

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**A STUDY OF THE NEWSPAPER READING HABITS OF MEMBERS OF
THE DEBATERS' CLUB OF OKUAPEMMAN SCHOOL.**

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**A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA
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MASTER OF ARTS (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES) DEGREE.**

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DECLARATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

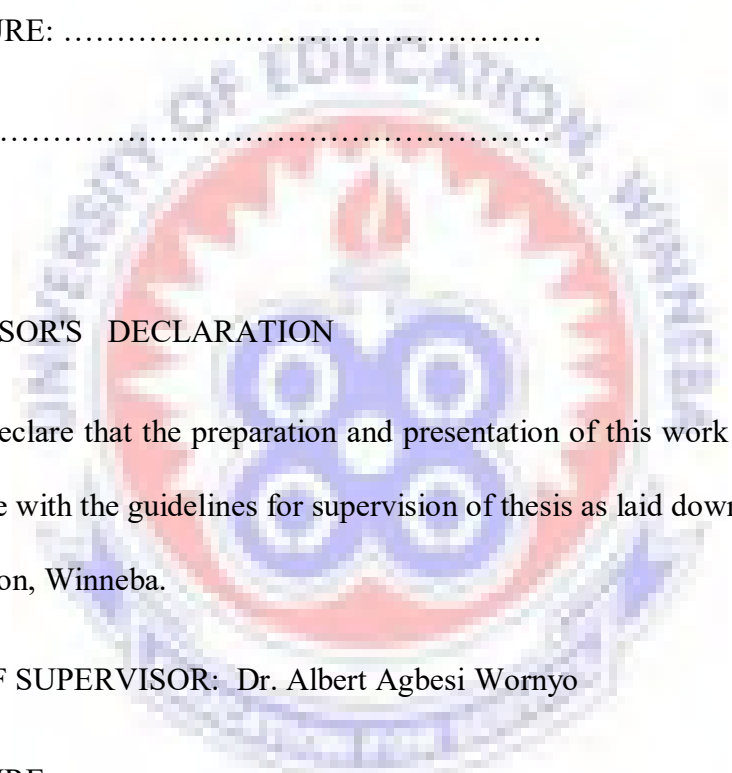
SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Dr. Albert Agbesi Wornyo

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DATE:



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The songwriter said, "You never gave the promise that the journey would be easy but your Grace and Mercy has brought me thus far."

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Christine Hammond and Dr Albert Agbesi Wornyo of the Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba for their extra ordinary encouragement and guidance from the birth of this thesis until its completion; then to my mum and my siblings for their immense support throughout my life.

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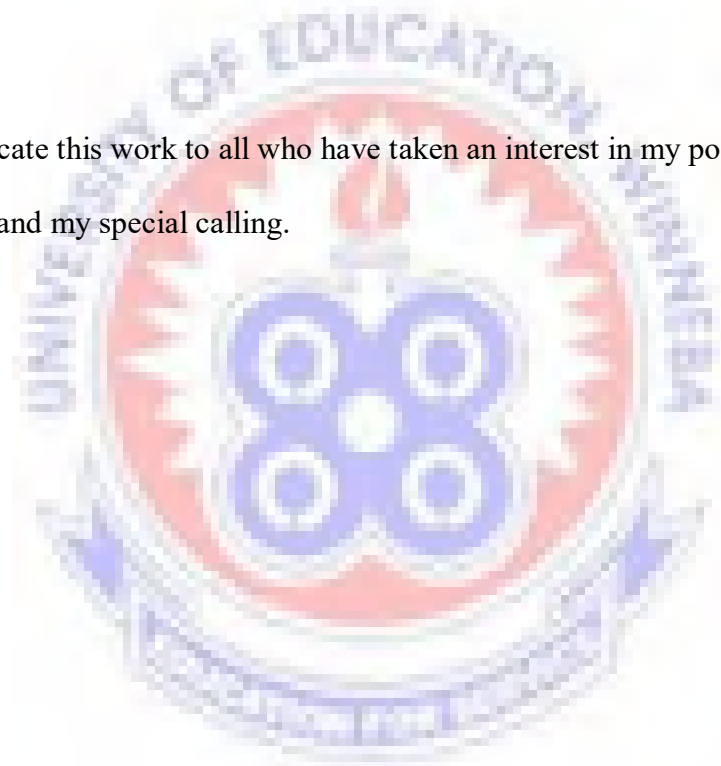


TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	III
DEDICATION	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
LIST OF TABLES	VIII
ABSTRACT	IX
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Research Objectives	6
1.4 Research Questions	6
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.5 Delimitation	7
1.6 Organization of the Study	8
1.7 Chapter Summary	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2. 0 Introduction	10
2.1 Newspaper reading habits of students	10
2.2 Reasons why students read newspapers	16
2.3 Factors affecting students' newspapers reading	21
2.4.0 Theoretical Framework	25

2.4.1 Uses and Gratification Theory	25
2.4.2 Dependency Theory	27
2.4.3 Sense-Making Theory	30
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	31
3.0 Introduction	31
3.1 Research Approach	31
3.2 Sampling Technique	33
3.3 Sample	34
3.4 Data Collection Methods	35
3.5 Data Collection Procedures	37
3.6 Chapter Summary	39
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	41
4.0 Introduction	41
4.1 Analysis	41
4.1.1 Time spent on newspaper reading	42
4.1.2 Newspaper reading habits (styles) of Okuapemman school students	43
4.1.3 Opinion of learners on why they read newspapers	44
4.1.4 Challenges Okuapemman School students face in reading newspapers	47
4.2 Chapter Summary	49

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND	
RECOMMENDATIONS	50
5.0 Introduction	50
5.1 Summary of findings	50
5.2 Key findings	50
5.3 Conclusion	51
5.4 Limitation of the study	52
5.5 Area for future research	52
5.5 Recommendations	52
5.5.1 School Authorities	52
5.5.2 Teachers	53
5.5.3 Parents	53
REFERENCES	53
APPENDIX	59



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Time spent by students on newspaper reading	42
2. Newspaper reading habits (styles) of students	43
3. Opinions of students on why they read newspapers	45



ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the newspaper reading habits of the debaters' club of Okuapemman School, Akropong-Akuapem. Three theories, namely, the Uses and Gratification Theory, Dependency Theory and Sense-Making Theory; underpinned this qualitative study. Purposive sampling and convenient sampling techniques were used to select participants for the study. Observation, Semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions were used to obtain data for this study. In all, twelve (12) students of Okuapemman School were purposively and conveniently selected. Four (4) participants were interviewed and the eight (8) taken through the focus group discussion. The study revealed that members of the school's debaters' club had varied newspaper reading habits (styles). They engaged in silent reading when at the school's library or may engaged in reading aloud if they had the opportunity to read newspapers outside the library or at home. Finally, the study showed that the students could not be described as habitual readers of newspapers so much efforts must be made to sensitize students on the importance of newspapers in education, and the need to develop good newspaper reading habits as well as overall reading.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Hussain and Munshi (2011) see reading as an art of decoding and constructing message under and through the word- written message. This definition was largely based on the work of Smith and Robertson (1980) who saw reading as an attempt by a reader to understand the message of the writer. In the view of Sharma and Singh (2005), reading is an intellectual activity that involves a reader's ability to understand and process information. Reading as an intellectual activity means that it involves the use of the human mind to make meaning out of recorded information either printed or non-print.

Karim and Hasan (2007) assert that reading is regarded as a process, a mode of thinking , a kind of real experience and involves many complex skills; the ability to perceive printed words, to skim for information and then perhaps read intensively. Here, it is plausible to say that reading is not just about printed matter, but the ability to interpret anything that is intended to convey a message or that which is able to communicate. In the view of Strommen and Mates (2004) reading builds vocabulary skills and background knowledge. The individual who takes to reading may not always have to resort to the use of a dictionary. Rather, a careful reader could figure out the definition or meaning of words through the use of context clues. Here, the previous reading experience may help the reader to improve the new reading task. What this means is that in reading a newspaper, the reader is able to acquire rich vocabulary and knowledge in other fields of human endeavour – knowledge that can equally be applied, particularly in one's academic pursuits.

Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014, p.2) also added that, “Good reading habits act as a strong weapon for students to excel in life.” When a person reads, he or she obtains meaningful and desirable knowledge. In effect, good reading habits serve as a good catalyst for students’ academic performance. Owusu-Acheaw and Larson further maintained that many students who do not belong to the category of good readers could partly be held responsible for the poor academic performance. In effect, it could be said that reading in general has a close link on students’ performance at school.

According to Majumder and Hasan (2013, p.87), “a newspaper is a wonder of modern science and carries news and views of what is at home and abroad to its audience.” As a storehouse for information, newspapers provide an avenue for different kinds to people to know their world. Again, these two scholars assert that newspapers create reading habits and help to easily differentiate people who read from those who do not read. The implication of this is that through newspaper reading a reading culture is created so that one is able to know how people live.

Ayoti (2015, p.3) defines reading culture as “the total of reading habits and interests for reading which entails a continued development and progression from one level to the next as one continues to read and expand knowledge.” It was added that such a culture can change and develop as it may be influenced by a number of factors such as the environment and the availability of reading material. It is plausible then to say that in a situation where there are available reading materials but the individual is unwilling to make use them, then good reading habit may not be formed. In a similar assertion, Johnson (2002, p.9) argues that reading culture is “social rather than an individual phenomenon, one that develops over time with deep roots in the tradition of the people.”

It has been seen as a highly complex cultural system which goes beyond “decoding a text” by a reader.

Ahmed (2016) in his argument on the effectiveness of reading English newspapers for improving vocabulary and reading skills of students of Dhaka University, assert that reading English Newspapers can help students acquire a much vocabulary for use, raise reading skills and help improve the speed at which students read. This is attributed to the rich and vivid content of English newspapers. He explains that the language used in newspapers is clearly written and it is one which could be described as a ‘day to day language.’ However, one would say that the ‘day to day language’ of university students will be different from the language of students in the senior high school and the basic school level. Also, it is not clear whether all students at varying levels in formal education acquire the afore-mentioned benefits of reading newspapers. Arguably, students in the basic and the senior high school levels who experience different environmental learning conditions may find the language of newspapers as means of acquiring much vocabulary.

The implication is that where a society has a good reading culture, the individual tends to be positively influenced into cultivating a good one. On the other hand, the negative reading culture of society adversely affects the individual.

At Okuapemman School, the researcher observed that some students are regular readers of newspapers. This habit is displayed during the one-hour reading section at the school’s library. With the regular reading and use of newspapers by these students of Okuapemman School, one would say that a newspaper reading culture has been created. One would like to investigate this reading culture. This study explored the newspaper reading habits of students of Okuapemman School at Akropong-Akuapem.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Different motives promote reading and reading habits among young children and adolescents. The desire for acquiring knowledge and information leads people to read books, magazines, newspapers, articles, research papers and other reading materials (Hussain & Munshi, 2013). Hussain and Munshi (2013) indicate that adolescents love to read books for pleasure and for edutainment. They prefer to idealise romantic, humorous and adventurous characters with the predisposition to adopt values and behaviours from such literature. In Ghana, newspapers have been made available to senior high school libraries, but what motivates students to read newspapers is not established.

Wolswinkel (2008) conducted a study on the 'Newspaper Reading Habits of Young Adults' using a quantitative method involving two hundred and forty-five (245) respondents in Twente, Germany. It was evident that the dynamic internet, radio and the television were the primary news sources of news consumption among young adults rather than a static medium like the newspapers. However, it was concluded that a large number of young adults regularly read either a paid newspaper or a free newspaper for the reason that newspaper contents are tailored to meet the needs of young people, and also, an urge to monitor the world through newspapers.

Owusu-Ansah, Yebowaa and Katsekor (2017, p.87) with reference to the information needs and information usage of Master of Business Administration (MBA) students of Singapore asserted that students value newspapers despite the increasing emergence of digital technologies. In their view, although electronic information resources are valued generally than all print resources, newspapers have been considered more valuable than other print resources by student users. The situation in Ghana is different. Access to the

internet accessibility as a means of news consumption has become the privilege of the well-to-do in society. The unavailability of easy access to internet in Ghanaian senior high schools has compelled students to resort to newspaper as a welcoming source of reading materials. The reasons why the students read newspapers could be investigated and established.

Kumar, Nagarajan and Prabakar (2017) using the quantitative technique randomly selected two hundred and fifty (250) postgraduate students from four management colleges in Chennai City and studied the newspaper reading habits. It was revealed that one hundred and sixteen (116) of the respondents representing fifty-eight (58) percent being the largest percentage had their newspaper source from the library and that their motive for reading newspaper was to get information to improve knowledge on job searching.

Majumder and Hasan (2013) in a quantitative study involving two hundred (200) randomly selected undergraduate and postgraduate students, affirm that the largest number of their respondents attest that their purpose for reading newspaper was to improve general knowledge. Self-subscription was identified as the main source of acquiring newspaper. Additionally, it was revealed that forty-two percent of the total respondents spent an hour or two on newspaper reading.

There are few newspaper reading research conducted in the Ghanaian setting. One of the few is by Owusu-Ansah, Yebowaa and Katsekor (2017). This study though conducted in Ghanaian learning environment had respondents from the tertiary level. It explored the newspaper reading behaviour of seven hundred and thirty (730) students who were randomly selected. They were identified as those who used universities' library resources. It was established that there exists a close relationship between the

availability of preferred students' newspaper and its impact on their desire to read. Whereas most respondents preferred to subscribe to their preferred newspaper, others however, resorted to waiting to get copies from their hostels or at the library. In effect, students who self-subscribe to newspapers were considered as regular users of newspapers. Also, it was evident that there is the issue of insufficiency and non-availability of preferred newspapers for students in these libraries. The problem of non-availability of preferred newspapers has resulted in some users resorting to online newspapers since there exists the advantages of easy and quick access and better circulation. Further, their findings revealed that with reference to students' attitude to newspaper reading, they had positive attitude to reading from online sources.

This study therefore seeks to examine the newspaper reading habits of members of the debaters' club of Okuapemman School.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore newspaper reading habits (styles) of Okuapemman School students.
2. To ascertain the rationale for reading newspapers by Okuapemman School students.
3. To identify the factors affecting Okuapemman School students' newspapers reading.

1.4 Research Questions

The study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the newspapers reading habits (styles) of Okuapemman School students?
2. What drives Okuapemman School students to read newspapers?
3. What factors affect Okuapemman School students' newspapers reading?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is significant in a number of ways. This study brings to light an overview of the newspaper reading habits of members of the Debaters' Club and some selected students of Okuapemman School. The findings of this study could inform the patrons and top management of Okuapemman School and also the Ghana Education Service (GES) on how to improve newspaper reading of students at the school. Again, this research will help senior high school students to take advantage of more innovative ways of improving access to newspaper and improving general newspaper readership. In another perspective, the findings of the study will contribute to the literature on newspaper reading habits of senior high schools in Ghana and the challenges senior high school students face in reading newspapers. Furthermore, the results and conclusions generated by this study could help develop a theoretical framework for increasing newspaper readership in senior high schools in Ghana.

1.5 Delimitation

This thesis attempts to find out the newspaper reading habits of members of the Debaters' Club of Okuapemman School. Okuapemman School is a public senior high school at Akropong in the Akuapem-North Municipality of the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Conducting a qualitative research in a public senior high school in Ghana will not call for large numbers so this study is therefore confined to investigating the newspaper reading habits of members of the Debaters' Club of Okuapemman School, Akropong-Akuapem.

1.6 Organisation of the Study

This study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter One gives an overview of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives and questions, significance of the study and delimitation of the study.

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature to form the theoretical basis for this current study. The discussion is organized under the following thematic areas: newspaper reading habits of students, reasons why students read newspapers, and factors affecting students' newspaper reading habits. Also, this chapter consists of the theoretical framework for this study.

Chapter Three deals with the methodology of the study. It shows justifications for the use of the research design, the convenient and purposive technique used, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection methods. Also, details of when and how data was collected and processed for this study.

Chapter Four presents the findings, and discussion of this study. This chapter provides summarized findings of the interviews conducted with the key participants. It presents participants' reasons for newspaper reading and the gratification they seek. It indicates the selected members of the club and non-members who were in the final year class.

