

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**VISUAL FRAMING OF JUNE 3 FLOOD AND FIRE DISASTER: A  
CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FOUR GHANAIAN NEWSPAPERS**

**PETER YANKSON**



**2021**

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CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FOUR GHANAIAN NEWSPAPERS**

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**A thesis in the Department of Communication and Media Studies,  
Faculty of Languages, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Communication and Media Studies)  
in the University of Education, Winneba.**

**NOVEMBER, 2021**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Peter Yankson, declare that this dissertation, with exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Gifty Appiah-Adjei ( PhD)

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

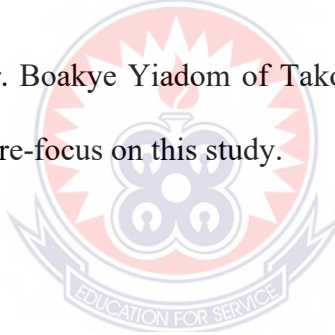
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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my family, especially my son Israel Kobina Yankson, my wife Sanwah Nawson Blay and my good friend, Ekow Spio-Afful for the support.

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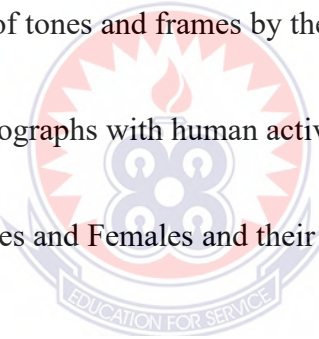


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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

U.K – United Kingdom

CRED- Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Diseases

H.I.V- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

S.E.J- Society of Professional Journalists

A.B.C- American Broadcasting Company

N.B.C-National Broadcasting Company

C.B.S-Columbia Broadcasting Systems

A.P- Associated Press

G.N.F.S- Ghana National Fire Service

NADMO- National Disaster Management Organisation

GNA-Ghana News Agency

USA-United States of America

SPSS-Statistical Package for Social Sciences



## ABSTRACT

Photographs of disaster published in newspapers potentially help in the disaster assessment and mitigation measures. Though framing on flood disaster has been researched, visual framing of flood and fire disasters in the Ghanaian context often lacks attention. This study applied the qualitative approach, to finding out how the newspapers framed the June 3 flood and fire disaster in Accra Ghana, whether the news frames used in coverage varied with the newspapers, and how gender played out in the coverage of the disaster. Using Framing, News Judgement and Gender theories, content-analysis 240 photographs used by four Ghanaian daily- Daily Graphic, Daily Guide, Ghanaian Times and Chronicle -newspapers to report on the June 3 flood and fire disaster at Kwame Nkrumah Circle. Thematic analysis of data established that *Human Interest* is the most dominant frame used by the four newspapers, though *Daily Graphic* recorded significant frequency of *Economic Interest* frame. The study also discovered that new frames such as *Solidarity* and *International Compassion* were used to represent some of the photographs. State owned newspapers (*Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*) gave prominence to the incumbent president in the political frame while the private newspapers (*Daily Guide* and *The Chronicle*) projected the opposition candidate. However, all newspapers largely portrayed the politicians (political frame) in a positive tone and the economic and human interest in the negative tone. Besides, most women (females) were significantly framed as 'passive' while men (males) were framed as 'active' in the disaster response and recovery process. The study recommends that disaster risk communication education must be part of newspaper publications in Ghana, in order to raise levels of awareness, on disaster risk among the general population.

Key Words: **Disaster, Photographs, Framing, News Judgement, Gender, flooding in Ghana**

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Photographs are part of media tools in reporting an event; therefore, every newspaper edition features photographs. In newspapers, photographs are used as focal points to attract a reader's attention and usually, it is the first object of a focal point, for newspaper readers (Ali & Mahmood, 2013). Photographs play critical role as accompaniment so far as news reporting is concerned. It gives audience a sense of reality of events. In this light, Faux and Kim (2006) aver that the media use photographs to create a 'pseudo-reality'.

### 1.2 Photographs and Visual framing

Photographs are still images about an accidental or intentional event, captured on film usually for the purpose of publication in the newspaper or other news productions (Ali, 2014). Photographs convey the message to the audience without necessarily reading through the text. In newspaper production, photographs serve the role as a focal point; helps draw the eye of the reader to the message conveyed by the imagery (Ali, 2014). The page planning unit within a newspaper organisation also makes use of photographs as a page planning tool, thus, giving the newspaper the balance between visuals and text.

Visual framing involves choosing certain aspect of a perceived reality and enhancing it more than other through the mode of visual communication, thus, emphasizing their salience and meaning (Ali, 2014; Rodrigues & Dimitrova, 2016). Visual framing research analysis has been done by Ali (2014), Ali and Mahmood (2013), Fahmy (2009), Garcia (1987), Jackson (2011), Messaris and Abraham (2004) and Rodrigues



and Dimitrova (2016). Photographs are the first items of focal point which attract attention of news readers (Fahmy, 2009) and create the visual story which aid the audience in impact assessment in disaster reporting (Jackson, 2011). Visuals or photographs impact viewers more than words because they “closely link it to be the reality” (Messari and Abraham 2004 as cited in Ali and Mahmood, 2013.p169). Hence, Ali and Mahmood (2013) argue that human interest frame is the dominant frame used in the visual framing of the 2010 flooding in India.

It is argued that emotions are the central themes to human angle (Lester & Ross, 2003) and that, human interest is the most prevalent frame in reporting natural disasters (Jackson, 2011) and man-made disasters such as wars (Wojdnyski, 2009).

Therefore, in disaster reporting, photographs tend to serve as a tool in aiding audience assessment of the impact of the disaster (Jackson, 2011 as cited in Ali & Mahmood, 2013).

Different forms of major disasters get widely reported in press and broadcast news stories in mainstream media organisations around the world. Disaster involves the destruction of lives and properties involving large scale accidents of natural or man-made occurrence. In most parts of the world, natural disaster is the major cause of fatality and destruction of livelihood (Ali & Mahmood, 2013). The significant majority of world disasters are fire or flooding, though other disasters involve oil spillage, mining and industrial explosions, as well as terrorism (Solman & Henderson, 2019).

Flooding involves rising water levels at places usually dry (Ayikpa, 2015). Disasters involving fire and flooding contributes to about 56% of world disasters (McGrath, 2017; Solman & Henderson, 2019). There are growing evidences to show that around the globe and in Ghana, the risk of flooding is increasing due to climate change

(McGrath, 2017; Asumadu-Sarkodie, Owusu & Rufungura, 2015). Since the extent of climate change varies according to countries, so does the nature of floods in countries. For instance, the nature of 2017 flooding in USA, United Kingdom, Nepal, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Ghana, and Northern India, show unequal effects of climate change globally (McGrath, 2017). Also, the rising temperatures due to global warming are driving increased precipitations. The precipitations will cause increased rainfall which may cause flooding. The latest projections by the UK Committee on Climate Change suggest that in this century, periods of intense rainfall could increase in frequency by a factor of five, as global temperatures rise (UK Committee on Climate change, 2015). The projections by the UK Committee on Climate Change, (2015), would mean that, world temperatures would increase by 5-point interval (5, 10, 15, and 20) in the new century. With these rising temperatures, increased rainfalls are likely to cause flooding, especially in developing countries where mitigation and preparation measures are next to non-existence (McGrath, 2017).

The levels of preparation and mitigation of effects of flooding resulting from climate change varies with regions of the world (Solman & Henderson, 2019; Ajaero, Okoro & Ajaero, 2016). While in some developed countries, flood preparation and mitigation plans appear adequate, it pales in semblance in most developing countries (Solman & Henderson, 2019). The structures for withstanding flood disaster impacts may not be relatively same between developed and developing countries. In many developing countries, high levels of marginalization in terms of development have exposed many vulnerable groups to greater risk of disaster impact (Rodrigues, Albores & Brewster, 2016).

The discourse on flood disasters in developing countries, according to Cottle (2009), usually focus on the apparent government corruption, war, diseases and famine, which account for the differences in the impact of floods on victims. Flooding is a major cause of disaster with significant damages to life and property. As flooding becomes more rampant, newspapers are likely to dedicate some proportion of space to report on these flooding and its effects. This study, therefore, attempts to understand how the newspapers visually presented the June 3 disaster.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

Thus, the media as a recorder of society's facts tend to utilize photographs to offer audience an estimation of what happened (Ali & Mahmood, 2013) and photographs provide instant emotional triggers (Lester & Ross, 2003) in this regard. For instance, Wojdynski, (2009) posits that text, however prodigious, stand inferior to "interpret sorrow on the face of young women standing over flag-draped coffin" (p34). In situations of man-made disaster like war, human interest frame is largely used to frame the events of the war (Wojdynski, 2009). Therefore, the visual framing of the US invasion of Iraq showed that photographs of human-interest frame about civilians were dominant in comparison to photographs on the soldiers (Wojdynski, 2009).

In a study about the British media's coverage of the Mozambique floods in 2000, Okere (2004) found that images published by the media were very influential in getting the attention of the world to the plight of the victims. In the 2000 Mozambican floods, the plight of victims came to world attention when international media covered the birth of Baby Roseta. Baby Roseta was delivered on a tree, when her mother climbed the tree to avoid flood waters. Thus, as instant emotional triggers (Lester & Ross, 2003), photographs with its potential may influence leaders to take action in mitigating the

effects of flooding on people (Okere, 2004) likewise, the visual framing of the June 3 twin disaster in Accra.

The media have reported significantly on the issues of flooding in Ghana (Osei, 2013). Although, flooding in Accra has caused loss of material and human resources in excess of \$ 1.5 billion (Yankson et al, 2017), local authorities have not been able to stop the perennial flooding confronting the capital city Accra (Osei, 2013). The nature and the impact of the damage caused by the floods within Accra during the raining season would mean that, flooding would find space in newspapers. With significant damage caused by flooding in Ghana over the years (Osei, 2013), the media's role in public education about the prevention, mitigation and relief in time of flood disaster is crucial (Rattien, 1990). As a result, researching into media frames of flooding disaster may help in mitigating or preparing towards the effects of flooding on people.

Studies on media or newspaper framing of flooding have been carried out by Ayikpa, (2015), Ali and Mahmood (2013), Borah (2009) as well as Okere (2004). Ayikpa (2015) studied the newspaper framing of the 2015 June 3 flood and fire disaster. Ali and Mahmood (2013) used content analysis to study how the newspapers in Pakistan, photographically reported on the 2010 floods in Pakistan during the monsoon season. Borah (2009) did a comparative study on the visual framing of the South East Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina to conclude that, the images from the Tsunami showed more dead than the hurricane Katrina flood disaster. Okere (2004) in the study of the British press framing of Mozambican floods concluded that, photographs of the victims especially the birth of Baby Rosita on a tree, was the turning point in generating appropriate response from the British politicians. However, the study by Ayikpa (2015) focused on the text in selected two newspapers, which was not relatively representative of the entire newspaper space in Ghana. Thus, there are state-owned and privately

owned newspapers in Ghana but Ayikpa's (2015) study considered only the state-owned daily newspapers without the privately owned ones.

Also, Ayikpa's (2015) study employed news story as a unit of analysis hence data for the study was derived from text (words) used in framing the flood and fire disaster but not photographs. Besides, his study did not consider the stereotypes embedded in the frames used to cover the disaster, therefore, confirming the assertion by Batta et al (2013) that the study of stereotypes including portrayal of women as passive and inactive in relation to disaster response and mitigation strategies often goes unsearched in such studies. Major studies on frame analysis of floods in Ghana (Ayikpa, 2015; Osei, (2013) are based on text other than visuals of photographs.

However, communication research on photographic or visual framing pales in significance to text (Matthes, 2009 as cited in Downey, 2012). Based on this assertion, it can be argued a research gap consequently exists in the Ghanaian context so far as the study of photographs in framing analysis flood disaster is concerned. This study, therefore, attempts to fill this gap by investigating the visual framing of the June 3<sup>rd</sup> Disaster in Accra by four local newspapers, specifically two state-owned and two privately owned newspapers. Photographs in newspapers tend to re-enforce stereotypical positions in the society (Fahmy, 2004; Lester & Ross, 2003). Many studies of visual framing of disasters outside the Ghanaian context often portray women as passive and inactive (Ali, 2014; Parkinson, 2011; Fahmy, 2004) and victims of sex and violence (Lester & Ross, 2003).

This study also considers this aspect of visual framing to floods to affirm or refute these assertions so far as the Ghanaian context is concerned.

## 1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to examine the visual frames used by the newspapers to cover the flood disaster, establish whether the frames used varied among the newspaper- outlets and determine the prominence given by the various newspaper outlets. The research objectives of this study were to;

- a) Examine how the newspapers visually framed the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood disaster.
- b) Establish the extent of variation between frames used by the newspapers over the period of the study.
- c) Investigate how gender was visually framed in the coverage of the disaster.

## 1.5 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions;

1. How did the newspapers visually frame the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood and fire disaster?
2. What are the differences in frames used by the newspapers?
3. How were males and females visually framed in newspapers?

## 1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on four daily newspapers in Ghana, namely the *Daily Guide*, *Chronicle*, *Ghanaian Times*, and *the Daily Graphic*. This study also focused on one month editions of the newspapers after the June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015 disaster. This study included the editions of the four newspapers from 4<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The study period was to cover adequate time in order to get more photographs and also the disaster responds and recovery period covered a little more time after the disaster. There are about one hundred and six (106) newspapers with about twenty-one (21) daily newspapers in Ghana according to the African Media Development Initiative, (BBC World Service

Trust, 2016). The significant number of these newspapers is owned by private news organisations while the state-owned and funded dailies include *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*. Currently there are two state-owned daily newspapers namely, *Ghanaian Times* and the *Daily Graphic* while the privately-owned newspapers offer many dailies including *Daily Guide*, *Today*, *Finder*, *Democrat*, *Ghanaian Observer* among others.

This study examined the top four daily newspapers in Ghana, based on circulation and readership according to, *Ghana Media Measurement Report* by GeoPoll in 2018. The Ghana Media Measurement Report is mobile phone – based survey conducted by GeoPoll to find the media preferences of Ghanaians over a period of time. Although the survey by GeoPoll was a mobile phone-based survey, it sought to find the newspaper preferences of the respondents over the same period in order to establish circulation and readership.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The media effect theories uphold the influences of media messages on audience perceptions and reactions. This implies that the messages on flood and fire disaster by media organisations go a long way to re-enforce preparedness, prevention as well as mitigation tendencies in the public. The findings from this study will be important in understanding the role of newspapers in disaster risk communication in order to generate the appropriate public awareness and preparedness for future disaster occurrence. Disaster risk communication involves communicating information about the risk and danger of disaster occurrence (Batta et al; 2013). Visual frames go a long way to influence official action on disasters (Okere 2004).

## **1.8 Organisation of the Study**

Thus, study is in five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction to the study which includes statement of problem, research questions significance of the study and the scope of the research. The chapter two discusses the related literature and the theoretical framework. The methodology is covered under chapter three and includes study area, research design, data sources, data collection, coding and analysis. Chapter four presents the analysis and findings from the data collected for the study. The chapter five presents the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations. The chapter five also contains the areas for further research.

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

The chapter begun with the introduction, then progressed into the background of the study, which delved into issues of flooding, structural underlying causes of flooding in Accra. The study background also gave a historical account of the major flooding events in over thirty-year period in Ghana. The chapter also focused on the statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study as well as the scope of the study.

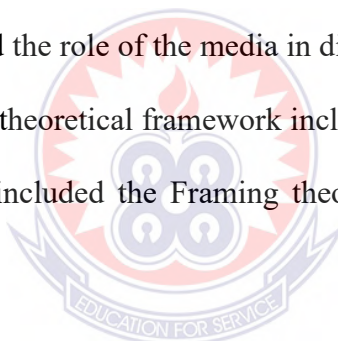


## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

Research into newspaper coverage of flood and fire disaster demands a review of related works on newspaper media frames of disaster stories. This chapter involves reviewing other studies into news coverage of flood and fire disaster. This chapter of the work deals with literature on the disaster and its implications on human settlements, taking into account the effects of flood and fire disasters. This chapter also responds to the seeming variations in disaster effects on the various socially constructed gendered –stereotypes, traits and other attributes within the social systems. The chapter continues with disaster response and the role of the media in disaster management. Additionally, this chapter discusses the theoretical framework included in this study. The theoretical framework in the study included the Framing theory, News Judgement theory and Gender theory.



