lastly, the study found that majority of the stories covered by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate were politically-oriented. The focus

of the stories was on the political activities of the female candidate. Politically-oriented stories published by the two newspapers were 43 (69.4%). On the other hand, the two newspapers gave less coverage to personality (5 = 8.0%) and issue-based (14 = 22.6%) stories that were related to the female candidate.

This current finding can be well explained by the framing theory which states that the media play a role in the portrayal and direction of meaning in ongoing interactions which are temporal communications structures that people build around issues during discussions or debates (Dewulf & Bouwen, 2012). According to Scheufele (1999), the basis of framing theory elaborates how the media focus attention on some events, placing them within a field of meaning. In the case of this study, the newspapers focused their attention on publishing stories that were more politically oriented.

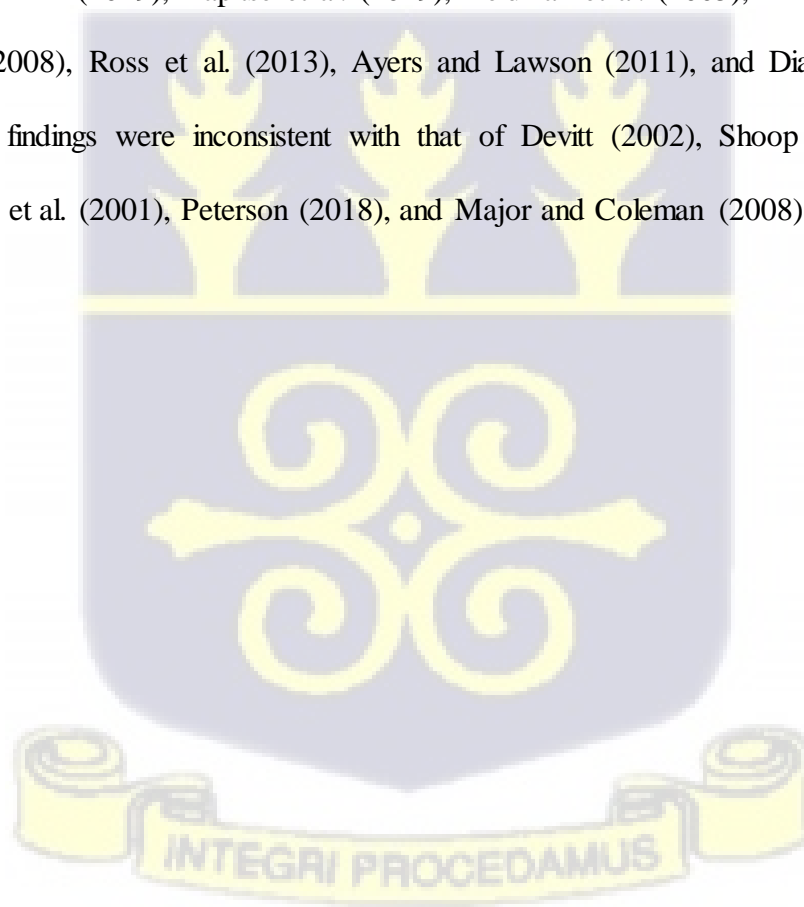
This current finding is not supported by the finding of Bystrom et al. (2001) who conducted a study to explore the extent of media coverage of female politicians in the primary races for governor and U.S. Senate in 2000 using the print media. The study revealed that newspaper reporters dedicated more attention to the personal lives, appearances, and personalities of female politicians.

Furthermore, the current finding is not supported by the assertions of Peterson (2018), and Major and Coleman (2008). According to Peterson (2018), the media focus on the appearance, gender, and marital status of female candidates instead of focusing on pertinent political issues that are related to these female politicians. The stories provided by the media about female candidates' personalities affect electoral outcomes. Major and Coleman (2008) suggest that journalists' coverage of news stories that are related to female political candidates

tend to emphasize the feminine traits such as personality, personal life, appearance, and marital status that mark these candidates (Major & Coleman, 2008).

### 4.3 Chapter Summary

The findings of the study were presented in this chapter in relation to the objectives of the study and research questions. The findings presented the frequency of stories, placement of stories, types of stories published, type of gender stereotype given to stories, gender of reporters, and focus of stories. The chapter has also discussed the findings of this study in relation to that of other scholars and the theories that underpinned the study. The findings were consistent with that of Bappayo and Kirfi (2019), Rapiitse et al. (2019), Heldman et al. (2005), Trimble (2007), Geoff (2017), Falkn (2008), Ross et al. (2013), Ayers and Lawson (2011), and Dianne et al. (2004). However, other findings were inconsistent with that of Devitt (2002), Shoop (2006), Yovonoo (2016), Bystrom et al. (2001), Peterson (2018), and Major and Coleman (2008).