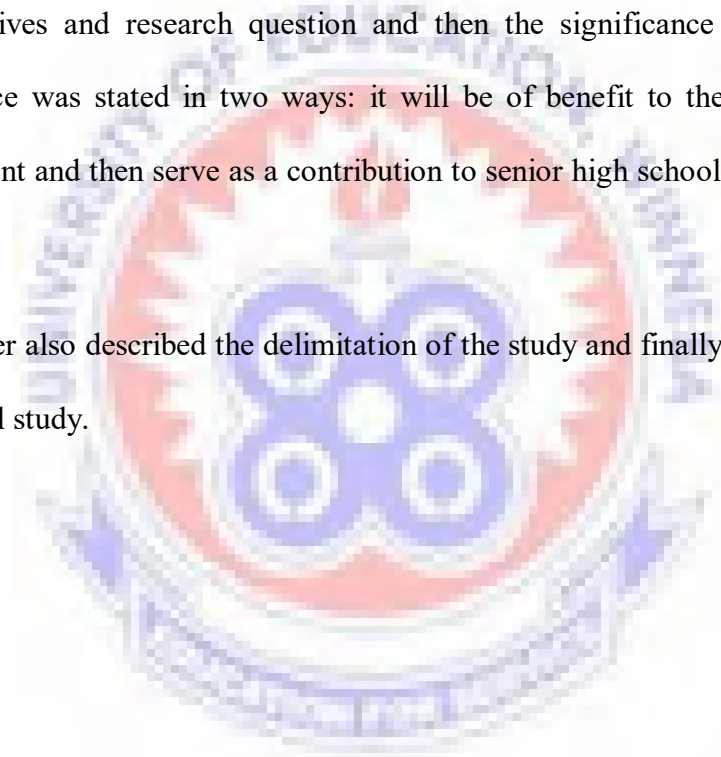
Chapter Five deals with the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The findings from this study were discussed here and conclusions

drawn. Useful recommendations were made in order to reduce problems senior high school students face in reading newspaper and also help build a culture of newspaper reading.

1.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the background to the study has been provided indicating some definitions of reading stated and their relation to newspaper reading. It continues with the associated benefits of newspaper reading. Also, the chapter presented the statement, the objectives and research question and then the significance of the study. The significance was stated in two ways: it will be of benefit to the researcher's work environment and then serve as a contribution to senior high school newspaper reading habits.

The chapter also described the delimitation of the study and finally gives an outline of the general study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature to form the basis for this current study. The discussion is organized under the following thematic areas: newspaper reading habits of students, reasons why students read newspapers, and factors affecting students' newspaper reading habits. It also discusses three theories which form the theoretical framework for this study.

2.1 Newspaper reading habits of students

'Reading' according to Majumder and Hasan (2013) is primarily an intellectual activity which involves the learning of new things, developing new ideas and this helps provide a sense of completeness. Pobi (2016, p.15) identifies 'reading habits' as "how frequently, how much and what students read." Tella and Akande (2007, p.3) defined the term reading habit as "the behaviour which expresses the tastes of reading and the likeness of the individual types of reading." In other words, it is the pattern with which an individual organises his or her reading. Mayekar (2010, p.6) on his part describes 'reading habit' as "the frequency of reading, the manner of reading and the reading preferences of learners." Iftanti (2015) points out that reading habit is individually, socially and culturally constructed; in that some external factors such as environment, education, social background and facilities also influence one's reading habit. The term 'factor' in this study refers to conditions or particular situations that actively contribute to an accomplishment or an outcome. When there are multiple factors, it may yield a particular outcome, that is, habit. Some factors or conditions that may influence the accomplishment of reading habits include accessibility to electronic facilities such as

internet at home or at school, availability of home video, school curriculum and the support from effective teachers.

Scholars have spent time to examine learners' reading habits and attitudes. Notable among them are Mayekar (2010), Lukhele (2013), Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014). They assert that reading habit is related to reader's gender, age, educational background and academic performance or advancement. Owusu-Akyeaw and Larson (2014, p.2) counsel that "reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one's life time." Lukhele (2013, p.2) argues that "attitudes to reading are set early in the life of an individual, but they are not permanent, whether they are essentially positive or negative." It is further suggested that reading attitudes of learners seem to be positive in the lower grades than those in the higher grades.

General reading habits which encompass newspaper reading can be seen from a gender perspective. In a Malaysian reading profile survey conducted by the National Library of Malaysia in 2010, it is reported that Malaysians who were of age ten (10) and above, only read approximately eight twelve books a year. It was added that these students reported they also read newspapers, magazine and comics to supplement their reading desire. Mayekar (2010) postulates that girls tend to have a more positive reading attitude than boys for both academic and recreational reading; and that more females read newspapers and magazines than males. With reference to the survey conducted by Hopper (2005), it was added that sixty-seven percent (67%) of girls were reading as compared with fifty-four percent (54%) of the boys. In a study by Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2014) that involved hundred (100) respondents, it was revealed that seventy-five (75%) of the respondents engage in reading with the motive that they want to pass their examinations. It was also revealed that sixty-two (62%) of the respondents visit

the library to read their lecture notes, twenty-five (25%) to read textbooks and only three (3%) visit library to read novels or fiction. This implied that majority of respondents had the view that reading habits have positive impact on academic performance.

According to Ahmeed (2016, p. 68), “Newspaper is the textbook that provide up-to-date information on local, provincial, national and world affairs.” Newspaper reading is a habit which influences an individual or group to discover and enter the storehouse of knowledge on daily basis. According to Majumder and Hasan (2013, p.87) “a newspaper reading habit is somewhat established by the time a person reaches twenty-five (25) to thirty years (30) of age.”

Newspaper reading habits could be defined as the rate or the frequency at which students or readers prefer to read newspapers-the dailies, the weekly or the bi-weekly subscription that could be accessed. In determining the newspaper reading habits of students, it is plausible to also identify the kinds of readers that one may encounter. According to Wolswinkel (2008), the target audiences of either free or paid newspapers are largely those who are literate. These audiences may be categorized into three kinds of readers: the habitual readers, the occasional readers and the non-readers. Habitual readers are those who regularly read and utilize pieces of information received in order to understand their world. Occasional readers are in search of information but more often spend less time and money on it. In other words, they are less committed to what they want to read. The non-readers do not think newspapers are interesting enough to spend money or time on.

There are types of reading habits or styles. These include reading aloud, silent reading, hobby reading and recreational. According to Lane and Wright (2007, p.668) “the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success is reading.” Reading aloud involves reading to the hearing of the audience. It is often used in the classroom learning situation to develop speaking skills, pronunciation skills and listening skills. In the classroom language learning situation, reading aloud may encompass ‘follower reading’ where model reading is done by the teacher or by a good student reader and the reading is imitated by the audience. Silent reading on the other hand involves reading a text not to the hearing of the audience but may involve observing the lips of the learner. Garan and DeVogd (2008) advised that it is very valuable for students to spend fifteen (15) to thirty (30) minutes each day reading a book or newspaper or any relevant material of their own choice independently and that the benefits of sustained silent reading cannot be overemphasized.

The habit of reading as a hobby helps one to be versatile in information and this makes the person able to discuss issues knowledgeably with others. According to the International Reading Association (2014), leisure reading is also known as recreational or pleasure reading. It has been identified as an independent reading, self-selected reading of continuous text for a wide range of personal and social purposes. Recreational or leisure reading can take place in and out of school, at any time. It is generally intrinsically or socially motivated and ‘it is a pleasurable activity for the reader.’ Whitten, Labby and Sullivan (2016, p.49) also defined pleasure reading as, “reading that is done in anticipation of the satisfaction it would bring because the reader found the subject matter interesting.” Pleasure reading is an individual experience and often involves materials that reflect the reader’s own choice at suitable place and time.