#### 2.2 Disaster as a concept

Disaster is an occurrence disrupting the normal conditions of existence and causing a level of suffering that exceeds the capacity of adjustment of the affected community (WHO, 2013). The WHO definition identifies some level of disruption to normal life as well as the potential challenges on the capacity to deal with the disaster within the affected communities. Shaluf (2007) argues that there are three types of disasters, namely natural disaster, man-made and hybrid (a combination of natural and man-made causes). Disasters can leave indelible mark on human development because it usually results in fatalities, displacement of victims and challenges the economic livelihoods of affected persons (Songsore et al, 2004).

Natural disasters are caused by the force of nature and sometimes may not have early warning systems (Ansah & Ke, 2019). Natural phenomena like earthquakes, heavy rainfall, tsunamis or volcanic eruptions may cause severity in damage to property and livelihoods (Shaluf, 2007). Man-made disasters such as wars and industrial accidents are also a major cause of deaths. Such industrial accidents often result from human error or lack of efficient supervision (Shauf, 2007). For example, the B.B.C reported on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2020, that a large amount of ammonium nitrate stored in the city of Beirut, capital of Lebanon caused an explosion killing at least 204 people with estimated cost of damaged property running into billions of dollars. Sometimes, human actions may trigger a natural phenomenon to cause large scale destruction to property and human life (Shaluf, 2007). The hybrid cause of disaster is when human activities such as degradation of the forest, surface mining, alluvial mining, application of chemical in fishing, indiscriminate buildings in water ways, throwing of rubbish into gutters among others, cause environmental disaster including deforestation, mudslides, and flooding.

Ghana has recorded a number of major disasters, including the Jamestown earthquake which recorded 17 fatalities ( Amponsah, 2004), the drought of 1983 that battered Ghana's economy (ISSER, 2010), the collapse of a six story Melcom Shopping Centre that trapped 82 people with 14 deaths, the 2014 Cholera outbreak that affected over 22000 people and claimed more than 200 lives in 5 months ( May to September) and the flood and fire disaster at Kwame Nkrumah circle that with over 200 fatalities (Owusu-Sekyere et al, 2017). Ghana has experienced its fair share of the types of disasters enumerated by Shaluf (2007).

### 2.3 History of Floods in Ghana (1968-2015)

In Ghana, disasters as a result of flooding are relatively common experiences (Asumadu-Sarkodie et al, 2015). A brief post- independence history of floods according to *Daily Graphic* and as cited in Asumadu-Sarkodie et al (2015) has been outlined below:

- July 4 1968- Accra records heaviest rainfall in nine years
- June 29,1971-Houses collapse in the Sekondi –Takoradi as a result of floods
- July5, 1995 –Floods wreak havoc in Accra
- June 13,1997-Accra Floods
- July, 1999- Over three-thousand (3000) people affected by flooding in Upper East/ Upper West and Northern Regions as well as parts of Brong Ahafo and Volta Regions.
- June 28, 2001-Accra floods, worst to hit Accra since July 4, 1995.
- November, 2007-flood in Upper E/W and Northern region. Three hundred and seven thousand (307, 127) people affected.
- May 5, 2010- flooding in Accra Central, Ofankor in Greater Accra Region and Begoro in Eastern Region.
- June 22, 2010-Nations worst flood disaster, Death toll-35
- June24, 2010-flooding in Agona Swedru in central region. Three bridges collapse
- October 14, 2010- floods displace 161,000 nationwide following the spillage of water from the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso. (Spillage of water from the Bagre Dam, increases water volumes of the Black Volta which is a tributary of the Volta River. This means water volumes at the estuary of the Volta also increased thereby causing flooding in some part of the lower Volta basin).

- June 3, 2015-Flooding and fire explosion at Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Greater Accra Region kills over one hundred and fifty (150) people.

The foregoing indicates the reoccurrence of floods in Ghana, hence, the need to give attention to the problem of perennial floods in Ghana.

#### **2.4 Climate Patterns, Rainfall and Flood in Ghana**

It must be noted that, the changing weather patterns in Ghana have been linked with the changing climate, (Asumadu-Sarkodie et al, 2015). The erratic nature of rainfall patterns is the consistent reminder of the growing effects of climate change (Asumadu-Sarkodie et al, 2015; Osei, 2013). Asumadu-Sarkodie et al, (2015), upon the study of the causes of flooding in Accra, find that the city is likely to experience increased precipitation due to rising temperatures. The rising temperatures increase the amount of precipitation in the atmosphere. These precipitations enhance clouds formation, resulting in rainfall. The rising temperature would mean Accra is likely to see increased rainfall over the next ten (10) years (Asumadu-Sarkodie et al, 2015). Unfortunately, efforts to mitigate negative shocks of climate change in Ghana have not received proactive attention.

Thus, the Ghanaian media have failed to mirror climate change issues and its negative impact in Ghana. This is affirmed by Fosu, Quashigah and Kuranchie (2019) when they aver that climate change issues are underrepresented in coverage by the Ghanaian media.

However, repercussions of climate change such as floods and the likely effects and impact may find space in media coverage of such situations when they occur. This reflects the assertion that “along with other natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms and wildfires, media organisations devote considerable space and time to floods and

victims of flooding” (Solman & Henderson, 2019, p .2). The effects of floods on people, according Ajaero et al, (2016), may vary with the medium through which the information about the flood was broadcasted. The authors note that in Anambra state in Nigeria, many people had information about the 2015 flooding from the radio than the newspaper. This helped relatively to mitigate the effects of the flooding that occurred in parts of northern Nigeria. Thus, the effects were relatively minimized because the radio broadcast was in the local languages which provided wider audience, boosted preparedness and subsequently limited the impact on human lives (Ajaero et al, 2016). In Ghana however, studies (Amoakohene, 2004; Nyarko, 2016; Sikaanku, 2011; 2014) have identified the print media to be pacesetters in the setting of agenda for the electronic and online media. Thus, topical issues from the front pages of newspapers and/or from the national wire agency are selected and discussed on the electronic and online media via the *Newspaper Review Programmes* and other formats for the general public to participate in the discussion of such topical issues. This justifies the need to study newspapers coverage of the June 3 twin disaster in Ghana. There is growing research into how media organisations tend to cover issues.

The way a media reports an issue, underscores the *frames*; - that is how these media organisations cover such stories. Frame and frame analysis by Entman (1993) reflect research into the manner of coverage of news as employed by media organisations ‘to locate a perceived problem and offer a causal interpretation, as well as provide a moral solution to such perceived reality of a problem’ (p.127). The ability for frames to stay within the public domain depends on the persistence of actors within the media space (Callaghan & Schnell, 2010). This implies that the persistence of media reports on flooding and fire disasters issues will have a tendency of improving the effects of flood and fire disasters.

## 2.5 June 3 Disaster in Ghana

The June 3, 2015 floods and fire disaster occurred at the Goil service station around the Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra. It was Ghana's most impactful disaster in terms of fatalities (Azumah & Darko, 2020). The rains started around June 1 and continued for over 24 hours. The continuous rainfall resulted in flooding around areas such as Kaneshie, Graphic Road and the Goil Service station located at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle. The actual cause of the fire explosion has still not been established but news reports suggest the leakage of flood waters into the underground fuel reservoir resulted in the displacement of the fuel in the reservoir to the surface of the flood which spread widely and led to the unfortunate twin disaster. The flood and fire disaster impacted greatly on the business within the locality. Newspapers published images of burnt and or mangled vehicles in and around the Odaw River, the main water channel within the vicinity of the disaster.

The June 3 flood and fire disaster was a combination of human and natural factors. According to the Ghana National Fire Service, the flood waters displaced some petrol in underground tank which cause the petrol in the tank to leak unto the surface of the water at the Goil service station and caused the explosion when fire from cigarettes butts came in contact with the leaked petrol. Natural disasters occur when floods or natural fires tend to destroy large areas and cause fatality (Shaluf, 2007). Some natural disasters affect large areas and cause destruction to lives and property (Addai, Tulashie, Annan & Yeboah, 2016). The 1983 drought in Ghana, which has become a historical reference point for national discourse on disaster, was caused by frequent and extensive fire outbreaks throughout Ghana (Addai et al, 2016). The most significant man-made disaster in Ghana is the fire disasters at the Central Medical Stores of the

Ghana Health Service and the Ghana National Fire Service indicates that the fire at Central Medical Stores was a suspected arson.

According to Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (2015), flooding is the most common natural disaster type recorded in the last thirty (30) years (from 1994 to 2013) worldwide. Flood disasters are the most frequent events because they account for 43% of all registered disasters which affect approximately 2.5 billion people and has the greatest material cost and losses from 1994 to 2013 (CRED, 2015). The argument in literature appears to support the possibility of flooding due to increased precipitations and rainfall associated with climate change (Asumadu-Sarkodie, Owusu & Rufungura, 2015; McGrath, 2017; Solman & Henderson, 2019). If flooding is the most common disaster in the last thirty (30) years, then attention from scholarship must focus on how these disasters are reported. In sub-Saharan Africa, the type of media, (radio, newspapers and television) may determine access to flood disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery information (Ajaero, Okoro & Ajaero, 2016). This study, therefore, becomes imperative because access to flood disaster information is critical to the post disaster mitigation and recovery process.

### **2.5.1 Flooding and fire as disaster**

Floods are triggered by seasonal rainfall combined with poor drainage, dumping waste in waterway and low elevation of settlements (Amoako & Frimpong Boamah, 2015). Ghana is one of the countries which is most prone to floods in West Africa (Aggrey, 2015, World Bank, 2011), with likely devastating effect especially on the urban poor (Okyere, Yacouba & Gilgenbach, 2013). In Ghana, the rainfall pattern has been seasonal, with the main raining season between May to June, while the minor season starts from September to October (Owusu & Waylen, 2013).

The flooding problems in Accra, is usually felt during the major raining season where volumes of water increase as the amount of rainfall increases (Aggrey, 2015). The increased volume of water is likely to cause flooding, because inadequate flood management strategies like poor drainage, low elevation of settlements and dumping of waste in gutters, building in water ways, can still be found in these urban settlements in Ghana (Amoako & Frimpong Boamah, 2015). Such activities become obstacles to the free flow of volumes of water when it rains, hence, the perennial flood problem.

Fire disasters occurs when fire burns and destroys unintended vegetation, industrial complex or factories and human settlements (Pacholok, 2013). There are bush fires, industrial fires as well as fires that destroy human settlements. Fires need three things to continue burning; oxygen, heat and fuel (Pacholok, 2013). Fire disasters constitute about 70% of reported disasters worldwide and are the most frequent disaster with the highest recorded cases of fatalities (Rush et al, 2020).

Deaths from fire disaster constitute about 95% of fire related deaths and injuries across low- and middle-income countries (Rush et al, 2020).

In Ghana, major fire disasters include the large fires in Ghana have usually been caused by human negligence, however, other wild disastrous fires may have its causes unknown (Owusu-Sekyere et al, 2017). Owusu- Sekyere et al, (2017) investigated the possible cause(s) to the fire at the Central Medical stores in Ghana. The Central Medical Stores, stocks essential medical supplies for malaria, H.I.V, Tuberculosis and Ebola in Ghana and other West African countries. Though the research by Owusu Sekyere et al, (2017) did not establish the exact cause of the fire at the facility, the *Daily Graphic* of January 30, 2016 reported the arrest of one Samuel Dogbe, a former labourer at the Central Medical Stores as the prime suspect in the case of arson. “The Ghana Police



Service, in collaboration with Ghana National Fire Service has arrested twelve suspects including Samuel Dogbe, a former labourer at the Central Medical Stores as the prime suspect in a possible case of arson” **Andoh, (2015). Jan, 30th Daily Graphic (Accra) p.3**). The fire disaster at the Central Medical Stores started around 4.30 pm on, January 13, 2015. It took the Ghana National Fire Service about 11 hours to douse the fire that lasted over 24 hours due to the intensity of the inferno. The explosive nature of the materials also contributed largely to the intensity and duration of the fire disaster (Owusu Sekyere, et al, 2017).

Based on assertions by CRED (2015) and Rush et al (2020) regarding the frequency of flood and fire disasters, it can be argued that both flood and fire disasters account for the majority of world disasters and global warming is responsible for such occurrences. This is also in consonance with conclusions from a number of studies (Anderson et al, 2018; Asumadu-Sarkodie et al, 2015; Batta et al, 2013; CRED, 2015; Rush et al, 2020). Thus, the findings from these studies suggest that flood and fire disasters have become frequent because climate change is causing extreme weather situations- the extreme dryness is contributing to the incidence of bushfires (Anderson et al, 2018; Rush et al, 2020) while the high precipitation may be forcing increased rainfall and flooding (Asumadu-Sarkodie et al, 2015; Batta et al, 2013; CRED, 2015).

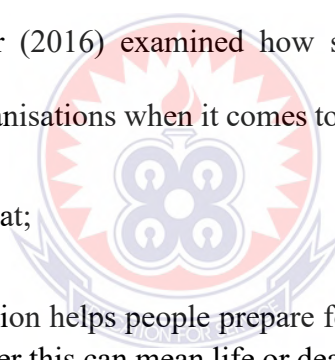
## **2.6 The media and disaster management**

Disaster management involves taking measures to prevent, manage and mitigate the effects of natural and human induced disasters. Disaster management includes public education on prevention as well as management of the effects of the disasters. Disaster management also involves post disaster recovery as well as prevention of disasters (Rattien, 1990). The mass media’s capability to broadcast messages to rare places and

enormous populations makes mass media an efficient instrument for disaster management (Yadav & Rani, 2011). “The media assist in the management of disasters by educating the public about disasters; warning hazards of the disaster, gathering and transmitting information about the affected areas, alerting government officials, relief organisations and the public, about the specific needs of victims” (Dave, 2021.p.1). The media coverage of disasters is now able to reach larger populations due to advances in technology which allows media organisations to provide news quickly to an audience (Rattien, 1990).

The media possesses the power to influence government officials on the appropriate measure to take to mitigate the effects of the disaster (Lowery et al, 2007). For instance, Mauroner and Heudorfer (2016) examined how social media impact the work of volunteer groups and organisations when it comes to disaster preparation and response.

Their study established that;



access to information helps people prepare for possible dangers, and in the event of disaster this can mean life or death. Those affected must be informed about their own situation if they are to react adequately. Social media can, therefore, contribute to increasing resilience – the prerequisite for this is being well practised and reflective in dealing with the channels and tools (p. 211).

In situations of “fatalities either from natural or artificial disasters, the media has the unconditional social obligation to inform, educate and create awareness among the public, about the dangerous events” (Ansah & Ke, 2019. p.169). Hence, in studying the role of the media in disaster communication, Nahak (2021) examined cases from Odisha, a calamity prone area in India to establish the perception of cyclone affected people at Ganjam District. Conclusion drawn was that the state administration preferred

working in coordination with the media when it comes to reporting disaster because of the “competitive attitude of editorial staff and dedicated team of reporters made it easy to communication situations during disaster” (p.5).

## **2.7 Environmental Journalism**

Environmental journalism involves researching, verifying, writing and producing and broadcasting news about the environment to the public sphere traditionally by trained professionals (Bodker & Neverla, 2013; Hansen, 2020). Baykoff (2004) indicates that the news media did not dedicate significant interest in environmental news, until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The news media reported environmental issues as and when incidences of environmental disaster occurred. The growth of environmentalism catalyzed the flourishing of environmental journalism (Dykstra, 2016) and provided the avenue for a dedicated news stream about the emerging environmental issues such as climate change (Bodker & Neverla, 2013). Though it is indicated that newspaper organisations “began an environmental beat and started covering issues such as smog, endangered species, air-pollution and nuclear fallout” (Pallen, 1998. p.1) due to the growth of environmentalism, the traditional media are often accused of presenting environmental issues in episodic manner (Batta, Ashong & Bashir, 2013).

The golden era of environmental journalism, came from the formation of the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) in 1990. The website of Society of Environmental Journalist states that, the organization has a mission among other things to strengthen the quality, reach and viability of environmental journalism across all media to advance public understanding of environmental issues. This organization has become a global advocacy group of environmental, dedicated to informing citizens and governments about climate change and adaptation issues (Pallen, 1998). The emergence of dedicated

journalists reporting on climate change issues such as flooding and fire disasters means that, media scholars must also investigate how these journalists frame these environmental issues because media frames have a potential on audience reactions to the news.