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This current study investigated how the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) was covered by the Ghanaian newspapers precisely, the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide in the 2020 general elections. The specific objectives intended to be achieved were to examine the prominence given to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide, to identify gender stereotypes that were related to the stories covered on the female candidate, and to examine the framing of stories that were related to the female Vice-Presidential candidate by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide.

This chapter presents a summary of key findings and the conclusions drawn from the findings. It also points out the limitations, and finally makes recommendations.

#### 5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed the following key findings.

- The study revealed that the first female Vice-Presidential candidate received less coverage from the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide
- Stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate were mostly placed on different pages other than the front page, back page, page 3, and the center spread which are considered the prominent pages of newspapers.
- The type of stories that were published by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate was mostly straight news.

- Majority of the stories published by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide had positive gender stereotypes.
- Male reporters of the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide covered more stories that were related to the first female Vice-Presidential candidate than their female counterparts.
- Stories covered by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate were politically-oriented.

## 5.2 Conclusions/Implications

Based on the findings, the study made the following conclusions:

Firstly, women politicians are given less coverage whenever there is an election. The two Ghanaian newspapers used in the study give less attention to female politicians whenever electorates go to the polls.

Secondly, the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide newspapers do not prioritize publishing stories that are related to female politicians on prominent pages. The names of female politicians and most of their stories hardly make it to headlines, front pages, center spread, and back pages of newspapers. This results in their coverage being practically invisible.

Ghanaian newspapers are mostly interested in publishing straight news that is related to female politicians. These newspapers hardly publish female politicians in feature stories, opinions, or editorials.

It has also been revealed that most Ghanaian newspapers have spurned the publications of negative stereotype stories that are related to female politicians. Thus, these newspapers have

embraced the publication of positive gender stereotype stories to encourage females who have political ambitions.

Also, the notion that male reporters publish more stories on male politicians than female politicians has been disproved by this current study. In terms of reporting stories related to female politicians, male reporters are doing far better than female reporters.

Furthermore, Ghanaian newspapers have lessened publishing personality-related stories of female politicians. The focus of stories has shifted to pertinent political issues.

The Daily Graphic which is state-owned provided more balanced coverage of the Vice-Presidential candidate than the Daily Guide which is a private-owned newspaper. This is due to Ghana's political structure which suggests that either of the two major parties have an equal chance of regaining power. Consequently, the state-owned newspaper is careful to avoid appearing biased in its coverage of the main opposition political party's Vice-Presidential candidate in Ghana. The privately owned newspaper, whose ownership could have ties to either of the two major political parties in the nation, is an exception to this rule.

Lastly, the state-owned newspaper is not profit-oriented; hence, its interest is in publishing stories with fairness. The privately owned newspaper, however, is profit-driven and is interested in publishing stories that will sell regardless of whether they are biased or fair.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to investigating how only one female politician was covered by the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. Other female politicians who were contesting for various political positions in the 2020 general elections were not captured in this study.

The study was also limited to the adoption of only two newspapers that is, the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. Other prominent newspapers that also covered different stories on the first female Vice-Presidential candidate were not selected for this study.

Also, since this study was confined to the coverage of the first female Vice-Presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) during the 2020 elections by the Daily Graphic and the Daily Guide, its findings cannot be generalized to all newspapers in all election coverages so far in Ghana.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Studies**

Based on the findings, this study makes the following recommendations:

This study was limited to only one female candidate and two newspapers. Hence, future studies can expand the scope of this current study by focusing on the coverage of more female candidates by more than two newspapers in any upcoming general elections. Moreover, similar studies can be conducted by using electronic media coverage of women in politics.

Future studies can also focus on adding another methodological approach such as a qualitative approach to interview female politicians on the perceptions they have regarding their less coverage in any political events.

For scholars and researchers, it is recommended that they study the impact of media framing of women in politics on the audience. Such a study on the audience will bring to light the perceptions and attitudes of the audience towards female political candidates.

### **5.5 Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

It is recommended that the Ghanaian media especially the print media should increase their coverage of female politicians during any general elections. This in turn will motivate female politicians in breaking the status quo regarding the Ghanaian political sphere which is considered as male dominated.

For media houses and practitioners, it is recommended that they should intensify public education and sensitization measures by designing programmes that will transform the socio-cultural values that work against women in Ghanaian society. Media houses and journalists should give the same amount of coverage that is given to male politicians to female politicians to create a healthy competition between these politicians.