Silent Reading is further categorized into Intensive Reading and Extensive Reading. According to Mikelandze (2014, p.19) Intensive Reading and Extensive Reading are two approaches to Reading in Foreign Language Teaching. Intensive Reading “deals with short texts under a teacher’s guidance for detailed understanding.” On the other hand, extensive reading involves reading large quantities of material, directly and fluently. It is further posited that intensive reading technique involves dividing reading skills into sub-skills and there are detailed skills that could help develop these sub-skills. These skills include recognizing script language, deducing the meaning and the use of familiar lexical items. This technique if effectively used also promotes retention of knowledge over a long period of time. Extensive reading rather involves simply reading for pleasure or reading technical, scientific or professional material. To most learners, the form of reading they may be conversant with is skimming and scanning. While scanning is done in order to get key details, skimming is most useful for essential information. The success of intensive reading stems from the premise that the more familiar the reader is with diverse reading materials, the more comprehension is promoted (Mikeladze, 2014). Taking a look at senior high school students’ newspaper reading habits, habitual readers tend to adopt intensive reading especially those who are mainly involved in formal arguments such as debates. This is largely due to the need to gather much information from several sources. Students who most often read newspapers at the library usually engage in silent reading. They either do intensive or extensive reading. Additionally, ‘Close Reading’ has been identified as a style of reading. Close Reading has been defined as “a thoughtful, critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text’s form and meanings” (Burke, n.d. p.2). Close reading helps learners to extract meaning from complex texts.

Owusu (2004) referencing the 'Ruotolo's Methodology' where fifty-six (56) newspaper readers in Brazil were purposively selected, identified five types of newspaper readers. These include the instrumental readers, opinion makers and the pleasure readers. The instrumental readers use newspapers to get the information which serves as instrument for their day to day life. Instrumental readers embrace information from their community and the world in order to analyse and understand daily happenings around them. Another type of newspaper readers are the opinion makers. These readers primarily use information to form and confirm the opinion of other newsmakers and editors. In order for the opinion makers to understand new events, they compare opinions with others. There are also pleasure readers who utilize newspapers for entertainment purposes. Reading newspapers becomes part of their daily routines and they love 'the fun' or the enjoyment associated with it. The fourth type of readers uses newspapers as ego boosters. These people read newspapers to enhance self-image and status. Ego boosters use newspapers to facilitate their social contact as well as creating sensational companionship. The fifth type of readers is "scanners, readers with a variety of motives such as information, guidance, validation of opinions and participation," and these qualities are contained in the other four categories (Owusu, 2004, p.22). The implication from this assertion is that the motives for reading newspapers provide reasoning which falls in lines with the uses and gratification theory of mass communication.

Fosu (2016, p.4) holds the view that "the content of newspapers is generally presented in style and language, which are much above the reading and comprehension levels of the average literate Ghanaian," in that some students of Okuapemman School will have to do a 'rereading' or conduct a 'purposeful' reading of Ghanaian newspapers in order

to go beyond the ‘surface meaning’. Majumder and Hasan (2013) posited that the habit of newspaper reading depends on several factors. These factors include reading at least three or more times per week, preferable daily, reading more than fifteen (15) minutes a day, having a stable method of getting the paper, and having a particular time and place to read the paper. In their view, this will promote a defined pattern of reading. At Okuapemman School, students are encouraged to read silently during the one-hour schedule per week at the school’s library. During such minutes, some students take the opportunity to read the available newspapers.

Elliott (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on reading and found some attitudes of adolescents toward new information to be on a continuum with childhood, and varied progress exclusive of specific age group. Adolescents have a natural tendency to idealize and fantasize characters and personalities. According to the adolescent selection of books for reading to learn seems to be contextual associated with socio-cultural and geo-political conditions arising from some uncertain events.

2.2 Reasons why Students read Newspapers

Reading is an important factor affecting intellectual and emotional growth. It involves the use of the mind and Sir Richard Steele, a British dramatist and politician, is noted to have logically quoted, “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body” (Mayekar, 2008, p.2) This could be interpreted to mean that reading improves the brain in the same way as exercise helps to improve the body. Reading therefore could be seen as a basic ingredient for developing the mind or the intellect of individuals. Adding to this assertion, Mayekar (2010) opines that when one cultivates the habit of reading, it influences the promotion of one's personal development in particular and social progress in general. Mikeladze (2014) identifies the labels ‘good’ and ‘poor’ readers

reading behaviours. These behaviours are dependent on factors such as the complexity of the topic or the text, the time of reading and the environment. A good reader could be identified as “one who always interprets a text as the writer intended-except when he chooses not to do so.” On the other hand, poor readers do not possess knowledge of reading strategies and are often not aware of how or when to apply the information they do have. Most often this category of readers cannot deduce meaning from surface level information and find it difficult to assess text for clarity, consistency and plausibility. However, Mikeladze (2014, p.17) asserts that “the same reader could demonstrate good and bad characteristics at different times and varying degrees on different dimensions.” This is to say that ‘good’ and ‘poor’ reading can be seen as desirable and undesirable reading. There is therefore the need for learners to identify and cultivate good reading habits especially as they desire to read newspapers during their academic pursuit.

Green (2001) asserts that reading makes way for a better understanding of one’s own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. Reading does not come natural to a human being. It has to be acquired, and cultivated. Here, one would say that a reader cannot only learn what has been discovered by others but also build on the foundation of information. Students therefore tend to know who they really are in terms of what they can read and how well they can do it.

Majumder and Hasan (2013) assert that newspaper reading does not only create a habit of reading but also gives learners the opportunity for self-improvement. According to Ahmeed (2016), when learners engage in the practice of newspaper, they tend to experience improvement in their attitudes and skills towards overall reading. They cultivate vocabulary acquisition skills and fluency skills in reading and in speaking which eventually leads to improvement in academic performance. In a study conducted

by Lukhele (2013) on exploring relationship between attitudes, reading ability and academic performance amongst primary teacher trainees in Swaziland, it was revealed that there is some relationship between reading ability and academic performance. The study which involved eighty-four (84) first- and third-year students studying for Primary Teacher's Diploma at a college in Manzini, further showed a close relationship between reading and vocabulary ability of participants.

Reading newspapers also helps convey the feeling that one belongs to the "reading club" and this is a demonstration of social acceptance. Most adolescents in senior high schools would crave for 'the sense of belongings' and so resort to newspaper reading.

According to Wolswinkel (2008), newspaper reading by young adults or high school students is related largely to their attitude towards news in general. Young people perceive news as very important but this belief does not lead to watching news programmes themselves. In the opinion of young people, news is basic social service which has to be available when one needs it. This means that among young people there seems to be no automatic correlation between actually watching television news programme and the significance attributed to the same news programme. The presumption here is that newspaper reading among young people falls into this paradox and that where newspapers may be available, young people may not read them.

One reason why senior high school students read newspaper is to help them get acquainted with varied sources of information and to make them develop useful learning skills. Oriogu, Subair, Oriogu-Ogbuiyi and Ogbuiyi (2017) were of the view that reading habits will enable students to have effective study skills, effective retention capacity and gain knowledge of diverse information resources. In the view of Lukhele

(2013, p.), “the more a student reads for leisure purposes, the more vocabulary the student acquires.”

Majumder and Hasan (2013) indicated that newspaper articles help develop the reading skills of students in the senior high schools. According to Ahmeed (2016, p. 68), “the practice of newspaper reading has been associated with improvement in students’ attitude towards overall reading.” It is therefore not far from right to assume that good readers are learners who read newspapers.

Newspaper brings news and views of happenings at home and from out of the country to the reader. According to Kumar, Nagarajan and Prabakar (2017) newspapers play an important role in the dissemination or diffusion of recent trends and happenings and this makes it a necessity in education. Reading newspapers helps audience-users to “know the outer world” alongside the other advantages of encouraging readers’ participation in class. Students who engage in habitual newspaper reading are well-informed of things that happen both within the learning environment and outside the learning environment. When this happens, learners in a competitive environment tend to gain numerous advantages over their counterpart in terms of academic progression.

In a study by Kumar, Nagarajan and Prabakar (2017) on the newspaper reading habits of postgraduate management students, it was revealed that some students engage in newspaper reading because it is their leisure pursuit. In the case of senior high students who are mostly adolescents, they love pleasure reading. Whitten, Labby and Sullivan (2016) discovered that pleasure readers have advantages in vocabulary acquisition over their counterparts who do not read.