## **2.8 Representation of Women and Disaster in the Media**

The effects of disaster on men and women only magnify both the strengths and weakness in the society (Parkinson, 2011). So the way gender is constructed influences how women are affected by disaster (Domeise, 1998 cited in Parkinson, 2011). This means that disasters only magnify the gendered stereotypes constructed within social discourse. These socially constructed stereotypes are often the manifestation of unequal resource acquisition, mobilization and treatment (Henrici et al, 2010).

Globally, there are disparities in resources acquisition and mobilization between men and women and this reflect in the manner in which they are treated (Henrici et al, 2010). Thus, since resource ownership vary, women are more likely to live or work in areas prone to floods and other disasters (Neumayera & Plumperb, 2007). This resource acquisition and ownership disparity between men and women, as a function of disaster effect, even appears in both developing and developed countries (Enarson, 2000 cited in Parkinson 2011; Philips & Morrow, 2008). Whiles women in developing countries are at a greater risk of death largely due to, the lack of access to resources and other cultural barriers, women in developed world have increased risk of economic insecurity as well as increased conflict at home and the community (Enarson, 2000 cited in Parkinson, 2011). Additionally, in pre and post disaster situations, men and women are treated differently (Ali, 2014; Scanlon, 1998). Women are pressured to leave their place of abode in the pre-disaster warning stage (Parkinson, 2011).

However, men are allowed to stay behind. In some instances, the discrimination is sub-graded to reflect even the marital status: where in post disaster recovery and relief, women “especially single parents may be left out of the relief process” (Scanlon, 1998.p.46). The flood disaster impact has disproportional effects on men and women (Ali, 2014).

## **2.9 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework in this study involved the Framing theory, News Judgement Theory and the Gender theory. The framing theory provided the context in which the photographs on the June 3 flood and fire disaster were presented by the newspapers to their readership.

The News Judgement theory is important to gauge the news values employed by the newspapers while the Gender theory offers explanations on how men and women are visually framed in disaster response and recovery.

### **2.9.1 Framing Theory**

The research of frame and frame analysis is important in guiding audience response to news frames. Framing has been a subject of many studies, including how audiences organize their thoughts and make meaning from a text (Goffman, 1974), the coverage of foreign news by US media (Entman, 1991), and the report on politics in America especially anti-war protest in the 1960s (Gitlin, 1980). Frame analysis has also used to study impact of attentiveness on the individual’s political efficacy (Semetko & Valkenburg, 1998), television framing of political news (Iyengar, 1991), news framing of the Gulf war (Iyengar & Simon, 1993), news constructs as a persuasive tool for influencing public opinion (Pan & Kosicki, 1993), framing of European politics (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), the framing of floods in Accra (Ayikpa, 2015), framing

of the 2010 floods in India (Ali & Mahmood, 2013) and the visual framing of women in flood disasters (Ali, 2014).

A frame may be seen as the interpretative guide for meaning-making by the audience. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1987), “media frame is a central organizing idea or a storyline that provides meaning to a strip of unfolding events” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987 p. 143). Many researchers have focused on media frames and have tried to study how journalists or media content producers locate news to enhance audience appreciations (Semetko, Valkenburg & De Vreese, 1999; Semetko & Aarts, 2003; Okere, 2004; Ofori-Birikorang, 2009; Ali & Mahmood, 2013; Ayikpa, 2015; Ali, 2017).

News value reflects the themes or the angles that journalists and news editors present the stories to guide the audience to make meaning. To significantly reveal the importance of media frames in constructing reality, Tuchmann (1978) asserts that “news frames organizes everyday reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality and it is an essential feature of news” (p. 195).

There are difficulties in generating specific and accepted definitions for frames (Entman, 1991). Entman called framing, a ‘fractured paradigm’, with many borrowed concepts from the other disciplines in the social sciences. Thus, Entman (1991) found framing as a ‘fractured paradigm’ that survived on combinations or drawing of concepts from other disciplines within the social sciences. Neumann et al (1992) try to offer some explanations on framing by stating that news frames are “conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret and evaluate information” (p. 60). Goffman (1991) defines framing as the schemata for interpretation of media text. This definition seems to reflect what frames actually do and does not necessarily explain the nuances

of how frames function. A comprehensive definition of frame is given by Entman (1993) when he notes that, framing is to “select some aspect of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicative text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, and moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation” (p 52). This definition by Entman reveals the agenda setting principles of frames. The meaning of ‘select ... ‘perceived reality’ as used by Entman (1993) reflects the fact that journalists exercise choice over what is news.

According to Goffman (1974), frames help “audiences locate, perceive, identify and label a flow of information around a perceived reality” (p.21). Gitlin (1980) argues that frames are “persistent selection, emphasis and exclusion” of events to have effect (p.7). The definition given by Gitlin (1980) is significant because it reveals the essence of exclusion in the framing process. If persistence is a powerful framing tool, then persistence in its negative (diversion) could equally frame and as well sets the agenda. What repeatedly appears in the media space can influence audience recall and reactions (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Mattes & Kohring, 2008); so, it stands logically to reason that absence of issues from the medium equally diverts attention from the issue. For instance, in visual framing, the absence of a photo may also be a framing strategy, to divert attention from the audience. To omit is to frame in the negative in the sense that absence of an issue in the media space is also a diversion of attention (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1993). A newspaper editor’s choice of a particular photograph over another, is a process of highlighting a perspective while diminishing others. Thus, exclusion may be seen as a framing strategy.

The contribution of Entman to framing as a mass media theory is enormous. According to Entman (1993), the placement of text and other cultural symbols are significant in

achieving the purpose of the frames. Entman (1993) notes that, “texts can make a bit of information more salient by placement or repetition or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols” (p.53). He however, acknowledges the lack of effective theory in explaining how frames are embedded and made manifest in human consciousness.

Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) provide some explanations as answer to Entman’s (1993) assertion on lack of manifestations of frames on human consciousness. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) argue that framing consist of three elements: language, thought and forethought. Language enhances information recollections and acts to transform the way in which people view the world. Thought reflect how people use language in the interpretative framework of their own actions and those of others. Forethought reflects how humans think spontaneously to predict the framing opportunities offered by any communicative event. Hence, the combination of these three processes enables frames to stick in the human consciousness. However, other socio-psychological and languages theories, have tried to offer varied reasons for the reflections of frames on human conscience. The research on the power of language to persuade led Brooks (1970) to develop the Language expectancy theory. This theory claims that strategic linguistic choices can be significant predictors of persuasive success and the choice of words in a media text provides the possible positive response from the audience. The contention of Brooks (1970) is that, language can persuade audience into a positive response only if it can reflect the forethought of the people. The text must be persuasively crafted to fit into the already known schemas in the consciousness of the audience.

Frame also includes omitted or excluded text because frames, to a large extent, influence thought process (schemata) and might function to simultaneously distract



attention from other aspect of reality. The exclusion of text as a framing process has been thoroughly researched in the works of Gitlin (1993). The significant function of an omitted text is to divert attention away from a perceived reality, which might be unfavourable to a writer of a communicative text, or may not serve the real communicative interest of the media owner.

Entman (1993) reflects that “most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include and the omission of potential problem definitions, explanations evaluations and recommendations may be as critical as inclusions in guiding the audience” (p.54). The omission of a text may serve the same communicative function of the manifest text. To omit will positively influence the audience appreciation of both the causal explanations as well as the potential treatment manifested in the communicative text. The omission of certain treatment of the potential problems, means other alternatives favourable to the text content producer or the media owner may be projected. Persistent omission will divert attention of the public from a particular omitted causal explanation and the potential treatment.

Evidence submits that frequently used frames reinforce recall and influence audience. Valkenburg, de Vreese and Semetko (1999) analyzed media frames on the audience recall of events. They used already known frames and one control frame to test audience recall of events. The study revealed that audiences were able to recall all other issues in the already known frames although the issues were clearly represented in the control frame. Furthermore, the study argued that the human-interest frame could have a negative consequence on audience recall of events. Also, the influence of frames as agenda setting mechanism was the subject of work by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Their research revealed that attribution frame is the significantly used media frame to

locate news about European Politics in the Dutch media. The study found that the attribution of responsibility and the conflict frame was largely used by serious newspapers, while the sensationalists press heavily relied on the human-interest frame to sustain audience interest.

If the frames used frequently reinforce audience recall (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001), then the persistence of an issue in media may influence public opinion. A study by Callaghan and Schnell (2001) looked into the issue of gun control in the United States of America. This study traced the history of the gun-control in the American media space especially ABC, NBC and CBS from 1988 to 1996. The study revealed the gun control rhetoric of the proponent and the opponent dominated the American media and occupied public opinion space for a long time. It was largely due to the fact that the parties in the gun control argument intensely competed for space in the media. The gun control rhetoric has long been a contestable turf for the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence (CSGV) with the former arguing for more self-protection by stressing on the rights of the individual to hold guns, while the latter pushes for gun control as a means of checking gun violence.

### **2.9.2 Media framing of flood and fire disasters**

The research into framing disasters, especially flood disasters, has contributed significantly to knowledge on media framing research. Most importantly, it sets out the guidelines for disaster responders in the treatment disaster victims. Using qualitative content analysis, Bohensky and Leitch (2014) conducted a study of media coverage of the 2011 Brisbane floods and found that, the media coverage of the Brisbane floods reinforced the aspects of resilience by acknowledging community spirits and self-reliance. The study noticed that the media in Australia used the Blame and Political

opportunity frames in reporting on politicians sympathizing with the victims of the floods. The work focused on learning as an aspect of resilience within two themes; the link between climate change and flooding and the perceived roles of government in managing the flood.

In a study of the British press report of the flood in Mozambique, Okere (2004) found that the media images influence governments and officials to action. Okere (2004) found that the image of the delivery of Baby Rosita on a tree in the media provided the defining moment of the rescue during the year 2000 Mozambican floods. The said image, pushed international donors to action, though other frames in the research pointed to fighting among politicians in the United Kingdom. The study by Okere (2004) revealed an interesting phenomenon: Though the dominant frames used by the British press to report on the Mozambique floods were the fighting among UK politicians about the role of Department for International Development (DfID) in many developing countries, the less dominant media frames were able to generate the needed international response to the evacuation of flood victims.

However, the level of impact of flooding on people depends on preparedness, which in turn might be influenced by disaster risk communication information provided by the media (Ajaero, Okoro and Ajaero (2016). The nature or type (local or national) of a newspaper, also influence the frames used to cover disasters. In a study to compare themes of resilience in coverage of two rural fires in Canada by national and local newspapers, Cox, Long, Jones, and Handler (2008) found that local newspapers tend to provide personalized stories of resilience than national newspapers.

The type of media available within the communities may also influence people's perceptions about the information on impending disasters. The study by Ajaero, Okoro

and Ajaero (2016) focused on peoples' perception and attitudes towards media reports of an impending flood in 2012 in Delta and Anambra states in Nigeria. Using structured questionnaire to collect data from three hundred (300) households in rural Delta and Anambra, the research discovered that more than 75% of respondent received information about the flood from either radio or television. Their regression analysis, however, showed that mass media report of the flood was not too effective in influencing the people's attitudes.

Framing analysis has been used by Gakpey (2011) to study the out breaks of fire disasters in Ghana. Gakpey (2011) focused on the coverage by *Daily Graphic* and *Chronicle* of fire disasters out breaks in Ghana over a period of six months. Gakpey (2011) found that *Daily Graphic* and *Chronicle* dominantly frames fire out breaks as individual responsibility while the responsibility of state agencies like GNFS is least highlighted. However, the level of coverage of fire disaster in the newspapers is inadequate compared with the official statistics from the Ghana National Fire Service. This assertion is relatively contestable because, research indicates that, *Daily Graphic* covered 75% of the fire out breaks while the *Chronicles* only covered 28% of the reported fire outbreaks, (Gakpey, 2011).

### **2.9.3 Visual framing by the media**

Press reportage of flood disasters often varies with the media outlet providing the news and may provide powerful images that often influence policymakers to take action (Borah, 2009). The significance of photographs in news production helps the audience to get an understanding of the events. Photographs in news media also provide a framing opportunity for the media organization, to explore an ideological position (Rodrigues & Dimitrova, 2016). The powerful ideological position of the media

organization can be used to create a blame game regarding the roles of political figures and organisations hence, researchers such as Borah (2009), Childs (2006), Messaris and Abraham (2001), Entman (2003), and Fahmy (2004) have given attention to visual framing.

Messariss and Abraham (2001) studied the role of images as a framing tool in news coverage. The work by Messaris and Abraham (2001) also sought to identify the role of visual communications as an agent of framing and how images tend to affect the framing process. The authors proposed three distinguishing characteristics of visual images that offer framing opportunities and how these characteristics may influence the framing of news and events. These characteristics include the analogical quality of the image, indexicality of the image and the lack of an explicit prepositional syntax. The lack of an explicit prepositional syntax reflects the fact that visual images lack a set of conventions in making propositions such as cause and effect relationships. Analogical quality is in reference to associations between the image and their meaning based on similarity or analogy. The relative sizes of the photographs speak about the level of indexicality that is the news framers attach to the issue.

Fahmy (2004) worked on the framing of Afghan women in news reports of international wires agencies to find out how Afghan women were framed in pre and post -Taliban era in Afghanistan. The study content analysed photographs that have images of women as a unit of analysis and coded them into various categories. The author justifies the use of content analysis on the fact that it provides a clear understanding of the subject under study. The author noted that most of the photographs used by the AP news wires services, did not reflect the entire 'picture' of the average life of Afghan

women. This study concluded that AP news tends to frame women mostly in a stereotypical frame of being passive and inactive.

The studies on visual framing of disaster have also been done to compare images of men and women in disaster recovery (Childs, 2006) and gender of dead in south East Asia Tsunami and hurricane Katrina disaster (Borah, 2009).

Using content analysis, Childs (2006) compared 65 images that had both men and women in disaster recovery situations. Childs (2006) found that men were more visually framed to be “actively involved in physical labour of disaster response” (p.207). Borah (2009) did a visual comparison of photographs from the South East Asia Tsunami and the hurricane Katrina in the USA and found that, newspapers showed more dead bodies featuring females in the Tsunami disaster than the Katrina Floods.

#### **2.9.4 Visual Framing of Women in Disaster**

The effects of natural disasters are not gender-neutral (Nelson, Meadows, Cannon, Morton & Martin, 2002). The flood disasters have paradoxically equal effect and yet differentiated gendered impacts (Akerkar & Fordham, 2017). The impacts of disaster are dependent on exposure to the disaster risk. Disaster risks are socially distributed in ways that reflect the social divisions that already exist within the society (Nelson, et al, 2002). The traditional gendered-stereotype roles define who may be more affected in a disaster and that the potential to be impacted by the disaster is defined by the gender stereotype (Nelson, et al, 2002). The disparity in the impact of flood and fire on men and women has been documented in relation to number of deaths (Bern, et al, 1993), vulnerabilities affecting the capacity to overcome uncertainty brought about by the disaster, and thus may be affected disproportionately (Mitchel et al, 2007). The vulnerabilities may manifest in the exercise of their rights during and after natural

disasters with regards to economic status, land ownership, rights to education and health care especially reproductive health (Islam, 2002; Cannon, 2002). In terms of disaster recovery strategies, emotional notion of needing care is attributable to women while men are portrayed with the notion of control (Akerkar & Fordham, 2017).

In disaster reporting, especially flooding, there is a greater tendency to show dead bodies of women than men (Bern, et al 1993 Borah 2009; Ali, 2014). In the print media, women are likely to be portrayed as passive rather than active social player (Ali, 2014). Newspapers often portray women in flood disaster situations as victims of deaths (Borah, 2009) lacking the capacity to deal with the recovery efforts ( Ali & Mahmood, 2013) and are more likely to be visually framed as needing help ( Okere, 2013; Borah, 2009).

### **2.10 News Judgement Theory**

The choice to report on a news event is dependent on selective values normative to the journalist or editor. The decision to select some event for reportage as news is influenced by what is usually referred to as news values. However, what a journalist or editor selects defines the agenda setting and framing techniques employed. Framing thus is the second level agenda setting: while agenda setting involves *what* to think about, framing is *how* to think about a news event.