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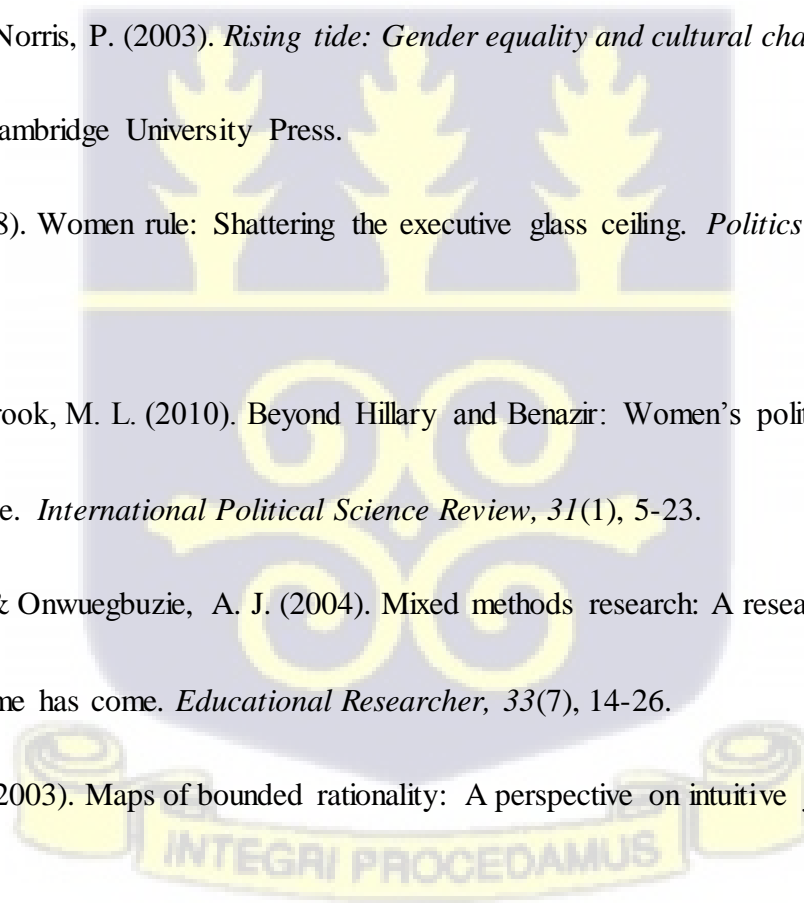
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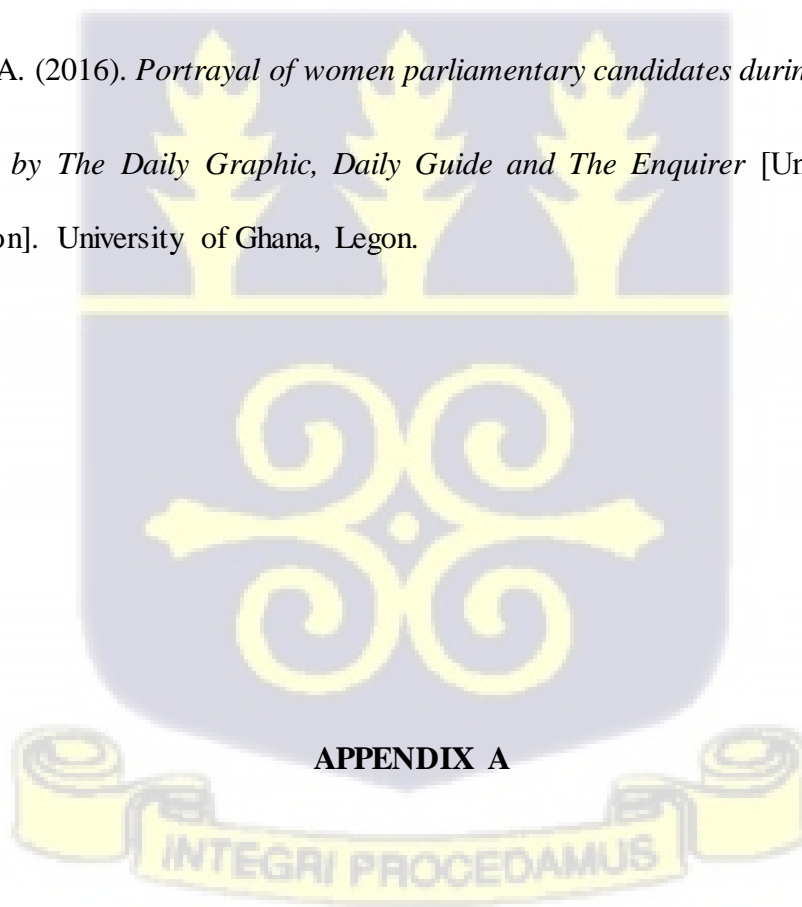
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**APPENDIX A**

**Coding Sheet**

<b>Name of Newspaper</b>					
<b>Month</b>					
<b>Date of Publication</b>					
<b>Total Number of Stories</b>					
<b>Type of Stories</b>					
Straight News					
Feature Story					
Editorial					
Opinion					
<b>Focus of Stories</b>					
Issue-Based Stories					
Personality-Based Stories					
Politically-Oriented Stories					
<b>Placement of Stories</b>					
Front Page					
Page Three (3)					
Centre Page					
Back Page					
Other					
<b>Gender Stereotype Stories</b>					
Positive Stereotype					
Negative Stereotype					
<b>Gender of Reporters</b>					

<b>Stories with Photographs</b>					
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