Modern newspaper has been the source of amusement or entertainment to children, gossip and personal criticism (Majumder and Hasan, 2013). Students in senior high schools in Ghana especially those at Okuapemman School find newspapers as an alternative source of entertainment. Though they are not privileged to use tabloids in the school environment, their motive to find amusing news such jokes and celebrity comedy pushes them to get access to read news online.

Owusu-Akyeaw and Larson (2014) pointed out that the habit of reading as hobby helps one to be versatile in information and this makes the student able to discuss issues knowledgeably with others. Reading for relaxation is a common practice among some Ghanaians. The implication here is that students may unknowingly create a reading culture associated with elitism though their motive is to get varied information and then develop argumentative skill of being able to contribute to issues meaningfully. Thus, the situation in senior high schools is that after one's hectic day at work, there is the need to change to reading newspaper or magazines. Students from homes where this culture of newspaper reading is practised tend to adopt this as a break from the challenging classroom work.

Igbeka and Ola (2010) indicated that in an academic community, a library's newspaper collection continues to play an enormous role despite the presence of news on the internet, radio and television. Newspapers are very useful for recreation, relaxation, entertainment and education. It is assumed that students and for that matter those in senior high schools engage in newspaper reading for a number of reasons.

2.3 Factors affecting students' newspapers reading

Reading newspapers may pose problems just as any important activity. Many factors in the school environment contribute to students' reading challenges. One of the factors that affect students' newspaper reading is the poor school environment. According to Tella and Akande (2007) poor school environment is a challenge to overall reading. These range from hostile librarians, unsupportive teachers and inadequate reading materials. A study that considered gender issues in leisure reading conducted by Early (2011) revealed that 16% of male students from the 10th Grade were disinterested in leisure reading owing to the reason that their teachers did not encourage them in in-school reading to out-of-school reading. In other situations where there are school-wide programmes that focus specifically on reading and literacy development, readers tend to enjoy direct support in terms of acquisition of skills and reading literacy. For instance, the instructional approaches and materials used in the school environment may pose challenges to newspaper reading.

The research of Peiser (2000) indicates that in the past decades in London, the number of habitual readers in London Metro has fallen while the number of occasional readers has grown. This means that the potential target group of paid newspaper in London over the years had decreased despite the fact that the potential target group of free newspaper had decreased. In relation to the Ghanaian newspaper reading situation, however, senior high school students do not pay for the cost of newspapers they use at school but rather it is possible that some habitual readers may buy newspapers when outside the school environment. The assumption here is that though these habitual readers may be ready to pay in order to read newspapers, the occasional high school newspaper readers will not buy newspaper and may not read it even if they available.

The teacher is of course another determinant to newspaper reading. Where teachers of various subjects do not encourage students to read newspapers in order to get additional information to supplement what is taught in the classroom, students see it as unimportant to read. This does not motivate learners to read. Motivation is derived from 'motive' which means needs, desires, wants or drives within the individual. Motivation is therefore the process of stimulating an individual or people to action in order to accomplish goals. It could be the intrinsic or extrinsic form of motivation that could causes students to read. Mayekar (2010) therefore recommends that teachers and librarians have the solemn duty to infuse the habit of reading into young ones and this should be done using a variety of approaches. Teacher and librarians motivating high school students to read newspapers could be seen as a form of extrinsic motivation.

Owusu (2004) indicates that the physical feature of newspaper is one factor that affects newspaper readership. In the study which examined the newspaper reading habits of two hundred (200) respondents of the Adenta SSNIT Flats in Accra, it was revealed that newspaper headline was an outstanding factor that motivated respondents to read. Other variables such as the newspaper layout, pictures and length of story were identified as powerful tools for respondents' reading to a small degree. Owusu (2004, p. 21) is of the view that "newspaper readers also consider the gratification they expect before reading." It is therefore arguable that in situations where students are not motivated by their teachers to read newspapers, the gratification that the audience user seeks from the 'physical quality' of a newspaper leads them to read.

In a study on the newspaper reading habits of postgraduate management students, by Kumar et al (2017) reported that some of the challenges postgraduate students faced in reading newspapers were that there existed insufficient copies of newspapers at the

school library, newspapers were not always on time and there was limited space at the school's library. Students at the senior high school level in Ghana especially at Okuapemman School face similar challenges. Okuapemman School like most senior high schools in Ghana does not have more than two copies of the subscribed newspaper type at the library. This poses a major challenge. Readers are often found sharing the individual pages of the newspapers or taking turns to read a particular newspaper and this does not encourage a large number of students to read. At other times, the dailies are not accessed on the same day. They are usually accessed a day or a few days later.

One other challenge students face in newspaper reading habits is the inadequate interesting and current reading materials found in the available newspapers. In a study by Oriogu, Subair, Oriogu- Ogbuiyi and Ogbuiyi (2017), it was revealed that university students are faced with the challenge of inadequate and uninteresting reading materials from university libraries. The assumption here is that learners with poor language skills fail to appreciate the complex language skills of the writer.

Fosu (2016, p.4) pointed out that most Ghanaians who are the notional targets of the print media have been found to depend on the media while non-literate Ghanaians are proscribed from primary information from newspapers. However, genuine concerns have been raised over the years about the readability and unambiguousness of the print media. In terms of readability, it has been observed that:

The content of newspapers is generally presented in style and language, which are much above the reading and comprehension levels of the average literate Ghanaian, junior high school-educated reader (Fosu, 2016, p. 4).

This same study revealed that the Ghanaian newspaper uses “Big English.” The writer further suggests that through the use of the “Big English” which has been defined as a ‘bulky’ and ‘authoritative’ vocabulary or expression, most Ghanaians across the educational system in Ghana might be faced with the challenge of getting the right meaning from newspaper messages. Igbeka and Ola (2010) assert that news editors and newspaper reporters use language in their news reportage to attract popular readers. This assumption here is that Ghanaian newspaper reporters take advantage of this language paradigm to attract the user-audience. Majumder and Hasan (2013) also pointed out that the content of newspapers is tailored towards fitting the wants and information needs of the younger audiences.

Wolswinkel (2010) postulates that for newspaper reading, there are variables that influence readership. There are personal determinants, environmental determinants and behavioral determinants. Most personal factors are the reader’s interest in news subject, self-efficacy, surveillance, reading as a task and the willingness to pay for the newspaper. Some behavioral determinants are news consumption pattern of audience and the use of public transport. For instance, the news consumption of young people in Twente, Germany has been described as “snacking news.” This behaviour of audience-users of newspaper means “quickly checking the headlines out of the desire to be on top of the main issues of the news” (Wolswinkel, 2010, p. 7).

Additionally, newspaper reading habits like all other habits are influenced by the reading habits of parents. In the view of Majumder and Hasan (2013, p.87), “the behaviour of parents is a stronger predictor of habit formation” than educational programmes that help establish readership habits. It is therefore plausible to predict that

parents with good newspaper reading habits tend to positively influence their children into cultivating a good reading habit.

Age has been identified as the powerful explanatory value to understand newspaper readership. Lauf (2001) found out that there has been a decline in newspaper readership among young people in Europe due to the fact that paid newspapers is unable to attract young readers. The situation where young people are not attracted to newspaper reading has been described as “an erosion of newspaper reading habits among the youngest groups,” (Wolswinkel, 2010, p.5). It therefore could be assumed that in Ghana where young people are compelled to pay for the cost of newspaper, the rate of readership may decline.

2.4.0 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by three theories namely, the Uses and Gratification Theory, the Dependency Theory and the Sense-Making Theory.

2.4.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

The theory of Uses and Gratifications is one of the theories that provide an appropriate framework for this study. Gratification simply refers to the satisfaction or reward the audience expects or receives from media use. This theory is largely attributed to the research of Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurenvitch in the 1970s. Its main focus is on how people use the media. The theory postulates that media users consist of active rather than passive individuals who demand something from the media to which they are exposed. The choice media users make is dependent on what gratifications they perceive the media provides. This is to say that people depend on media to meet their specific needs. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2011, p. 351) “the gratifications the

individual seeks from the media are determined by his or her attitude towards the media” and that the increased dependence on media, in turn, increases media influence on people’s lives. Media has therefore been considered as one of the contributing factors to meeting the needs of people. This implies that newspaper users tend to patronize particular newspapers based on what satisfaction they would get from them.