The News Judgement theory underpins the selective choices of newspaper journalist and editors to make some communicative events news while disregarding others. A classic attempt at offering explanations to what constitutes news was done by Galtung and Ruge (1965). This work provided explanations to why certain event may be considered news worthy than others. Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified twelve elements that may influence a choice of an event as news. However, Galtung and Ruge (1965) recognize the difficulty in exhausting all considerations of news value: “No

claim is made for completeness of the list of factors” and that “we leave this for future research” (pp.64).

Harcup and O’Neil (2001) responded by refining the model into a ten (10) factor theory of News Judgement. This study by Harcup and O’Neil (2001) argued that power elite, celebrity status, entertainment, surprise, relevance among others are the determinants of news worthiness. Power elite value is seen in stories involving powerful individual, organisations or institutions while celebrity value concerns stories about already famous people. The entertainment value informs the selection of stories on sex, showbusiness, human interest, animals, unfolding drama, entertaining photographs or witty headlines whereas the surprise value is realized in stories that have elements of surprise and or contrast. Bad news is a story with negative overtones such as conflict or tragedy but good news involves stories that have to do with rescues and cures. The magnitude value is in reference to stories that are perceived as sufficiently significant either in terms of the numbers of people involved or in potential impact. The relevance value reflects news stories about issues, groups and nations that may be relevant to the audience and follow ups are stories already in the public domain. Newspaper agenda value are stories that set or fit the news organization’s own agenda.

However, it must be noted that these ten elements may have some overlapping ethos, in the sense that, some of these factors are not exclusively exhaustive. For example, good news about the discovery of a cure of a worldwide pandemic, will equally qualify as a relevant news item. Besides, stories about celebrities often start as entertainment issues and may be found on middle or even back pages. These celebrities become so popular and powerful that; they find themselves in front pages of major tabloids (Watson, 2003).



Other researchers such as Westerstahl and Johansson (1994), Golan and Wanta (2001), Donsbach (2004) as well as Bednarek and Caple (2014) have done considerable work on News Judgement theories. Golan and Wanta (2001) reduced the factors to four (importance, proximity, deviance and political events), but Bednarek and Caple (2014) argued for a return to the classic factors as proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965). This lack of consensus on exhaustive factors of news values indicates that other considerations may be important in the determination of an event as *news*. It is important to note that subsequent works by Harcup and O'Neil (2001, 2010) have refined these twelve (12) influences to incorporate the growing development of journalism, ideological meaning of text and the new media. News Judgment theory has developed to include the issues of editorial policy, newsroom culture as well as broadcast or publications deadlines. Other factors such as newsroom culture and deadline constraints may influence what make it into print or broadcast (Watson, 2015). The choice of an event to make it into production is at the discretion of the journalist and/or editors. This justifies the assertion that the journalists' or editors' choice of event as news is influenced by many factors (Gultaung & Ruge, 1965). In a seminal work, Gultaung and Ruge (1965) tried to account for influences of media choice of coverage of stories (news judgement processes), with three underlying hypotheses:

- (i) The more events satisfy the criteria, the more likely the events will be considered as news-worthy.

This hypothesis highlights the indication that the selection of issue for publication re-enforce the agenda setting role of the media.

- (ii) The factor to be considered for news-worthiness gets distorted once the item has been selected as news.

This hypothesis aligns with the view that the distortion in identifying the reason for publication is an indication that news values may not be exhaustive and or exclusive.

The challenge therefore stems from the difficulty in identifying which news value, occasioned a particular choice of a news item.

- (iii) Both the process of selection and distortion will take place at all the steps in the chain from events to reader (replication).

The above hypothesis implies that the choice of an item or issue as news takes place from both the eye of the journalist and the judgement of the editor. Thus, along the line of news production, journalist select items for news while the editors make the choice as to which item gets published.

The seminal work provided twelve (12) influences of media choice of coverage of events. These twelve (12) influences include frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite persons, reference to persons and reference to something negative. Frequency reflects the likelihood of selecting an event that occurs regularly as news. Any event that happens frequently is more likely to be selected as news. Threshold on the other hand talks about the levels of impact of an event to qualify to be selected as news. This threshold usually defines the intensity of the impact of the event based on the perception of those responsible for news selection. Unambiguity is another value that is considered. It refers to events being straight-forward and less complicated and their chances of being selected as news. Those events that may not be difficult to understand often get selected as news.

Meaningfulness as a value has to do with the event being “culturally relevant” enough to be selected; thus, the cues from the event must fit “into the news selectors’ frame of reference” (Harcup & O’Neill, 2001 p.263).

The value of consonance refers to the news selectors' pre-image of the event as an influence on news selection. It typifies the journalists' and editors' stereotypes and the mental scripts of how events proceed (Bell, 1991). Unexpectedness or rarity of events is typically considered news. Rare events are considered more news worthy relative to routine or unsurprising events, (Bell, 1991). Continuity as a value for news selection is the justification to sustain an event within the media spotlight. The quest for details and explanations in a story to the audience may influence selection of the event as news-worthy. Composition refers to an event may be intrinsically less of a news value, but will provide significant balance within the overall composition of the newspaper or broadcast. Typically, a news broadcast or newspaper may have a hard news and soft news, to achieve the balance. The balance in composition of stories may not only be achieved by a simple blend of hard and soft news, but inclusion of events to achieve a contextual balance within the newspaper or broadcast production. For example, stories on "alleged institutional racism within the police, may be balanced with positive initiatives to combat racism, which would normally go unreported" (Harcup & O'Neill, 2010. p 263).

Also, news selectors will likely consider news about elite nation or dominant world economic power or elite people. Harcup and O'Neill (2010) argue that, "actions of elite nations are seen as more consequential than the actions of other nations" (p.263) and are more likely to be reported. Again, events involving people of fame, wealth and or power get selected as news because news selectors view their actions as "having more consequence than the actions of others" (Harcup & O'Neil, 2010 p.263). News is about the actions of people hence the reference to persons in news is seen in reporting human interest stories. However, the reference to persons goes beyond just human interest.

The reference to persons in news could relate to “cultural idealism” that, “man is a master of his own actions and events can be seen as the outcome of an act of free will” (Harcup & O’Neill, 2010 p.263). The cultural idealism encapsulates the notion of human rationality and those actions of persons, if rare, odd or strange, may be reported by news selectors as worthy of publication.

**Reference to some negative event.** Negative news gets selected because it breaches the general social expectations of behavior or normalcy. Typically, “*abnormal*” events are likely to be selected as news.

## 2.11 Gender Theory

Gender studies research is broadly found under the critical traditions of mass media research. The critical traditions of every theory emphasize the power relations that are embedded in the social interaction process (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). The critical theorists tend to uncover the oppressive social conditions and how power and its expression are arranged within a polity. The gender theory research studies are offshoot of the feminist studies under the critical traditions.

Feminism may be defined in terms of “movement to secure rights of women to advocacy of self-determination as well as the push to ending all forms of oppression” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011.p.61). The strength of the feminist movement projected the basis for the gender theory. Early feminists such Judith Butler, Nancy Chodorow and Patricia Hill Collins questioned the binary categorization that society places on sex and “challenge the ‘sex/gender’ dichotomy, thus, the notion that sex is the biological difference between ‘male’ and ‘female’ human animals while ‘gender’ is the social difference between males and females’ roles or men’s and women’s personalities” (Connell, 2002 p.33).

Gender entails social traits, behaviours or attributes associated or socially constructed to be ‘male’ or ‘female’. Gender may not refer to physiology but is affected by physiology, in the sense that, these social traits are constructed in line with the sex of the individual (Osei Mensah, 2018). Scholars agree that it’s a biological fact that women bear children and may have to bear the breastfeeding and up-bringing of children. However, sociologists argue that, gender relations are the results of the “way social processes act on specific biological categories and form social relations between them” (Enarson, Fothergill & Peek, 2018.p.15).

Gender theory in communication studies research delves into the production of text, images, videos and sounds that are constructed to reflect the social structure and power arrangements that are within the society. In the media, representations of these social constructs reinforce already embedded differences (social cues) found in social interactions. Media text then only normalizes the existing social arrangements.

### **2.11.1 Gender and the media**

Gender is the social construction of assigning roles, traits, stereotypes, symbols, behavior attributes among others, to male or female individual (Marwick, 2013; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). It involves the assigning certain behaviors, traits, values, stereotypes or norms in a given society, to be for boys or girls and women or men (Marwick, 2013). The media plays a critical role in the social construction process. Gender is a social rather than a biological attribution to the male and female sexes (Phillips, 2005). The social constructions of these attributes and stereotypes about male or female roles perpetuate itself in the media. The argument is that, the media is a reflection of society hence reports what is within the social interactions.

Therefore, the media is only mirroring the stereotypes already embedded in the social interactions. The persistence of these stereotypes within the media space, tend to reinforce these gender stereotypes and mimic legitimacy to these social constructions. This proposition explains the power of the media in the social construction process. The media reflects the gender roles and attributes within the social settings. The media has the power to represent what is socially acceptable (Carter & Steiner, 2004) and tends to reflect social norms or beliefs that are socially acceptable to people.

### **2.12 Relevance of Theories to the study**

The critical part of academic research is to link the relevance of the theory to the study. The framing theory is important to understand how the newspapers presented the June 3 flood and fire disaster. Framing theory presents the interpretative framework to understand what happened. This study also used the News Judgement theory and the Gender theory, to understand the news values underlying the choice of photographs in the publications. The Gender theory was significant in explaining how males and females were portrayed in the disaster reports.

### **2.13 Chapter Summary**

This chapter dealt with the literature and the theoretical reviews of this study. It gave a background to the underlying constructs in the framing, news judgement and the gender theories. The chapter also provided the causes of flooding and flood disasters in Ghana resulting from Climate change issues and gave a historical account of some major flood and fire disasters. The chapter discussed media framing of flood and fire disasters and concluded with a discussion on how the media (newspapers) visually framed males and females in flood and fire disaster recovery.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter focused on the methods and the procedures employed in carrying out this study. It explains the use of content analysis and offer explanations of the appropriateness of the methods used. The justifications for the use methods as well as the sampling techniques applied in the study are also found in this chapter.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

Communication research involves three approaches including qualitative, quantitative and the mixed methods (Cresswell, 2013) and this study employs the qualitative approach. Qualitative research approach relies on texts and images (photographs) in systematic diverse designs, which involves research in the natural state without external biases, hence the decision to use this approach (Cresswell, 2013; Choy, 2014). Another important strength of the qualitative approach to research is the open-ended nature of qualitative research (Cresswell, 2013).

This study used the qualitative approach because it seeks to investigate the visual framing of the June 3 disaster in Accra by four selected newspapers. This enables the researcher to examine the visual framing of the disaster in the selected newspapers without external biases. The seeming lack of studies on visual framing of disasters in Ghana influenced the choice of photographs as the data for this study. Also, photographs of the June 3 disaster offer a viable material for analysis into the framing opportunities utilized by the news editors of these newspaper organisations.

### 3.3 Research Design

Research design is the way the study has been structured in order to help in data collection and analysis to respond to the research questions (Cresswell, 2013). Research design involves the “procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies” (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p.58). The design of every research entails the connection of the research questions and the empirical research. Thus, the research design sets the procedure for the data methods to be applied to collect and analyse those data and how they all help in answering the research questions (Grey, 2014). However, to understand which design fit a particular study, the researcher must know that “a good qualitative research design is one in which the method of data analysis is appropriate to answer the research questions and where the method of data collection generates data that are appropriate to the method of analysis” (Willig, 2001.p.21).

There are three possible forms of research design based on the purpose these research designs would serve; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Robson 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2013). Exploratory research is conducted to understand a little-known phenomenon with scanty defined research problem. Exploratory studies do not seek to make definite conclusions but it may offer questions worthy of further studies (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Explanatory qualitative research looks at causal relationship between study subjects. It proves the causes and reasons, and may provide evidence to support or refute an explanation (Grey, 2014). Descriptive research provides a picture of a situation, events or persons and show how things are related to each other in its natural occurring mode (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2005).



This study employed descriptive research design because it allows for a thorough analysis of an event that occurred. The strength of a descriptive study is the ability to analyse the publication of texts or photographs in its simplest form. Specifically, qualitative content analysis was used as the design for this study because it has the benefit of removing external biases from the study and has been used by many scholars (Creswell, 2013; Ofori-Birikorang, 2009; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Pan and Kosicki 1993).

Frames as a concept presents a challenge in measuring it. Entman (1993) called framing a “scattered conceptualization”. Many studies try to measure frames in different methods. Pan and Kosicki (1993), tried with a linguistic dimension by using the structure of a paragraph of a text. They proposed frames of syntax, script theme and rhetoric as the frames for analyzing text. Others use qualitative analyses of texts and then code them as holistic variables in manual content analyses (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad: 1998, Meyer, 1995; Simon & Xenos, 2000; Segvic, 2000 cited in Matthes and Kohring, 2008; Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Huey & Apollonio, 2018). However, despite the fact that content analysis tends to numericalise text; qualitative content analysis compensates for this by providing “knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992.p.314; Huey & Apollonio, 2018).

There are two possible approaches to content analyzing frames in news: inductive and deductive (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The inductive approach involves the researcher analyzing news stories to reveal an array of possible frames but the deductive approach uses already identified frames from earlier studies in measurement of media texts. The difficulties with the inductive approach reflect time consumption, labour use as well as possible replication problems. However, the deductive approach makes it less

cumbersome to replicate. It also offers the researcher an opportunity to compare the universality of framing techniques of journalism, especially if the phenomenon (disaster) is similar. This study therefore used the deductive approach by using the frames identified in the work of Ali and Mahmoud (2013) in their study of how the newspapers framed the 2010 floods in India. Ali and Mahmoud (2013) identified Human interest frame, Economic frame and the Political frame as the most dominant frames in the study of visual framing of the 2010 floods in India.

### **3.4 Sampling**

Many qualitative research works employ sampling strategies to guide the study in order to observe a communication phenomenon while minimally being intrusive (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Sampling involves selecting some sub-group representative of the larger population. A “sample is a subset of the population, selected so as to be representative of the larger population” (Acharya, Prakesh, Saxena and Nigam, 2013.p.330). It is important for the sample to exhibit same or similar characteristics within the target population. Sampling methods in any research would either be a probability or non-probability sample (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) and for the purpose of this study, a non-probability sampling technique is used.

Most qualitative studies often rely on non-probability samples because qualitative research set out to find special qualities about a phenomenon (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). Qualitative studies employ non-probability sampling including but not limited to; convenient, purposive sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling census sampling among others. Purposive sampling is useful in qualitative research design because some qualitative studies involve multi stages. These multi stages may be needed because some current data may be a built up of previous data in the multi stage

(Acharya et al, 2013). The multi-stage may be relevant in treating some data from the previous stage.

This study applied purposive census sampling because they are much quicker and easier to apply especially in qualitative studies (Sharma, 2017). The rationale for the purposive sampling technique is that, though flooding an annual occurrence in Ghana, the June 3 involved explosion of fire coupled with flood disaster. The study sampled four newspapers to use for the research at one stage and took photographs of the already published photographs before using it in the coding process. The newspapers selected for this study is based on research findings on the newspaper landscape in Ghana. Despite the fact that print media may not be significant source of information because of high illiterate populace in Ghana, they offer trustworthy information for NGO's, opinion leaders and public policy makers (Amevor, 2014; Amadu, Mohammed, Fadila & Alhassan, 2019). Also, in the media space in Ghana, newspapers have gained a lot of traction due to the proliferation of radio stations that tend to use them in news reviews on these radio networks (Amoakohene, 2004; Nyarko, 2016; Sikaanku, 2011; 2014). Each morning, most radio and television channels highlight the stories in these newspapers thereby increasing the heightened general public interest in these newspapers.

### **Sample size**

The sample size for this study is four newspapers (namely; *Daily Graphic*, *The Ghanaian Times*, *The Chronicle* and *Daily Guide*). The selection of these newspapers is based on daily publications, wider coverage and general readership (Amponsah, 2012; Amevor, 2014; Geo Poll, 2018; Amadu et al, 2019).

The two state dailies, *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*, have country wide circulation of 1.5 million and 532,000 respectively and widely covers all issues (social, political, economic and cultural) that potentially frame the crescendos of national political economy (Geo Poll, 2018). The two private daily newspapers, *Daily Guide* (726, 000 copies) and *The Chronicle* (173, 000 copies) have the widest circulation and readership amongst the private newspapers in Ghana (Geo Poll, 2018).

This study selected the number of photographs (with or without a caption) in the four newspapers. This study sampled a total of 240 photographs with *Daily Graphic* accounting for 135, *Ghanaian Times*-21, *Daily Guide*-55 and *Chronicle*-27.

### **3.5 Unit of Analysis**

A unit of analysis is the basic coding item that can be identified in both quantitative and qualitative research study (Ali, 2014; Atareburo, 2018). It is the smallest element that retains the attribute of the whole (Ali, 2014; Granott, 1998,). In many qualitative content analysis, a word, a symbol, a sentence, paragraph or even a photograph is used as the unit of analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). This study used the photograph as the unit of analysis. The use of photographs, as unit of analysis, in qualitative content analysis has been done by researchers such as Ali and Mahmoud, 2013; Borah, 2009 and Peng, 2004.

Ali and Mahmoud (2013) used photograph in the study of the 2010 monsoon seasonal floods in India. The motivation for the use of photographs, may partly due to, the ease with which coders are able to identify the frames, because according to Borah (2009), photographs are clearer to code in comparison with word text. In another study using visual framing, Peng (2004) used over two thousand five hundred (2500) photographs to investigate how national newspapers in USA tends to frame the Chinese in America.

Borah (2009) also used photographs published by *Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, in the comparative study of the Hurricane Katrina and the Indian Ocean Tsunami, within one week of the events. Insights from these studies informed the choice of photograph as the unit of analysis in this study.

**Content Categories:** This study used the deductive approach to framing theory, by using the already known frames from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and Ali and Mahmoud (2013). These frames have been outlined below:

- *Human Interest frame:* It considers photographs that tend to evoke emotions and curiosity. This frame looks at deaths, injuries and show of emotions by objects in these photographs.
- *Political frame:* This frame looks at visuals that tend to offer criticism or praise for political leadership. It always reflects the photograph of political leaders both at the local and national levels. For example, a photograph of President visiting the victims at hospital may be coded as political.
- *Economic frame:* This frame entails photographs about the economic cost of the disaster. It takes care of the photograph of damage to both public and private property.

This researcher developed some indicators for other frames that may not fit into the already deducted frames. These frames included the Solidarity and International Compassion. In situations of flood disasters of significant magnitude, there are a tendency for the international community to show concern, and willingness to help (Okere, 2004). Disaster response and recovery often involves some members of the general public getting involved in the process (Ali, 2014).

- The *Solidarity frame* indicated photographs that portray individuals or groups of people offering help in the response and recovery. The photographs shows images with, individuals helping others, trying to put out the fire, or cleaning the flood waters from public spaces.
- The *International Compassion frame* has indications of photographs that have presidents, diplomats and members of international organisations including African Union, European Union, ECOWAS and other international development agencies like DFID, DANIDA, USAID and other development agencies.

### **3.6 Data Collection methods**

The following data collection methods were employed by the researcher:

#### **3.6.1 Document Analysis**

Documents are physical or virtual artifacts designed by creators for user to function within a particular setting (Prior, 2003 cited by Dalglish, Khalid and McMahon, 2020). Document must be understood within the social web of meaning in which they are produced and consumed (Dalglish et al, 2020). Documents are created, shared and/or consumed within a social field of actions (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997 cited in Dalglish et al, 2020). They are facts about social life within the environment in which social groups interact. Documents are not “mere records of social life but integral part of it and indeed can become agents in their own right” (Prior, 2003 cited in Dalglish et al, 2020 pp.1424). Photographs as documents, reflect the accounts of what happened which record the real interactions of people within a social set up.

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating document to provide context, generate questions, supplement or corroborate other data sources and track change over time (Bowen, 2009 cited in Dalglish et al, 2020). Document analysis has a useful adaptation to understanding a socially constructed meaning embedded within a text (Dalglish et al, 2020). However, documents may be a representation of manipulation of powerful entities within the social site, because the powerful entities within the social environment “manipulate nature and content of knowledge; therefore, gaps in available information must be understood as reflecting and potentially reinforcing societal power relations” (Bryman and Burgess, 1994 cited in Dalglish et al, 2020 p.1425).

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), documents are vital for qualitative research because they are the ‘trail’ of events. However, like any research method, document analysis suffers validity, reliability, author motivation and authenticity issues which can be compensated for by standard techniques such as triangulation, adequate sample size and better engagement with the documents (Dalglish et al, 2020). This research offered to compensate for the weakness of document analysis by providing adequate sample size and describing the data in details to the coders.

### **3.7 Data Collection Processes**

An introductory letter from the Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, was taken to the selected newspaper organisations to secure access to the documents for the study. The nature and the purpose of this study were explained to the various officers in charge of the documents. The *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers were retrieved at the Ghana Library Authority (Western Region) in Sekondi.

The *Daily Guide* copies retrieved from the archives or libraries of the newspapers. The researcher retrieved the copies of *Daily Guide* newspaper from the library of Western Publications limited (in Accra near the Nima Police Station), publishers of the newspaper. The copies of the *Chronicle* newspaper were retrieved from the serials and periodicals section of Balme Library at the University of Ghana, Legon.

The researcher purposively selected the one-month (June, 2015) publications of the four newspapers. The duration of the study period of a month was to give enough time for the newspapers to provide the various angles and details of the June 3 flood and fire disaster (Raudenbush, 2001). Raudenbush (2001) argues that, the study period should be long enough for all variables to be accounted for. This will prevent a possible loss of vital characteristics of the phenomenon under study. The one-month study period was also to enable the researcher to analyse how the newspapers covered the post disaster response and recovery process. As a way of getting the data in its natural state, the researcher took pictures of the photographs used in the publications. Using a Samsung J4 + mobile phone, with 32-megapixel camera and a laptop, the researcher took pictures of all photographs related to the issue under investigation in the four newspapers under the period of study. Note pads, pens high-lighters and sheets of papers were used to code and tally the themes derived from the newspapers.

This study used a laptop to aid in the coding of the data. The pictures from the mobile phone camera were transferred and stored on a laptop. This enabled coders to input the data (photographs) directly from the laptop. Coders were made to look directly at the photographs on the laptop, enter the corresponding frame on a coding sheet.



The researcher decided to use phone camera to take the pictures of the photographs, instead of making photocopies of the raw data. The advantage of direct pictures over photocopy stems from the fact that, pictures are more accurate than photocopies since photocopies may have challenges with accurate colour semblance.

This study measured the inter-coder reliability between the coders by piloting the coding of fifty (50) photographs from *Daily Graphic*. This study applied the Holsti formula in calculating the reliability of the categories, because the formula is simple and straight forward. Holsti's reliability is measured by  $2M/N_1+N_2$ . Where;

M is the number of coding decisions on which the two coders agree.

$N_1$  and  $N_2$  refer to the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively. Out of the fifty (50) piloted samples from *Daily Graphic*, both coders agreed on 45 of them.  $2(45)/50+50=.90$ . Most content analysis have reliability figure around 90% or more when using the Holsti's formula (Krippendorff, 2013).

### **3.8 Coding and Categorisation procedure**

Qualitative Content analysis requires that the researcher breaks down the text into smaller units and then a coding scheme is derived from developing classification systems or categories (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Stemple (1989) proposed that any good researcher who wishes to undertake a study using content analysis has to deal with four methodological issues - selection of units of analysis, developing categories, sampling appropriate content, and checking reliability of coding - while Hsieh and Shannon (2004) take the opinion that categories must be mutually exclusive so that a word, a paragraph or a theme belongs in one and

only one category. Also, the categories must be exhaustive so that all units examined fit in an appropriate category.

The first step in the coding process involved the coders going through the one-week publications of the four newspapers that is related to the June 3 disaster. A coding instrument (see **appendix A**) was developed in order to conduct the coding. A coding scheme is a standardized sheet that contains instructions on how unit of analysis (photographs) will be placed. It usually has check marks or slashes in a pre-determined space, in which the coders may tick in response to a generated theme. This study pre-attached numbers to the various photographs in order to identify the various photographs. The columns on the coding sheet (see **appendix B**) included but not limited to name of newspaper, date of publication, thematic categories.

However, some of the photographs portrayed more than one theme. The coders were instructed to consider the photograph based on the majority characteristics. For example, if a photograph had image of politician but significantly portrayed a compassionate appeal, then the photograph will be coded in the compassion frame.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

#### **3.9.1 Qualitative content analysis**

Qualitative Content analysis requires that all sampled units are placed in categories or themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The number of themes or categories depends on the nature of the text and the judgment of coders. Thus, coders had to identify a relationship among the different elements before they are grouped under one category (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), in a qualitative content analysis the researcher can incorporate the use of diagrams such as a pie, bar or a line graph into a study to

present clearer graphical view of contents analysed. This study therefore applied tables and diagrams such as pie chart to represent data on prominence, bar chart to represent data on issues covered and line graphs to represent data on the frequency and trend of coverage. First and foremost, raw data were collected and presented into tables, and later on transferred on to excel worksheet to generate the diagrams. Braun and Clarke (2013) as well as Lindlof and Taylor (2002) agree that, the first systematic effort at data analysis usually comes with the creation of categories and a coding scheme.

The **Research Question 1** was analysed by identifying frames of the photographs that were coded using the coding instrument. This research question investigated the type of categories or frames that were used by the newspapers to report on the June 3 flood and fire disaster. The data (photographs) obtained for this research question were coded into frames adopted from Ali and Mahmood (2013) with their corresponding subcategories.

The **Research Question 2** focused on identifying similarities or variation in categories used by the various newspaper outlets. This was done by counting the number of each category (frame) used by the newspapers. This research constructed a simple frequency distribution to measure each newspaper's frames. This research question is also important to understand the implications of variations in the frames used by the newspapers.

The **Research Question 3** was to determine any differences in gender representation in disaster reporting using visuals or photographs. These set of questions are to help identify the sex of the individual and the activity such individuals are pictured doing in the photograph. The sets of questions are to determine whether the individuals in the photographs are active or passive in the recovery. **(See Appendix B)**

### **3.10 Ethical Issues**

Before collecting data, the researcher was introduced to management of one of the selected media (Daily Guide) houses about the intended purpose of the study. The data from *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* was obtained with permission by the Regional Library Officer, Ghana Library Authority in Sekondi, while the data from the *Daily Guide* secured from the library of these newspapers. The data from *The Chronicle* newspaper was however obtained from the Balme library at the University of Ghana. It must be stated emphatically that, no financial inducements were used to obtain the data. The data obtained for the study were collected from the hard copies of the various newspapers; in this regard, there were no breach of privacy or laws.

Due to the nature of the data, coders were cautioned on the possible disturbing nature of some of the photographs. Throughout the training of the coders, photographs that showed deaths and injuries were marked as ‘disturbing’ before coding was done. Disaster reports in newspapers often contain photographs of the destruction of property, images of death and injuries to human beings.

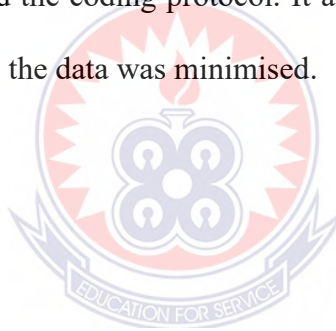
### **3.11 Trustworthiness of the study**

According to Cope (2014), trustworthiness or truth value of qualitative research and transparency of the conduct of the study are essential to the usefulness and integrity of the findings. Trustworthiness of a study is the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck, 2014). In each study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers (Amankwaa, 2016).

To ensure trustworthiness of this study, the researcher recruited two graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba

and one other graduate from the Department of Graphics, Takoradi Technical University to help with the coding of the data. The three coders were taken through training for approximately two weeks to ensure they adequately understood the coding process in order to achieve reliable coding. According to Zhang and Wildermuth (2008), training of coders is mandatory in qualitative content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002).

To ensure coding consistency, every coder used the same version of the scheme to code the raw data which the coders practiced coding on some sampled photographs from the four newspapers objectively of each other. Then they came together to discuss each photograph and how they were categorized and this was very helpful in making sure that the coders understood the coding protocol. It also ensured that personal bias and differences in interpreting the data was minimised.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the data analysis from the *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Guide*, *Ghanaian Times* and the *Chronicle* newspapers. The findings presented covers the various frames or themes to reflect the research questions

#### **4.1. RQ1: How did the newspapers visually frame the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood and fire disaster?**

Though the research question sought to establish how the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood and fire disaster was visually framed by the newspapers, the study first presents the frequency of photographs used by the newspapers in order to establish the total number of data set involved in the study. Each newspaper had twenty-three (23) editions published within the period of study making a total of ninety-two (92) editions. Though all the newspapers were dailies, none of them publishes on Sundays. From the 92 editions, a total three hundred and sixty – eight (368) photographs were published by the newspapers under the study period. However, two-hundred and forty (240) specifically covered the June 3 flood and fire disaster as indicated in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** *The frequency of Photographs used by the Newspapers to report the June 3 Disaster at Kwame Nkrumah circle in Accra*

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Daily Graphic	135	56.3
Ghanaian Times	23	9.6
Daily Guide	55	22.9
Chronicle	27	11.5
Total	240	100

**Source:** Field data

The total number of photographs used by the newspapers sums up to two hundred and forty (240). The *Daily Graphic* had the highest number of photographs of one hundred and thirty-five (135) photographs, representing (56.3%), followed by the *Daily Guide* with fifty-five (55) photographs (22.9%), *The Chronicle* with twenty-seven (27) photographs (11.3%) and the *Ghanaian Times* with twenty-three (23) photographs (9.6%).

The relatively higher number of photographs from *Daily Graphic* explains the level of attention that the newspaper gave to the June 3 disaster. The *Daily Graphic* dedicated an average of three (3) pages per edition (per week) to generate what it termed ‘*Photo Report*’ on their reportage for the June 3 disaster. This section of the newspaper dedicated photo pages, exclusively to report on the June 3 fire and flood disaster at Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra. It must be noted that the *Daily Graphic* has more pages per copy edition than all the newspapers used for this study.

*Daily Guide* dedicated fifty-five (55) photographs that is less than the number of photographs published by the *Daily Graphic*, an indication that *Daily Guide* has a relatively different news values from *Daily Graphic*.

However, *Ghanaian Times* and the *Chronicle*, had the least number of photographs, indicating a relatively less importance dedicated to the disaster.

The researcher analysed the two hundred and forty (240) photographs to bring out the frames adopted by the newspapers to report on the flood and fire disaster. The data (photographs) were analysed into themes. For the purpose of a better understanding, the study used the deductive approach to analyse how the newspapers framed the June 3 disaster. The deductive approach to frame analysis involves adopting already existing frames from other research studies in the same or similar communication event (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). This study adopted the frames generated by Ali and Mahmoud (2013) in their study of the 2010 flood disaster in India, namely political frame, economic frame and human-interest frame. These frames were first used by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), in the study of framing of European politics. The justification for adopting the frames used by Ali and Mahmoud (2013) stems from the fact that, this study also used photographs published in newspapers to study flood disasters. Also, the researcher developed new frames for photographs that did not fall under the pre-determined frames. Outcome of the analysis is presented in table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2** *The Frequency Distribution of Frames/Themes Used by the Newspapers to Report on the June 3 Flood and Fire Disaster.*

Frame	Category		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Frequency	Percent		
Economic Frame	88	36.7	36.7	36.7
Human Interest Frame	76	31.7	31.7	68.5
Political Frame	58	24.2	24.2	92.5
Solidarity	13	5.4	5.4	97.9
International Compassion	5	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	240	100.0	100.0	



As evident in the table above, findings revealed that economic frame emerged as the dominant frame with a frequency of eighty-eight (88) representing 36.7%. This was followed by the human-interest frame with a frequency of seventy-six (76) representing 31.7%, political frame scored a frequency of fifty-eight (58) representing 24.1%, solidarity frame accounted for a frequency of 13 (5.4%) and the international compassion frame had a frequency of 5 (2.1%). The researcher also discovered two additional frames used by the newspapers to report on the disaster. These are the Solidarity frame and International Compassion frame accounting for 13 (5.4%) and 5 (2.1%) respectively.

#### **4.1.1. Political Frame**

The political news frame reflects photographs that tend to offer praise or blame to political leaders. The political frame has been used in the study of European politics by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). This study content analysed the photographs that tend to communicate blame or praise of political leaders including presidents, ministers, deputy ministers of states, government appointees including local government officials.