According to Owusu (2004, p.12) “the degree of perceived gratification depends on the needs or interests of the individual.” The basic assumption of this theory states that media users seek the content that seems to satisfy them most. These needs are social and psychological in nature. The more an individual perceives the content of a media more satisfying, the greater the chance to choose it. For instance, if respondent-newspaper users at Okuapemman School perceive that the information they need would be found in a particular newspaper, they would select that and read to meet their need.

Owusu (2004) emphasized that it is not always that the audience uses a message for the purpose for which the sender intends. Rather, some reasons may vary considerably from the sender’s intention. This was explained with the reason that media content is generally rationalized and directed towards certain goals and satisfactions. With reference to an active user of media content, information is usually rationalized in order to find some form of logical explanation. In relation to this study, it is suggestive that respondents on purpose will read a particular newspaper and specific content of those newspapers. Additionally, it is plausible to say that respondents are conscious of media-related needs and it is this motivation which reinforces media use.

In a study by Blumler and Gurevitch (1995), it was postulated that people’s media behaviour is dependent on their media related needs. Drawing knowledge from their previous research that these needs are social and psychological in nature, they expressed

the view that people evaluate how useful different forms of media information are. Owusu (2004) points out that generally the Uses and Gratification Theory has been studied at levels and these are the satisfaction that the consumer audience derives from mass communication; the social and environmental circumstances that cause the consumer-audience to resort to media use; and the needs audience members are attempting to satisfy.

Lui (2015, p.71) states that “the audience is using media for particular needs associated with personal characteristics and social environment of the individual when they produce problems and solutions.” He further postulated that these problems and solutions result in varying motives for the gratification behaviour which may have influence on the individual or society. This could be interpreted as the behaviour influence of newspaper reading habits among students of Okuapemman School. For example, a student may come across a recipe column in the *Mirror* and may draw the attention of her colleagues if their interest is in cooking. This behaviour of reading that newspaper is for the satisfaction gained from the ‘recipe column.’ This satisfaction could be her previous inability to solve the problem of identifying the recommended procedure in cooking or the mere prestige of the knowledge of what to do after reading.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory in the view of Littlejohn and Foss (2011, p.352) is “a limited-effects theory.” In other words, this theory or approach grants individuals much control over how they use media in their lives.

2.4.2 Dependency Theory

Another theory that helps explain the basis of this study is the Dependency Theory of audience-media Society. It is one of the Mass Communication theories that help explain

the effects of media on audience-users. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2011, p.352), “Sandra Ball- Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur originally proposed the dependency theory.” in 1975.

The proponents posit that there exists a tripartite integral relationship between the audience, media and the society. The existence of this relationship provides a framework for the individual members of society to achieve their goals and that this relationship is largely dependent on the information the media systems provide. It is arguable in this instance that where there exists a closer relationship between the media and society, there tends to be a higher level of dependency media. For example, individuals living in urban areas are more dependent on media for information as it affects their day to day living than people living in rural areas.

Dependency theory emphasises the interactions of societal establishments and media systems with audiences to generate needs, interests and motives (Littlejohn and Foss, 2011). The interaction or relationship that exists between the societal establishments and the media systems tend to have an influence on the selection of several media and non-media sources. These may, in turn, result in various forms of dependency. Littlejohn and Foss (2011, p. 352) postulate that “audiences depend on media information to meet certain needs and to achieve certain goals.” However, an individual audience –user does not depend on all media equally.

In the view of Littlejohn and Foss (2011), there are two factors which determine how dependent the audience-member becomes on any given medium. The first factor shows that dependency on media is based on the fact that it satisfies a number of needs and not just a few. Among the numerous function of media such as reporting news, providing entertainment and monitoring political activities, an individual or a group of

people becomes dependent on the medium that meets more than one need. For instance, a member of the Debater's Club of Okuapemman School preparing for a regional contest is likely to read news items and articles in the *Daily Graphic*, the *Ghanaian Times* and even try getting access to online than resort to reading only celebrity news in the weekend *Mirror*.

Secondly, media dependency is based on social stability. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2011) when conflicts arise or when there is social change, established institutions, beliefs and practices are challenged and hence this may force a reevaluation and probably a new choice in media consumption. During such 'revolutionary periods,' there is much reliance on media. On the other hand, at stable periods, dependence on the media may go down. For instance, *the Daily Graphic* was one of the popular media outlets that carried the news of how some students of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi-Ghana had engaged in violent a demonstration against the university management which caused the Ashanti Regional Security Council (REGSEC) to close down the university for some days and subsequently, the Government of Ghana had to dissolved the Governing Council of the university. (Daily Graphic, October 26 2018, p. 3)

During the three-week KNUST impasse, it was observed that the most active readers of newspapers at Okuapemman School were students who had relatives or friends from that university. These readers relied on the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* for much information. However, when the KNUST brouhaha was over, four weeks after the students had reported back to school, the general student populace seemed to have forgotten about KNUST.

Additionally, Littlejohn and Foss (2011, p.353) added that individual's need, motives and use of media are dependent on outside factors that may not be within the control of the individual. This means that one's needs are shaped by factors such as culture or by social conditions and that the individual's needs are not strictly personal. These factors act as controls on what and how media can be used and on the non-availability of non-media alternatives. For example, senior high school students at Okuapemman School who do not have alternative to newspapers as sources of educative news may take opportunity to watch television at teacher's residence on some exceptional occasions.

2.4.3 Sense-Making Theory

A third theory that is appropriate as a theoretical framework for this study is the Sense-Making Theory. The term "Sense-Making", according to Littlejohn and Foss (2009, p. 877) appeared in communication literature in the 1970s. However, Karl Weick is noted to have popularized this theory in 1993 when the theory was seen as approach that helped the individual or an organization to make meaning to event or a happening.

The word 'sense' generally refers to products of human sensory activity. The emphasis is on human perceptual capacities to make good judgments concerning what has been transmitted via the senses. According to Mills, Thurlow and Mills (2010, p. 183) has been equated to the process of organizing and thus "to make sense is to organize, and sensemaking refers to processes of organizing using the technology of language." Over time, some definitions have come to be associated with sense-making. These include intuitiveness, intelligibility, meaning and natural understanding. Sense-making has evolved from the original emphasis on sensing as accurate perception to individual reflection known as 'cognition' and also includes emotional, spiritual hunches in

addition to other ways through which human beings make meaning out of the world around them.

Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005, p. 412) stated that “Sense-making is about presumption, action and it entails plausibility.” In their view, to make sense is to link the non-concrete with the concrete. Plausibility is not about truth and getting it right. Instead, it is concerned with redrafting an emerging story so that it becomes more comprehensive. The question that may be asked is “what is going on here?” It implies that as one searches for meaning, for example, from a newspaper, a number of mental thoughts (questions and earlier information) come to play in order to figure out what would be interpreted. For example, what meaning would be made by the reader if he or she sees a front-page story? The act of presuming, displaying emotions and the truth of the story is what Sense-making theory seeks to explain.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is outlined broadly in six (6) main parts. Immediately following this introduction is a brief explanation of the research approach. The other details are the sampling techniques, data collection methods used and how the researcher analyzed the data collected.

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach that was selected is the qualitative method. Quinn Patton and Cochran (2002) assert that in situations where little is known, it is often better to start

with qualitative methods. Since little is known about the newspaper reading habit of senior high school students in Ghana, it is most suitable to use the qualitative method. Lindolf and Taylor (2002) explain qualitative research as the approach that focuses on the social practices and meanings of particular group of people. It is also important to consider the historical and cultural context of people being studied in such a situation.

In research, the qualitative approach seeks to identify and explore into details phenomena such as attitudes, behaviours and reasons of a particular situation. In other words, the researcher seeks to understand and interpret more local meanings, which is, making efforts to arrive at knowledge that contributes to general meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2014). According to Creswell (2013, p.47-48), such an exploration is needed, in turn, “because of a need to study a group of population, identify variables that cannot be easily measured, or hear silenced voices.” Conducting a qualitative research will give room for a detailed understanding of an issue or a phenomenon.