Photographs may also be a tool for political framing, in the sense that, visual framing of disasters often portray politicians in a positive light (Solman and Henderson, 2019). Unlike words in a printed newspaper, photographs do not offer simple explanations of blame or praise. A photograph that indicates a caring politician may feature politicians consoling or offering to help victims through recovery. A close up shot of politicians consoling victims may indicate some form of bond with the victims (**Borah, 2009**) and often portrays the politician as caring for the plight of the disaster victims. On the other hand, photographs that indicate some form of exchanges or arguments between the victims and the politicians, often portrays a politician as opportunistic and self-seeking

individual, may be interpreted as blaming a politician. This puts the politician in a negative light (McClure, 2011).

This study established that a total number of 58 (24.1%) photographs appeared in the political frame. The state newspapers tended to portray the incumbent president as showing care and concern. The state newspapers (*Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*) dedicated four (4) and two (2) photographs respectively to the incumbent president. On the other hand, one of the private newspapers (*Daily Guide*) featured two (2) photographs of the opposition leader, as seen in figures 4.1 and 4.2. The Chronicle newspaper, however, did not publish a front-page picture on the political frame. The paper dedicated six (6) photographs to the political frame in the middle pages.

*Figure 4.1: Private newspaper (Daily Guide, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2015) Showing then Opposition Candidate, Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo Addo Consoling Some Affected Families of the Victims (front page).*



**Figure 4. 2:** State Newspaper (*Daily Graphic*, June 11<sup>th</sup> 2015) Showing President Mahama in a close –up shot, Consoling Families of the Victims. (front page)



This finding affirms Solman and Henderson (2019) assertion that newspapers or the media tends to frame politicians positively in times of disaster. Interestingly, no photographs communicating blame of politicians, were published by the newspapers.

With the passage of legislations on disaster response and relief, many presidents have assumed administrative and political responsibility for managing these natural disasters (McClure, 2011) and Ghana is not an exception. Natural disasters present “significant challenges and liabilities to the presidency” (McClure, 2011.p1) and may offer a rhetorical opportunity for the president to show care and support to the victims of these disaster. Natural disasters offer opportunity for rhetorical engagement of presidents with the public and that failure to do so may cause political disaffection for the president (McClure, 2011). For example, the failure of George Walker Bush (former president of USA) to visit the affected areas of Hurricane Katrina on time, is considered one of the worst crisis of (Bush’s) administration (Bumiller and Nagoumey, 2005 cited in McClure, 2011).

In the context of this study, the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood and fire disaster offered an opportunity for the incumbent president and the leader of the main opposition political party to visit the victims to show care and support so as to avoiding causing political disaffection. The angles of photographs (especially of politicians) in newspaper publications are important in the framing process. The close shot angle photographs often portray politicians as being personal and caring of the victims (Solman and Henderson, 2019) as seen in figures 4.1 and 4.2. The pictures of presidents in framing disaster are perhaps to reassure citizens of government commitment to the plight of the victim and families (Borah, 2009). Therefore, the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood and fire disasters presented a communicative opportunity for the president and opposition political leader to respond to social expectations.

#### **4.1.2. Economic Frame**

Photographs with this frame indicate cost /loss and gain of monetary or economic value in the news report. The economic frame recounts events from the perspective of economic gain or loss attributable to a phenomenon under publication in a media space. In this study, findings revealed that photographs with this frame featured items such as burnt cars, houses as well as loss of economic livelihoods of the victims as indicated in figures 4.3 and 4.4.

**Figure 4.3:** Photograph (Ghanaian Times, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2015) from the Newspapers Showing Destruction to Property (p.12)



**Figure 4.4:** Photograph (Daily Graphic, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2015) from the newspaper showing the aerial view of the scene of the disaster (Middle page).



The findings indicate that the economic frame was largely used by the newspapers to report on the June 3 flood and fire disaster at Kwame Nkrumah Circle. The Economic frame had a frequency of 88 (36.7%) of the total photographs. The *Daily Graphic* had the highest frequency of 68 (72.4%) of the Economic frame. The high frequency of the Economic frame in the *Daily Graphic* is due to the significantly high number of photographs the newspaper dedicated to reporting on the June 3 flood and fire disaster. Economic frame as the most dominant frame in this study contrast the findings in India by Ali and Mahmood (2013) which suggested that human interest is the dominant frame in flood disaster reports.

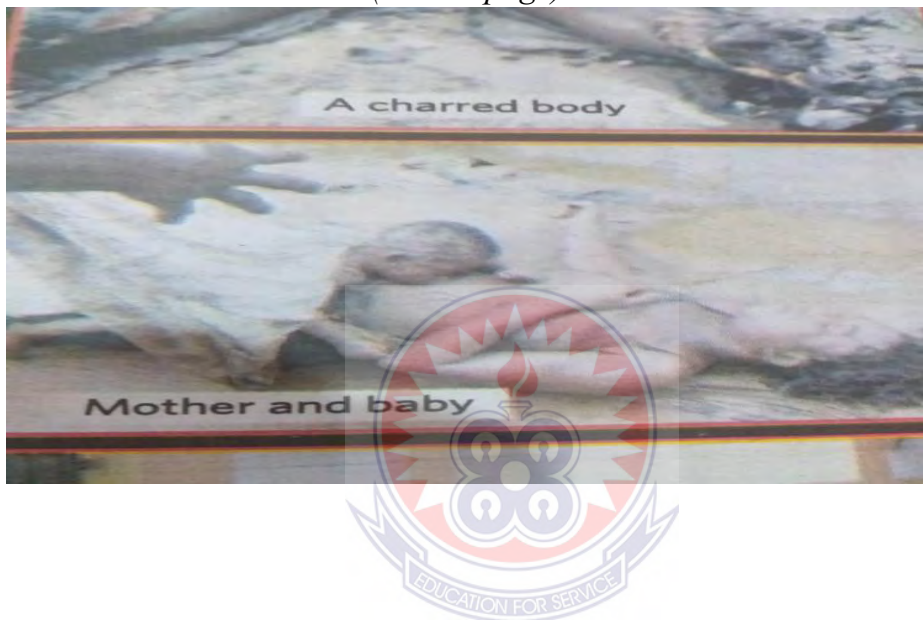
The differences in findings of this study in comparison to the study by Ali and Mahmood (2013) may be due to the differences in the study period as well as the settings of the events. While the June 3 Kwame Nkrumah Circle flood and fire disaster was a single event (episodic), the study by Ali and Mahmood (2013) of the India floods was trend (thematic) analysis of the visual framing of the 2010 floods in India. Again, the location of the June 3 disaster is a brisk business or economic zone, where traders, shop-owners engage shoppers and petty traders. The study by Ali and Mahmood (2013), however, covered the entire monsoon season in India. This variation in study period may be significant because, episodic framing is about a single incident framing while thematic framing tends to follow trends in the development of a phenomenon (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

#### **4.1.3. Human Interest Frame**

The *Human-Interest* frame was the next dominant frame. According to Ali and Mahmood (2013), the human-interest frame considers photographs that tend to evoke emotions and curiosity and frames looks at deaths, injuries and show of emotions by

objects in photographs. In this study, the human-interest frame defines most photographs that show loads of emotions and deaths in publications. They include photographs used by the newspapers within the period of study that show death, injuries, hospitalisation and other emotion- laden photographs as seen in figures 4.5 and 4.6.

*Figure 4.5: Photograph (Daily Guide, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2015) Showing Dead Mother and the Child (middle page).*



*Figure 4.6: Photograph (Daily Graphic, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015) Showing Some Injured Victims at the Hospital (page 22).*



The human-interest frame had a frequency of 76 (31.7%) of the total photographs used by the newspapers. The plausible inference of why the *Daily Graphic* dominates with most frequency in the human-interest frame, may be from the corresponding number of photographs published by the newspaper. The *Daily Graphic's* dedicated “Photo Report” page, might have accounted for the increased frequency of the human-interest frame.

In their study of the 2010 floods in India, Ali and Mahmood (2013) found that human-interest frame was the most dominant frame used by the newspapers (local and national). That notwithstanding, the local dialect newspapers (Urdu) had the political frame as the dominant frame. The Urdu newspaper choice of frame however did not affect the overall standing of the dominant frame. Thus, unlike this study that used all national newspapers, Ali and Mahmood (2013) did include local language newspapers. This study did not use local language newspapers because they did not fit the criteria for purposive selection of newspapers under study. Besides, local language newspapers are no more in existence in Ghana (Appiah-Adjei, 2021).

However, there were similarities in the findings in relation to the use of the human-interest frame. Thus, the newspapers are more interested in the welfare of the people more than the politics that was associated with the disaster. The similarity in the dominance of the human-interest frame could be explained by relative importance attached to the death, injuries and emotions of victims as well as the elements of the negativity, proximity and threshold in the news judgment (values) of the journalist and editors. News about death and injuries is major news value that gets reported around the world though such news is in reference to negativity (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O’Neil, 2000; 2011).



Moreover, one important news value, according to the twelve (12) influences of newsworthiness by Galtung and Ruge, (1965), is unexpectedness of an event. If an event is highly unexpected, it will likely make news if it happens.

The June 3 flood and fire disaster together with the number of fatalities was topical in the news because disaster was an unexpected negative event with emotional proximity to readers. Additionally, news about deaths and injuries typically constitutes news values under the revised news influences by Harcup and O’Neil (2011). Thus, death and/or injuries may be considered a significant news value. Hence, the newspapers saw the death, injuries and hospitalisation of victims of the 3<sup>rd</sup> June flood and fire disaster as meeting Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) threshold, unexpectedness and negativity criteria as well as Golan and Wanta’s (2001) importance and proximity criteria for news selection.

#### **4.1.4 Compassion Frame**

This frame/theme tends to show some level of appeal to sympathise with victims. It reflects visuals or photographs that evoke sympathy, kindness and show of love and support. To Okere (2004), images of disaster are likely to evoke emotions for sympathy and support. The researcher discovered that a sizeable number of the photographs were dedicated to showing some level of compassion. The compassion frame recorded a frequency of 5 (2.1%) photographs of the total photographs used by the newspapers to report on the June 3 flood and fire disaster. In this study, many photographs portrayed large groups of people voluntarily helping in the recovery and cleaning of the disaster areas as seen in figure 4.7.

**Figure 4.7:** Photograph (Daily Guide 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2015) of members of the general public helping in the post disaster recovery



Other photographs under this theme also showed many corporate and individuals offering medical and cash donations to the victims of the June 3 flood and fire disaster as revealed in figure 4.8.

**Figure 4.8:** Officials of Sharp Pharmaceuticals donating to the disaster victims (Daily Guide, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2015) (p.17)



This finding is an affirmation to notion that newspapers have a tendency to show acts of community resilience in the post disaster period (Bohensky and Leitch, 2014). The disaster may present an opportunity for the community to come together to offer help (Bohensky and Leitch, 2014). Newspaper coverage of disasters often shows themes of resilience often underscored by the elements of recovery in the post disaster period

(Bohensky and Leitch, 2014). Disaster recovery themes occupy newspapers spaces based on the news value that, the magnitude of an event (impact) is worthy discourse for news publications (Harcup and O'Neil, 2001). Again, the news organisations are obligated to offer details of news already in the public domain (follow up), in order for the audience to appreciate the full details.

#### **4.1.5. International Solidarity Frame**

This frame consists of attention and concern shown by key foreign personalities and organisations to a nation. In most disasters in developing nations, it presents economic and infrastructure challenges to these nations (Okere, 2004). This challenge often leads to solicitations of international or donor funds to help mitigate the effects of the disaster. Hence, the international solidarity frame shows photographs of other presidents, foreign diplomats in Ghana, and members of international organisations including African Union, European Union, ECOWAS and well as other international development agencies like DFID, DANID showing concern camaraderie with Ghana in the face of the 3<sup>rd</sup> June flood and fire disaster.

This study discovered the theme/frame of international solidarity, which reflects photographs defining involvement of international personalities like ambassadors and other diplomatic agencies. A number of the photographs – five (5) representing (2.1%) depicted the involvement of international players such as the president of neighbouring countries, various diplomatic missions, European Union officials among others in showing solidarity with Ghana. For instance, in figure 4.9, the Ghanaian Times newspaper published a photograph of President Faure Gnassingbe from Togo showing solidarity with Ghana in the face of the disaster by visiting some of the victims who have been hospitalised with President Mahama whereas in figure 4.10, a photograph of

some staff of foreign embassies showing concern by being present at the memorial service held for the victims who died as a result of the disaster was published by the Daily Graphic.

**Figure 4.9:** Photograph (Ghanaian *Times*, June 8, 2015) Showing President of Togo, Faure Gnassingbe, together with President Mahama, Visiting some Victims at the Hospital



**Figure 4.10:** Photograph (Daily Graphic, June 6<sup>th</sup> 2015) showing some members of the foreign embassies attending the memorial service.



Also, the then coach of the Ghana Black Stars team, Avram Grant showed camaraderie with the nation as it was mourning the victims who died from the flood and fire disaster by laying a wreath on behalf of the technical team of the Ghana Black Stars as seen in figure 4.11.

**Figure 4.11:** Photograph showing Black Stars coach, Avram Grant laying a Wreath during a Memorial service for the victims



**Source: June 6, 2015 edition of Daily Graphic**

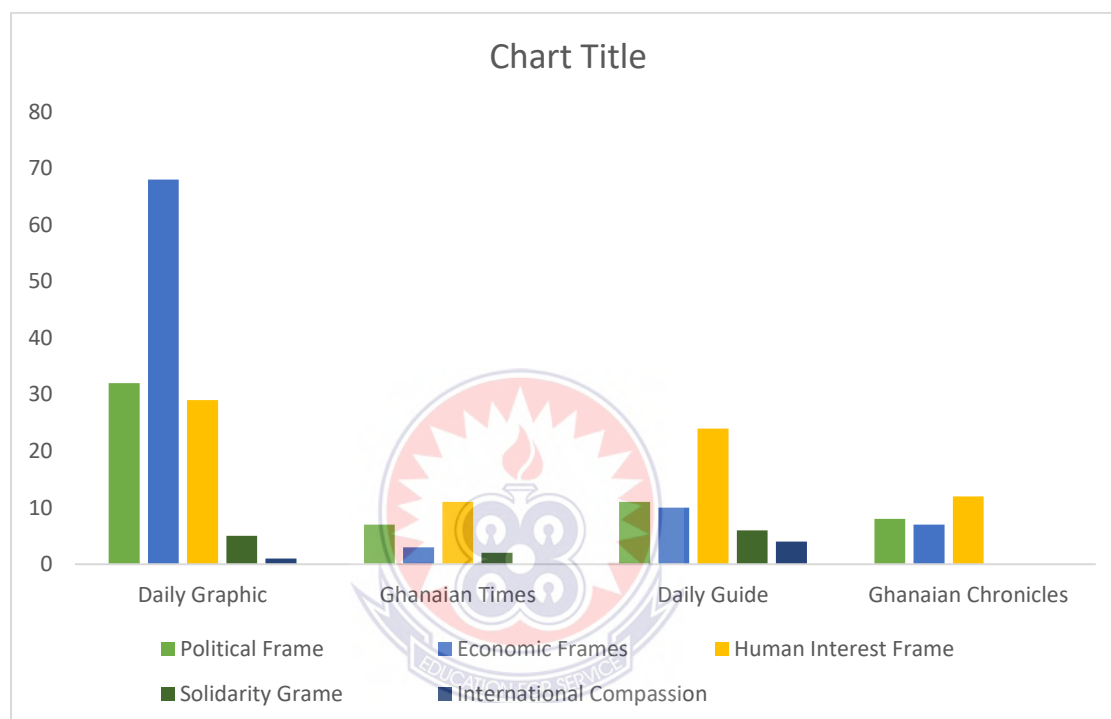
The news judgement theory indicates that reference to elite persons is one of the values that influences decisions at the newsroom as to what to publish. This is because Harcup and O’Neil (2010, p. 263) posit that events involving people of fame, wealth and or power get selected as news because news selectors view their actions as “having more consequence than the actions of others”. Within the West African context, the President of Togo qualifies to be considered as elite just as expatriates and staff of embassies. Therefore, photographs of the show of solidarity by President Faure Gnassingbe, Avram Grant and the some of the staff of embassies in Ghana got selected for coverage because of the consequence of their action.

#### **4.2: RQ 2. What are the differences in frames used by the newspapers?**

This research question was to find out if there were any differences in the way the four newspapers framed the June 3 disaster. The study used frequency, placement and tone of photographs as indicators in the analysis of data for research question 2 to understand the differences or variation in the frames used by the newspaper. The dominance of a text reflects how frequent such theme occurs and may also be determined by the tone with which such theme is portrayed within the communication space (Atareburo, 2018)

as well as placement. In order to present a clear pictorial data analysis, this study used bar chart to present the data on differences in the frequency of frames used by the newspapers as indicated in figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12: Bar Chart Showing the Frequency of Frames/Themes Used by the Various Newspapers.



**Source: Field data**

From the bar chart in figure 4.12, it is established that the *Daily Graphic* recorded a frequency of 68 (out of 88) in the Economic frame, 32 (out of 58) in the political frame, 29 (out of 78), 5 (out of 13) in Solidarity frame and 1 (out of 5) in the International compassion frame. The *Ghanaian Times* on the other hand, recorded a frequency of 3(out of 88) of the Economic frame, 7 (out of 58) of the Political frame, 11 (out of 78) of the Human interest frame and 2 (out of 13) of the Solidarity frame. *Daily Guide* recorded a frequency of 10 (out of 88) of the Economic frame, 11 (out of 58) of the Political frame, 24 (out of 78) of the Human interest frame, 6 (out of 13) in the

Solidarity frame and 4 (out of 5) of the International compassion frame. The *Chronicle* newspaper dedicated 7 photographs (out of 88) to Economic frame, 8 (out of 58) to the Political frame, and 12 (out of 78) to the Human-interest frame.

Findings also revealed that *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* dominated in terms of frequency of the five frames used to visually frame the 3<sup>rd</sup> June flood and fire disaster. *Daily Graphic* had a highest frequency of 29 out of the total 76 photographs in the Human-interest frame. The *Daily Guide* had 24 out of 76, with *Chronicle* following with 12 out of 76 while *Ghanaian Times* had least with 11 out of 76. The *Ghanaian Chronicle* had the least frequency in this regard. Also, the *Daily Graphic* dedicated a large number of the photographs to the economic frame while *Daily Guide*, *Ghanaian Times* and *the Chronicle* used more of the human-interest frame. Apart from *Daily Graphic*, all the other newspapers had the human-interest frame as their dominant frames. *Daily Guide* also had the highest frequency in the international compassion frame. The *Chronicle* and *Ghanaian Times* did not use the international compassion frame. The absence of the international compassion frame by the two newspapers may be attributable to exclusion as a framing tool (Entman, 1993). The framing strategy to divert attention from a particular position is to exclude photographs that may communicate such from the publications.

The coverage by the newspapers also varied in relation to the placement of the photographs. Like text, the placement of a photograph indicates the prominence attached to the photographs by the news editors or journalists and that front page photographs are deemed more prominent than inside or back page photographs. The frame of photographs that may be placed more on the front page indicates the level of importance the newspaper attached to that particular frame.

This study first presents frequency distribution of photograph placement in the newspapers before the presentation of the variation in the frames used through placement.

The significance of the placement underscores the level of importance attached to the stories (Atareburo, 2018). This study highlighted the placement as a justification for a variation in the frames used, because the placement gives an indication of the value attached to a photograph, by a newspaper.

*Table 4.3: Distribution of frequency of placement of photographs*

<b>NEWSPAPER * NewspaperPage Crosstabulation</b>				
	Newspaper Page			Total
	Front page	mid page	Back Page	
Daily Graphic	6(15%)	126(63.9%)	3(100%)	135(55.8%)
Ghanaian Times	9(22.5%)	14(7.1%)	0	23(9.5%)
Daily Guide	22(55%)	33(16.7%)	0	55(22.9%)
Ghanaian Chronicle	3(7.5%)	24(12.1%)	0	27(11.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>240</b>

In all a total of forty (40) photographs appeared on the front pages, one hundred and ninety-seven (197) photographs in the middle pages and three (3) photographs at the back pages. *Daily Guide* had the highest number of twenty-two (22) photographs on the front pages and thirty-three (33) photographs in the middle pages, with no back page photographs. The *Daily Graphic* had six (6) photographs on the front pages, placed as many as one-hundred and twenty-six (126) photographs in the middle pages with three (3) back page photographs. *Ghanaian Times* placed nine (9) photographs on the front page, fourteen (14) photographs in the middle pages with no back page photographs. It can be argued that the *Daily Guide* gave more prominence to the June 3 disaster by placing a total of twenty-two (22) photographs on the front pages.



Regarding variation in the frames employed by newspapers, findings in **table 4.4** established that out of the total number of 40 photographs with front page placement, 21 photographs for Human Interest frame, 10 photographs appeared in Political frame, 6 photographs in Economic frame, 2 photographs in the Solidarity frame and 1 photograph was found International compassion frame.

**Table 4.4:** The distribution of frequency of placement of the frames by the newspapers

		Frames/ Themes					Total
		Political	Economic	Human Interest	Solidarity	International Compassion	
<b>Front Page</b>	D.Graphic	2	2	2	0	0	6
	Gh.Times	2	0	6	1	0	9
	D. Guide	6	3	11	1	1	22
	Chronicle	0	1	2	0	0	3
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Middle page</b>	D.Graphic	30	63	27	5	1	126
	Gh.Times	5	3	5	1	0	14
	D. Guide	5	7	13	5	3	33
	Chronicle	8	6	10	0	0	24
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Back Page</b>	D.Graphic	0	3	0	0	0	3
	Gh. Times	0	0	0	0	0	0
	D. Guide	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Chronicle	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>240</b>

The data indicated that, *Daily Guide* placed more prominence on the Political, Human Interest and Economic frames because it had the highest number of front-page photographs with these frames. The placement of a story indicates the importance or the value in which the newspaper attaches to a story. If the story is published on the front page, it indicates a higher level of value the newspaper places on such stories and

that front page stories are relatively, more important than other pages (Gakpey, 2011; Atareburo, 2018). Though the assertion by Gakpey (2011) and Atareburo (2018) was in reference to text, it could be argued reasonably to extend to photographs because the front pages of newspapers together with accompanying photographs often get the displayed in various newsstands.

Data gathered showed that a total of 197 photographs with middle page placement were published by the newspapers within the period of study. Out of this number, 126 of them were from *Daily Graphic*, 33 from *Daily Guide*, 24 from the *Chronicle* and 14 from *Ghanaian Times*. Regarding the frames of the 197 photographs in the middle pages, 48 representing 24.3% were in political frame, 79 photographs representing 40.1% in economic frame, 55 photographs representing 27.9% in human Interest frame, 11 photographs representing 5.5% in the solidarity frame and 4 photographs representing 2.0% in the international compassion frame. *Daily Graphic* predominantly framed the photographs with middle page placement with economic and human-interest frames with 63 and 27 photographs respectively. *Daily Guide* also followed this trend with 13 and 7 photographs. Despite the highest frequency by *Daily Graphic*, it can be argued that it did not translate into prominence because inside page placement does not accord high prominence like front page placement.

Also, within the period of study, only three photographs with back page placement were on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June flood and fire disaster and only *Daily Graphic* was the newspaper that gave back page prominence to the issue under investigation. All the 3 photographs were in the Economic frame. The back pages of most newspapers in Ghana, is mostly dedicated to sports news. This study therefore argues that, the absence of photograph on the June 3 flood and fire disasters on the four newspapers might be due to adherence to news room culture (Watson, 2015).

The News judgement theory postulates that what factors as news is also influenced by the news room culture of the media organisation (Harcup & O’Neil, 2010). Hence it can be argued that, these editors only conformed to conventions of placement of news photographs within the various news media organisations.

“The tone of visuals influences readers’ attitudes about its subject matter” (Yaschur, 2014.p.16). The tones of photographs could be positive, negative, and neutral. Positive tone indicates a favourable commentary on the photograph. Positive tones could also depict suggestions, opinions or explanation of issues and possibly offering solution, advice or hope about the issues (Atareburo, 2018). A negative tone on the other hand, involves insensitivity, oblivion, disapproval, refusal, denial and or terrifying situations (Atareburo, 2018). The neutral tone reflects captions, headline that simply offers information and does not offer any value judgement (Hamid, Hussein and Chu, 2011 cited in Atareburo, 2018). Tones of photographs without captions may be determined by gestures, facial expressions and posture (Yaschur, 2014). However, the challenge might be with photographs that do not show human expressions or may not have human subjects. Photographic images without human expressions could be understood by use of some elements of visual vocabulary (Zinkham, 2006).

According to the Focal Encyclopedia of Photography (2017), a photograph could be read by the following elements of visual vocabulary; colour balance, composition, contrast, depth of field, exposure, focus, perspective or view point, rhythm, sequence, space and tonal range. The colour balance details how the overall colour of the image is clearly distinct from the other colours within the photograph. A photograph with good composition entails the arrangement of the subjects in the image. Contrast defines the difference in the light and bright areas of the image while depth of field talks about the distance between the photographic subjects captured and the degree of sharpness. The

exposure is the intensity of light or other radiant energy to aid in photographic image. Focus is the sharpness of the image whiles sequence is the serial arrangement of images that present a story. Space refers to the use of background or white spaces and rhythm is the repetitive use of these visual elements. The tonal range is the shade between light and dark areas. Zinkham (2006) argues that, if a photograph makes use of these vocabularies, it is likely it might be a good quality photograph. A good quality photograph will evoke positive perceptions from audience (Yaschur, 2014). In the context of this study, the tone of the photographs and their captions also varied in relation to the various newspapers. The extent of the differences or variation in the frames can be gauged from the tone with which the photograph and the caption are published.

**Table 4.5:** *The frequency of tones used by the newspapers to report on the June 3 disaster*

	Frames/Themes					Total
	Political	Economic	Human Interest	Solidarity	International Compassion	
Positive	44(75.9%)	2(2.3%)	4(5.3%)	10(76.9%)	5(100%)	65(27.1%)
Negative	6(10.3%)	52(59.1%)	35(46.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	93(38.8%)
Neutral	8(13.8%)	34(38.6%)	37(48.7%)	3(27.1%)	0(0%)	82(34.1%)
<b>Total</b>	58	88	76	13	5	240

**Source:** Field data

Data gathered in table 4.5 established that a total of 65 out of the 240 photographs, representing 27.1% had positive tone, 93 photographs representing 38.8% had negative tones and 82 photographs representing 34.1% with neutral tones. From table 4.5, it is evident that the political frame received the most positive tone of 44 photographs followed by solidarity frame with 10 photographs.

International compassion frame was next with 5 photographs followed by human Interest and the economic frames with 4 and 2 photographs respectively.

*Table 4.6: Frequency distribution of tones and frames by the newspapers*

		Frames/ Themes				
		Political	Economic	Human Interest	Solidarity	International Compassion
<b>Daily Graphic</b>	Positive	26	1	1	3	1
	Negative	2	44	15	-	-
	Neutral	4	25	13	2	-
<b>Ghanaian Times</b>	Positive	6	1	1	1	
	Negative	-	1	3	-	
	Neutral	1	1	7	1	
<b>Daily Guide</b>	Positive	9	-	-	6	4
	Negative	-	6	14	-	-
	Neutral	2	4	10	-	-
<b>Chronicle</b>	Positive	3	-	2	-	-
	Negative	4	3	3	-	-
	Neutral	1	4	7	-	-
<b>Total</b>	Positive	44	2	4	10	5
	Negative	6	52	35	0	0
	Neutral	8	34	37	3	0
		<b>58</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>

**Source: Field data**

The study discovered very low frequency of negative tone for the political frame (6), solidarity (0) and international compassion frame (0). However, there were high frequencies of negative tone for both economic frame (52) and the human-interest frame (35). The relatively high negative tone for economic and human-interest frames may be largely due to the nature of the event (disaster) which lends itself to negative commentary. The neutral tone had a frequency of 82 (34.1%), out of which 34 were for economic frame, 37 for human interest, 8 for political frame, 3 for solidarity and 0 for international compassion frame.

This study found that most of the front-page photographs were clearer than middle or back page photographs. The high positive tone for the political frame reaffirms Solman and Henderson's (2019) assertion that in visual framing of disaster, politicians are often

portrayed in a positive outlook. The proposition is that, disasters present rhetorical or persuasive opportunity for politicians to respond favourably to the plight of the victims. Also, the June 3 flood and fire disaster resulted in the loss of lives and destruction of property. Often negative news gets reported (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neil, 2010). The argument is that, negative news gets selected by journalists and news editors because it breaches the general social expectations of behaviour or normalcy. Findings on tone of photographs show that political frame was dominantly framed in a positive tone whereas economic and human-interest frames were framed in negative and neutral tones respectively.

The News Judgement theory (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Harcup & O'Neil, 2001: 2017) posits that certain factors including proximity, conflict, ownership control, newsroom deadlines (News values) and others influence what makes it to press as news. This theory underscores factors such as proximity, impact, unexpectedness, frequency, threshold, timeliness, conflict and others, as influencing journalists and editors in selection of events as news-worthy. The June 3 flood and fire disaster were largely reported by the four newspapers because of impact the event had on the general Ghanaian population.

In Ghana, most newspapers at the newsstand, display the front pages to attract readers' attention. Therefore, the front pages serve as the most important focal point of attraction for the readers. The data from **Table 4.4** shows interesting findings with only three (3) photographs from the entire data were published on the back page. A total of forty (40) photographs appeared in the front page and one hundred and ninety-seven (197) middle page photographs.

Some interesting findings from this study were the placement of the photographs. If placement is an indication of prominence then, *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide* employed different news values to arrive at the decision of placement in the front pages. Whiles the private newspaper (*Daily Guide*) placed the opposition leader (Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo) on front page during the first week of the disaster, the state newspapers, (*Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*) placed the incumbent president, John Dramani Mahama on its front pages. The *Chronicle* newspaper on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 2015 edition, featured an aerial photograph of the destruction caused by the flood and fire disaster.

Figure 4. 13 and 14: State Newspapers (*Ghanaian Times*, 6th June 2015 and *Daily Graphic* 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2015)



The decisions of news editors concerning, why certain photographs were placed on front, back or middle pages sums up their news judgement about the June 3 flood and fire disaster.

Early studies on news values by Walter Lippmann, found that news reporting was not “the simple recovery of obvious facts” (Lippmann, 1922. p.134) but more complex and selective. News reporters and editors, through a selection process (gate-keeping), include certain events as news whiles rejecting others. This gate-keeping role is often

influenced by the values these news organisations attach to particular events before considering them as news-worthy (Agenda setting).

Media organisations do not only influence what becomes news, but also, *how* to understand (frame, - second level of agenda setting) *the* news. The interpretative guidelines for understanding news, is *framing*. Framing involves a structured way of understanding an event. Framing involves selection, explanations and offering solutions to a perceived problem. Sometimes framing also involves the omission of certain angles of an event (Entman; 1993).

#### **4.3. RQ 3: How were males and females visually framed in newspapers?**

This study tried to analyse how males and females were visually framed by the newspapers. To do so, male and female characters in the photographs were examined under the active and passive dichotomy based on Ali and Mahmood's (2013) assertion that women are mostly framed in passive mode in disaster response reports whereas men are actively framed. Borrowing insights from Ali and Mahmood (2013), the study operationalised passive mode to indicate photographs that feature people standing idle and watching the recovery process, not taking part in recovery the process, or simply just crying. The active mode features photographs that indicate people helping in the recovery, including helping to put out the fire, helping to carry victims, draining flood waters from shop among others. Photographs that did not fit any of the two modes were labelled as others frame. The study first presents findings on photographs with and without human being before that of photographs with human. The findings are presented in Table 4.7 and 4.8 respectively.



**Table 4. 7: The distribution of photographs with human activity**

	Cases					
	Valid		Others		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Activity of Gender *	180	75.0%	60	25.0%	240	100.0%
Gender in Photo						

Table 4.7 indicates that sixty (60) photographs, representing (25%) did not a human subject (there were no human beings) whereas 180 photographs, representing 75% were photographs with images of individuals or groups of people. The sixty (60) photographs in the others category, contained images of burnt cars, damaged shops, including the Goil filling station at Kwame Nkrumah Circle, where the disaster took place. The sixty (60) photographs did not contain any image of activity or inactivity of humans.

The study further examined photographs with humans in order to establish the gender and the kind of activity being carried out. The outcome is presented in table 4.8.