Braun and Clarke (2014, p.24) also postulate that in qualitative research, the approach “allows for a far richer or multifaceted understanding of a phenomenon” and it is suitable in this study in that in terms of questioning it allows one to focus on the participants’ own framing around issues, and their own terms of reference, rather than having it pre-framed by the researcher. The appropriateness of the approach used stems from the fact that Quinn Patton and Cochran (2002) emphasized that qualitative methods generally aim at understandings the experiences and attitudes of people.

In this study, the behaviour involves the newspaper reading habits of Okuapemman School students: habits or behaviours of students displayed over a period of time. Questions would be asked in order to identify the reading habits of students of Okuapemman School.

3.2 Sampling Technique

Sampling is very important in conducting research. This is because sampling enhances the quality of inferences made by the researcher stemming from the underlying behaviour.

Purposive sampling and convenient sampling techniques were used in the selection of participants for the study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) emphasized that purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest. In addition to knowledge and experience, Creswell (2013) asserts that the concept of purposeful sampling is used when the researcher selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem or the fundamental phenomenon in the study.

Creswell (2013) cautioned that when using the purposeful sampling, the researcher must make the decision on who to consider or what to select as participants or sites for the study. The assumption is that the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner; have been fundamentals to considering using this technique.

Through the purposive and convenient sampling techniques, eight (8) females and four (4) males were selected. This gives a total of twelve (12) participants. Out of this number, two of the male participants were the school's library prefects and that since they help in organizing the library for use by both teachers and students, they have greater opportunity of reading newspapers and therefore could provide more useful responses. The females outnumbered the males in the sense that the females at

Okuapemman School were always available for questioning. The participants were all final year students of Okuapemman School. The current academic senior high school calendar did not make it convenient for the first and second year students to be included in the data collection.

The researcher's reason for choosing these participants is that they have a peculiar characteristic (habitually been identified with reading newspapers) and the researcher is familiar with their study habits. Furthermore, they are available for questioning so they can help the researcher obtain relevant information for this study. Quinn Patton and Cochran (2002) assert that convenient sampling involves selecting whoever is closest and easier to find.

3.3 Sample

According to Insaadoo (2016), there is no officially authorized sample size in qualitative research since the best sample depends on a number of factors in the study. These factors include the purpose of the study, the research questions and the 'richness of data.'

Out of sixty active members of the Debaters' Club of Okuapemman School, twelve were purposively and conveniently selected. Out of these twelve, two males are library prefects and the third male is one of the principal speakers for the debating team.

These students who were final year (form three) students were purposively and conveniently selected. These were students whose reading habits have been observed by the researcher. The members of the Debaters' Club have been identified as people who have used newspapers as exhibits in formal arguments (debates).

In all, twelve (12) students of Okuapemman School, Akropong –Akuapem were purposively and conveniently selected. Four (4) were scheduled for semi-structured interview and the eight (8) for the focus group discussion. According to Lindolf and Taylor (2002), for a focus group discussion there should be at least six (6) participants and at most twelve (12) for a successful study. So the researcher deemed it more appropriate to purposively select only eight (8) participants for the focus group discussion.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

In order to answer the research questions regarding why Okuapemman school students read newspaper and what factors affect their newspaper reading, the researcher decided on semi-structured interview and the use of focus group discussion as data collection instruments in order to get meaningful data to complete the study. Kumekpor (2002) therefore posits that data collection is necessary for arriving at the solution or solutions to studies being investigated. It is important to get the unprocessed information (data) from selected participants so that a useful finding could be obtained.

The researcher has for a period of two months observed students who read newspapers at the school library in order to purposively and conveniently select participants for the study. The observation was carried out at the school library during the one hour section assigned to each class per week.

Interview is the second data collection instrument used in this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2014, p.79) an interview has been explained as the ‘professional conversation’ which has the ultimate aim of getting a participant to talk in ‘their language’ about experiences and perspectives that relate to a topic. In qualitative

interview, “the researcher asks the participants a series of open-ended questions and the participants respond in their own words” (Braun and Clarke, 2014, p. 79). With the conduct of this instrument, the researcher endeavours to give adequate opportunity to participants to discuss issues that are of much importance to them but might have been anticipated by the researcher. ‘The face-to-face contact between the researcher and participants has characterized the contemporary idea of collecting interview data.’ (Braun & Clarke, 2014, p.79) According to Braun and Clarke (2014) interviews have been considered as the most common method of data collection in qualitative research. The researcher wants participants to have the opportunity to discuss the subject of newspaper reading in their own words as much as possible. An interview guide was developed by the researcher based on the literature review and the knowledge acquired during a similar interview with students.

One significant reason for the choice of interviews as a tool for this study is that interviews could be used to answer factor-type questions such as the factors influencing the newspaper reading of senior high school students (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

Creswell (2003, p. 212) stated that “when qualitative data are collected first, the intent is to explore the topic with participants at sites.” This assertion is what Masadeh (2012) uses as the legal grounds to suggest that focus group discussion is good in qualitative research. Masadeh (2012, p. 63), was of the view that the term ‘focus’ emphasizes that “the group will discuss a precise topic of interest rather than broad generalities.”

According to Braun and Clarke (2014, p.108) focus group “involve a relatively unstructured, but guided, discussion focused around a topic of interest.” In focus group discussion, the moderator gives participants the opportunity to interact with each other to ask questions, disagree and to agree on an issue. Data needed for the study are

collected from multiple participants at the same time and the discussion is often led by the moderator. The focus group discussion used in this study allow for adequate interaction by students of Okuapemman School with one another.

They are particularly appropriate when the interviewer has a series of open-ended questions and wishes to encourage research participants to explore the issues of importance to them, in their own vocabulary, generating their own questions and their own priorities. Also, the researcher believes in allowing the research participants to feel encouraged using their diction as they express their opinions on newspaper reading. Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2014) posit that focus group discussions are potentially useful if the researcher desires a kind of social change. Participants' involvement in group interaction could become a tool for social change. The researcher desires that participants' group interaction behaviour will improve since they will learn better group communication dynamics such as tolerance, good listening skills and critical thinking skills in their subsequent encounters.

The key participants in the interview were the principal speakers of the debater's club while the focus group discussion was conducted for the non-principal speakers and other members purposively selected students. They comprise students who were taught and are not taught by the researcher. This was intended to find out some factors that affect students' newspaper reading. The focus group discussion was adopted to find out some reasons why students read newspapers.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The focus group discussion and the interviews were conducted respectively between the months of October and November, 2018.

After convenient and purposive selection of the participants, the researcher with help of the President of the Debaters' Club who also a principal speaker for the school's debating team, scheduled a meeting with the interview participants. A convenient environment was identified and chosen for the scheduled meeting. This was necessary because the data collection involved must be recorded on a tape recorder for subsequent transcription. The interview was carried out in the evening when the whole student populace was at evening prep. This time was largely decided by the respondents.

The researcher then briefed them on the purpose of the meeting and further explained the steps taken to ensure confidentiality of the information disclosed. Each participant was allotted a maximum of forty (40) minutes and minimum of ten (20) minutes to be interviewed. The researcher adopted the 'face-to-face' interview and participants were engaged in spoken conversation. The conversation was audio-recorded and the recording was transformed into written text. This was later analysis according to key thematic areas.

The focus group discussion was conducted after the interview. This was several days after the interview. The initial schedule was unfruitful since four members were engaged in another assignment. Another meeting was therefore schedule. The researcher led the discussion after announcing the purpose and modalities for the meeting. This decision that the researcher plays the role of the moderator or facilitator stems from the assertion that "It is necessary for the researcher to run a focus group because he or she is knowledgeable about the subject, so the researcher can help the group maintain its focus and thus keep the sessions on track (Masadeh, 2012, p. 66)

The discussion centered on three key thematic areas, namely: reasons for reading newspapers, challenges students face in newspaper reading at Okuapemman School and measures to help students improve newspaper reading habits. In determining how frequent respondents spend time in a week on newspaper reading, they were first asked whether they have an alternative source of accessing newspaper apart from the library. The discussion lasted forty-five (45) minutes.