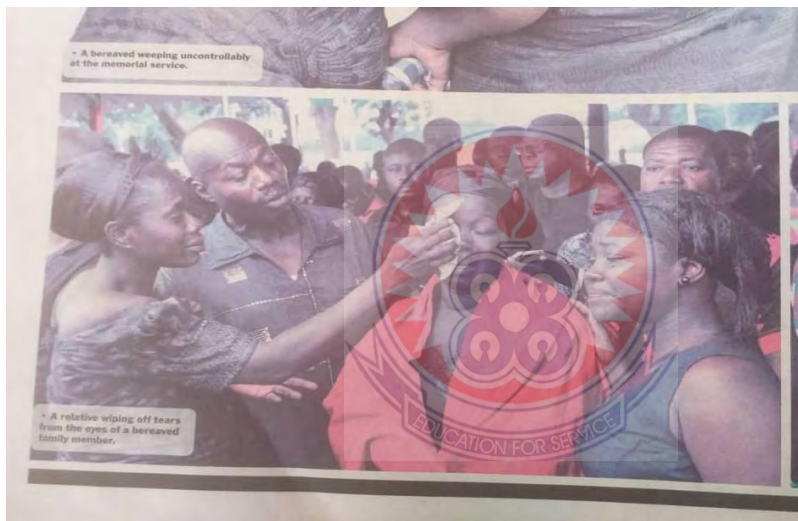
**Table 4.8: The Distribution of Males and Females and their Activities**

<b>Activity of Gender * Gender in Photo Cross tabulation</b>					
Count		Gender in Photo			Total
		Male	Female	Both	
	Sitting or Standing alone	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>
	Sitting or Standing in Groups	31	1	13	45
	Crying and /or lamenting	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>
	Observing crime scene	8	2	3	13
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>115</b>
	Cleaning and Recovery	22	6	3	31
	Offering help to others	22	6	6	34
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>65</b>
Total		98	56	26	180

**Source: Field data**

From table 4.8, findings revealed that a total of 115 photographs, out of the 180 photographs of individuals were in passive frame whereas 65 photographs were in active frame. Also, 98 photographs contained images of only males, 56 photographs had images of only females and 26 had both sexes. With the 115 passively frame photographs, thirty-one (31) females (against 7 males) were framed as crying and/ or lamenting; ten (10) females (against 8 males) were framed as standing alone; and two (2) females (against 8 males) were observing what was unfolding at the crime scene.

**Figure 4.15:** *Photograph (Daily Guide, June 11) showing some females crying at the memorial service.*



**Figure 4.16:** Photograph (Daily Guide, June 11) showing some females crying at the memorial service.



According to this study, visually framed women in passive roles accounted for forty-four (44 females) against 54 males. These findings indicate that, large number of males visually framed in the June 3 disaster reports were passive responders in the disaster recovery and response. This contradicts the claim by Ali and Mahmoud (2013) that males are framed as active responders in disaster whereas females are framed as passive responders. However, it is important to note that while the majority of the passively frames males were standing idle that of the females were crying and/or lamenting. This may be due to the fact that the location was a crime scene hence restrictions in access to the place. However, it affirms the gender theory contention by the Nelson, et al (2002) that disaster risk is gendered to reflect the social divisions that persist within the society. Thus, gender as a social construct will ultimately influence the impact of the disaster. Hence, females dominate in photographs with images of lamentation and crying than males because they are emotional and the weaker sex whereas males are strong. Also, the domination of males in photographs with images of people standing alone or in groups or observing the crime scene than females support the patriarchal

assumption that males are brave and are supposed to be around disaster of such nature than females.

The trend of domination of males against females was also observed in the analysis of the actively framed photographs. Data in table 4.8 shows that 44 photographs (against 12) had image of males in the recovery process or helping others.

**Figure 4.17:** Photograph (Ghanaian Times, June 4) showing all male NADMO personnel carrying dead victim into a truck.



Also, a total of twenty-two (22) men against six (6) women each were framed in the helping other and recovery and cleaning modes.

**Figure 4.18:** Photograph (Ghanaian Times, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015) showing women helping some victims and cleaning and recovery.



Though some women were involved in the disaster recovery, many of the photographs published in connection with the June 3 disaster, featured the majority of men involved in the response and recovery. The finding on gender and their activities regarding the disaster is in consonance with the assertion by Ali and Mahmood (2013) that women are often framed as passive actors in disaster response and recovery, while men are framed as active responders in disaster response and recovery.

**Figure 4. 19:** Photograph (Daily Guide, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2015) showing women crying during the memorial service for the victims.



Visual framing of victims is not gender neutral (Nelson, et al, 2002; Ali & Mahmood, 2013; Ali, 2014). Often, visual framing of disaster shows more dead women than men (Nelson et. al, 2002; Ali, 2014). Nelson, et al, (2002) argue that newspaper photographs are likely to show women in passive or inactive situations in disaster response and often show dead women than men. This argument is reaffirmed by Ali and Mahmood (2013) that both local and national newspapers tend to portray women in passive positions in disaster recovery. This study also affirms the position that women tend to be framed as inactive in disaster response and recovery.

**Figure 4.20:** Photograph (*Daily Guide*, June 9) of three females that perished in the disaster.



News images are also embedded with stereotypical portrayals including gender. Often these stereotypical depictions reflect the challenges women face in the society. The findings confirm Ali and Mahmood's (2013) arguments that, newspaper disaster recovery will likely frame women lacking the capacity to deal with the recovery efforts. Akerkar and Fordham (2017) further assert that in disaster recovery, women may be portrayed as needing help. However, the gendered effects of disasters are the results of the exposure to disaster risk. Nelson, et al (2002) contends that disaster risk is gendered to reflect the social divisions that persist within the society. Thus, gender as a social construct will ultimately influence the impact of the disaster.

#### 4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter dealt with the findings and discussions of this study on the visual framing of the June 3 fire and flood disaster at Kwame Nkrumah circle. The study answered the research questions through a content analysis of photographs of four selected newspapers. This study sampled the *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Daily Guide* and *Chronicle* newspapers using the deductive approach to framing research analysis and found that, the *economic frame* was the dominant frame followed by the *Human Interest*

and then the *political frame*. This study discovered two additional frames (Solidarity and International Compassion) used by the newspapers to report the June 3 flood and disasters. This study observed variations in the frames used by the newspapers. Daily Graphic had more photographs in the Economic frame than all the newspapers, which largely accounted for the high frequency of the Economic frame. However, International Compassion frame was the least dominant frame. Daily Guide placed more prominence on Political and Human-interest frame relative to other newspapers, by placing more photographs of the Political and human Interest on the front pages.

The study also found that, the representation of males and females differed significantly. The majority of females in this study were visually framed as being 'passive' or 'inactive' while the males were framed as being 'active' in the recovery process in the June 3 disaster.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the recommendations and conclusions from the data collected from *Daily Graphic*, *the Ghanaian Times*, *The Chronicle*, and *Daily Guide* newspapers on the June 3 2015, flood and fire disaster at Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra. It also contains a summary of the research findings and conclusions from these findings. It sets out the discussions on the limitations of the study and offers insights or recommendations for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of research

The findings of this study reflected the data collected through a thematic approach to content analysis of the sampled newspapers; *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Daily Guide* and *The Chronicle*.

This study investigated the visual framing of the flood and fire disaster that occurred on June 3 2015. It also sought to find out if the news frames varied with the newspaper outlet. This study also wanted to find out whether females are usually framed in the passive mode while males are framed in the active mode. The study used the gender theory to deal with the third research question, because male and female attributes are the gender constructions that affect social interactions.



This research study was based on the following research questions;

**RQ1. How the newspapers visually framed the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood disaster?**

**RQ2. What are the differences in frames used by the newspapers?**

**RQ3. How were males and females visually framed in newspapers?**

This study reviewed literature on the framing theory, news judgement theory as well as gender theory and content analysed the newspaper photographs used to report on the June 3 flood and fire disaster at Kwame Nkrumah circle in Accra.

The study content analysed two hundred and forty (240) photographs, coding and organising them into themes or frames. The researcher applied the deductive approach to framing analysis by using frames developed in early research from Ali and Mahmood (2013) in their study of 2010 Pakistan flood disasters. Using Holsti's reliability measurement, the study achieved a reliability of 90% validity. This was important in ensuring that coders were able to agree on the definitions of the categories or themes in the majority of the photographs. The nature of the data, especially images of the dead injured required that, coder was cautioned on the nature of the images.

## **5.2 Key Findings of the study**

- The first research question sought to examine how the newspapers visually framed the June 3<sup>rd</sup> flood disaster. This study found that the four newspapers used a total of two hundred (240) photographs to report on the disaster. *Daily Graphic* had the highest number of photographs totaling one hundred and thirty-seven (137) followed by *Daily Guide* with fifty-five (55). The *Chronicle* newspaper had twenty-seven (27) and *Ghanaian Times* had twenty-three (23). *Daily Graphic* had the highest number of photographs largely due to the dedicated pages, the newspaper called "Photo Report". This study also found

that the *economic frame* was the most dominant frame followed by the *human-interest frame*, the *political frame*, and *solidarity frame*, while *international compassion* was the least dominant frame. The frequency of the *economic frame* for the *Daily Graphic* influenced the overall frequency of the frames. This accounted for the economic frame as the dominant frame, though all the other three newspapers had the *human-interest* frame as the most frequent.

- The second research question sought to investigate the differences in frames used by the newspapers. The findings of this study reveal that, apart from the *Daily Graphic* that had a significant number of photographs in the economic frame, all the other newspapers had the human-interest frame as the most dominant frame. The study also found that the frames used did vary with the newspaper out-lets, in relation to the prominence (placement of the photographs) and tone of the photographs and captions. The private newspaper (*Daily Guide*) placed more prominence on the political frames by placing five (5) photographs on the front page against two (2) photographs by the state newspaper (*Daily Graphic*).
- Another important finding was the tone placed on the political frame. Interestingly, the tone of the politically framed photographs in both the private and the state newspapers was positive, though each had portrayed different politicians on the front pages in the first week of reporting on the disaster: the state owned portrayed the then President Mahama and political appointees while the privately owned portrayed the then main opposition leader, Nana Akufo Addo.

- The third research question aimed at exploring how gender was visually framed by the newspapers. Findings revealed that the representation of females and males differed in the coverage of the June 3 flood and fire disaster. The majority of the females in the visual framing of this disaster appear “passive”. On the other hand, males were visually framed as being “active”.

### 5.3. Conclusions of the Study

The conclusions from this study were drawn from the findings from the data. The conclusions are reflective of the research questions that influenced the study.

- June 3 flood and fire disaster are visually framed more of an economic issue than a human-interest issue.
- The visual frames used by the newspapers to report on the flood and fire disaster would vary with the newspaper outlet. While the state newspaper (*Daily Graphic*) visually framed the June 3 flood and fire disaster in the economic frame, private newspaper (*Daily Guide*) concentrated more on the human-interest frame.
- Political images are likely to be front page publications in newspaper productions when reporting on flood and fire disasters. Thus, politicians are likely to be prominently placed and positively toned in visual framing of flood and fire disasters.
- In disaster response and recovery women are more likely to be visually framed as passive by both the private and state newspapers in reporting on flood and fire disasters.
- Women are likely to be pictured dead in flood and fire disasters than men.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

Qualitative research is time-consuming and may be prone to fatigue-linked errors. This limitation could stem from the large number of newspapers produced in Ghana. This study de-limited this by the choice of the number of newspapers. Although the newspapers sampled namely; *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Guide*, *Ghanaian Times* and the *Chronicle*, has a wider coverage and readership, it might not be fully representative of the viewpoints of the entire newspaper space in Ghana.

Another limitation to this study, was access to the library of the Chronicle newspaper. According to a store- keeper at the headquarters of the newspaper, copies of newspaper at the library were destroyed by floods at the office or library. The researcher had to get the photographs of the Chronicle newspaper from Serials and Periodical sections of the Balme Library at the University of Ghana, Legon.

This study was also challenged quality of some of the photographs published by the newspapers. Some of the photographs published in the newspapers were of poor quality. The researcher had to adjust the camera settings on the phone to make it a bit brighter for the coders to work with.

Another limitation to this study was the seeming lack of research on visual framing in Ghana. Though textual (words) framing of disaster had been done, the literature was scanty on visual framing especially of disasters. This study relied on research on visual framing of disasters in other countries to make the study meaningful.

## **5.5 Areas for Future Research**

This area of future research in flood disaster reporting in the media may include but not limited to;

This study offers opportunity for future researchers to expand this research to include more newspapers, which may be more representative of the newspaper space in Ghana. The study also recommends that, the research may be expanded to include the motion picture (videos) from news broadcast organisations that reported on the disaster. Another area for research is to do a comparative visual framing analysis between the print media and the broadcast news. Further studies could also expand the methodology of the data collection. This expansion could include interviews of the journalists and editors to capture the factors that motivated or influenced their choice of those images used in the publications.

## **5.6 Recommendations for Industry**

The newspapers have the opportunity to place important issues to the fore of public discourse. The publications on June 3 flood and fire disasters would provide a guide on how journalist will respond to similar events in the future. It is therefore recommended that, newspapers present disaster reports in a way to elicit the needed and appropriate responses from authorities responsible for some of these disasters.

The findings also tend to follow stereotypes about gender roles in disaster response themes. This study suggests that newspaper journalists and editors must be conscious of the gender stereotypes in these publications.

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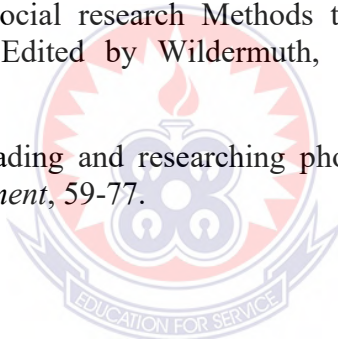
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## APPENDIX A

### CODING INSTRUMENT

1..... **Newspaper**

- (i) *Newspaper; (a) Daily Graphic (b) The Ghanaian Times (c). Daily Guide (d). The Chronicles*
- (ii) *Page ; (a) front, (b) middle page (c) back page*
- (iii) *Photo size; (a) large, (b) medium, (c) small*

2. .... **Category**

#### **(i). Political-**

Photographs of political authority, local and national politicians, including presidents, ministers of state, deputy ministers, assembly members and unit committee members.

#### **(ii). Economic-**

Does the picture show damage to property, and businesses? Does it have picture of damaged shops or cars etc?

#### **(iii). Human Interest-**

This contains photographs of injured or dead people? Does the photographs show people with emotions, like crying and deep emotions?

**(iv). Solidarity-** These photographs contain groups of people showing support or care to the victims.

**(v).International Compassion-** These photographs contain presidents of other countries, diplomats and officials from international organisations such as EU, AU, and E.C.O.W.A.S etc.

### **3. Gender**

**(i) What is the gender of those in the photograph?**

(a) Male; (b) Female (c) Both

**(ii) What is the activity gender in the photograph?**

(a) Sitting or standing alone

(b) Sitting or standing in groups

(c) Cleaning or recovery items

(d) Offering help to others

(e) Crying and lamenting

(f) Observing the crime scene



## APPENDIX B

### CODING PROTOCOL

The explanations for the various expressions and symbols on the coding sheet are outlined as follows;

Please read each carefully and provide the corresponding response in the space provided.

1. Newspaper ; Write the name of the specific newspaper
  - (i) Indicate the page location whether front page, inside page or back page by indicating the page numbers where the photograph is found.
  - (ii) Indicate photographs sizes, example whether the photograph is small medium or large
2. Categories; indicate which category (frame) that describes the photograph.
  - (i) **Political**; Indicate if the photograph has local or national politicians as well as other political activists.
  - (ii) **Economic**; indicate whether the photograph contains images of destruction of property, businesses, cars and shops etc.
  - (iii) **Human interest**; indicate if the photograph contains injured or dead people.
  - (iv) **Solidarity**; indicate if the photographs contains groups of people offering help
  - (v) **International Compassion**; indicate if the photographs contains international presidents or diplomats and or international agencies such as EU, AU, ECOWAS, etc.
3. What is the gender of those in the photograph?

- (i) Indicate ;
  - (a) male,
  - (b) female
  - (c) both
  
- (ii) Indicate the activity of those in the photograph
  - (a) Sitting or standing alone
  - (b) Sitting or standing in groups
  - (c) Cleaning or recovery items
  - (d) Offering help to others
  - (e) Crying and or lamenting
  - (f) Observing the crime scene