By the end of the period, the researcher had conducted interview for four (4) students and eight (8) were engaged in the focus group discussion. It is sought to find out factors influencing respondents' reading newspaper. Also it is to find out factors influencing respondents' selecting newspapers and their satisfaction from reading newspapers.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study comprised the research approach and design, the sampling technique used. The qualitative approach was used. The purposive sampling and the convenient sampling technique were used to select twelve participants. The data collection instrument mainly observation, interview and focus group discussion. The data instruments were administered within a period of four weeks. This enabled the researcher to present the findings and analysis of findings.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of data and analysis of this study. This chapter provides summarized findings of the interviews conducted with the key respondents. The key respondents were four principal speakers of the school's debating team and who were also active members of the Debater's Club of Okuapemman School. The focus group discussions involved eight members of the debaters' club who were neither principal nor supporting speakers but were in their final years of studies and were also identified with reading newspapers. These students were purposively and conveniently selected. This was to find out reasons for newspaper reading, the challenges senior high school students encounter in reading newspaper and what recommendations could be made to improve newspaper reading by students at Okuapemman School.

4.1 Analysis

Data were analyzed according to key thematic areas. The results were presented under the following sub-headings:

The maximum number of time spent on newspaper reading per week,

Newspaper reading habits (styles) of learners at Okuapemman School.

Reasons why students read newspapers,

Challenges Okuapemman School learners face in reading newspapers, and

Recommendations to help learners improve newspaper reading at Okuapemman School.

4.1.1 Time spent on newspaper reading

Table 1: Time spent by students on newspaper reading

Time spent	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	0	Nil
30 -60 minutes	11	91.67
More than 60minutes	1	8.33
Total	12	100

All four (4) respondents affirmed in the negative except a female respondent who responded that the library was the only source of getting newspapers to read. The four (4) respondents in the interview were questioned on the maximum time spent in a week for newspaper reading. Out of the four key respondents interviewed, three (3) made it known that they spent thirty (30) to sixty (60) minutes for reading newspapers. This was usually during the one-hour library schedule on the time table. The other respondent, however, acknowledged that she spends an hour or more on reading newspapers. This was not done at the school's library but in her dormitory or in any convenient place in the school. When asked how feasible her situation was especially at Okuapemman School, it was revealed that she was always supplied newspapers by her parents any time they visit her at school.

From the focus group discussion it was revealed that all eight (8) participants resorted to the library as their only source of newspaper reading. They did not make attempts to get newspapers from any available source within or outside the school environment. They spend a maximum of fifty minutes on reading newspapers each week.

4.1.2 Newspaper reading habits (styles) of Okuapemman school students

The researcher sought to determine the newspaper reading habits (styles) of Okuapemman School students since newspaper reading just like general reading could be seen in various forms. It was to determine the reading styles they adopt especially when reading newspapers at school. The table below shows students' newspaper reading styles based on the focus group discussion:

Table 2: Newspaper reading habits (styles) of students

Newspaper reading style	Number of respondents	Degree
Skimming / scanning	4	180
Close reading	2	90
Both	2	90
Totals	8	360

During the period of study, the researcher observed that learners who read newspapers at the school library engaged in silent reading. However during the interview conducted with the key respondents of the debaters' Club, it was revealed that student who sometimes wish to read to the hearing of a colleague or mate especially one who has an interest in that particular newspaper story. This behaviour if detected is reciprocated with threats of punishment from the supervisor or the librarian. This behaviour was attributed to the fact that reading newspaper for specific information may require that the learner memorizes fact or the data required. For instance, a principal speaker in an interschool debate may have to get useful facts that could be presented as exhibits and such information is better appreciated if memorized.

The response from the focus group discussions showed that all the eight (8) participants affirmed that they read newspapers from the school's library. The eight (8) represents hundred per cent (100%). When at the library, they engage in silent reading. When asked if they have had any confrontation from the librarians or the supervisor, they said that they strictly go by the rules governing the use of the library. There has been a situation where the participants had to discuss what was read from the newspapers but this was done after the one –hour library reading section.

In determining what newspaper reading style respondents adopt when they are at the library, it was revealed that most participants skimmed or scanned through newspapers. Two of the respondents, disclosed that they do what they termed as a “close reading” of the text.

It was also made known from respondents that other students who patronize the use of the school library were also occasional readers of newspaper. The explanation was that the library was their main source of accessing newspaper does not allow students to come there without proper permission especially if the class has no library schedule on the time table.

4.1.3 Opinion of learners on why they read newspapers

The participants gave varied responses for reading newspapers. Some of the reasons why learners read newspapers were the following:

1. Reading to keep abreast of the latest information that the media reports.
2. Reading to get additional information to complement knowledge from teachers and textbooks.
3. Reading for fun.

4. Reading to be socially acceptable.
5. Reading for emotional satisfaction.
6. Reading to kill time.
7. Reading as a hobby.

Table 3: Opinions of students on why they read newspapers

Reasons for reading	Number of respondents	Percentage
Social acceptance	3	25.0
Vocabulary acquisition	2	16.67
Hobby	4	33.33
Entertainment / fun	2	16.67
To kill time	1	8.33
Total	12	100

From the focus group discussion, it was revealed that all the eight (8) respondents (representing 100 percent) read newspapers in order to get abreast of the latest information that the media reports. While in schools, they are not privy to important news or occurrences outside the school environment. Respondents make use of the one-hour allocation for library on the school time table to engage in newspaper reading.

Out of the four key participants who were identified as the principal speakers of the debating team, three (3) confirmed that they read newspapers because it complements information that teachers and good textbooks provide. A participant disclosed that the *Daily Graphic* for instance, has columns purposely dedicated to articles. Such information is very useful to learners who want to excel in English Language when

articles are treated as a topic. The learner is able to identify, read and practice how to write a good 'lead' when exposed to samples in the newspaper. Also, reading newspapers helps readers to acquire good vocabulary for use. Two (2) respondents stated their main focus for reading newspapers is to "get acquainted with much vocabulary for everyday English use."

Another reason why participants read newspaper is for the purpose of fun or entertainment. Newspaper entertainment comes in various forms. These include puzzles, cartoons and jokes sections. At Okuapemman School library, the *Mirror* and the *Spectator* are the common newspapers that contain 'fun segments' such as puzzles, celebrity news and fashionable dress styles. The *Daily Graphic* and the *Spectator* have occasionally captured cartoons and celebrities which are noted to attract most fun-loving youth. One female respondent added that she is always happy when she sees fashionable dresses displayed in the media. This gives her emotional satisfaction too. "There's a kind of good feeling I get when I see those lovely and trendy pictures," she added. The learners have found more than one form of gratification from the use of media therefore has led to the dependency. The situation agrees with Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's assertion that the individual may become more dependent on media that meet a number of needs than on media that satisfy just a few (Littlejohn and Foss, 2011, p.353).

From the focus group, it was also revealed that students perceive newspaper reading as a means of social acceptance among peers. The seven (7) females who formed the 87.5 % of the focus group that was conducted said, "We each belong to our unique group and if those other girls do decide to read, then they cannot be part of us."

There were four (4) participants who pointed out that reading was their hobby. They loved reading newspapers because “they are much easier to read and leave.” One of the participants pointed out that when the content of newspapers does not give him the satisfaction he had wanted, he quickly read the ‘catchy’ pages and give out to their counterpart who may enjoy some bits. “We may flip through other available papers just to kill time.”

4.1.4 Challenges Okuapemman school students face in reading newspapers

The focus group discussion was used extensively in order to find out challenges they face in reading newspapers. The challenges centered on access and availability, time, content and language of newspaper available; and the reading environment. The following were some of the challenges that were revealed:

On the subject of access and availability, the responses showed that subscribed newspapers were not always available on time. In situations where they are available, there were limited copies. The library has only one copy each of the *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, the weekend *Spectator* and *Mirror*. During the period allocated for library for example, it is a common practice to find two or more classes at the same time. In the event where a group from one class gets the newspaper for the day or the most current newspaper, the other parties are not likely to get them. Most participants resort to reading a week old newspapers.

Another participant disclosed that sometimes the staff ‘highjacks’ the newspapers for the day so students may only have access when the staff member or members concerned have finished reading. There is no newspaper vendor in the school for students as an alternative.

Also, the library is not opened after class to allow students to have access to newspapers and other library resources. This makes it difficult for learners to have additional time to read newspapers outside their one-hour library schedule. One of the female participant commented that “I can only go to the library during the one-hour weekly schedule since my time table is fully with lessons.”

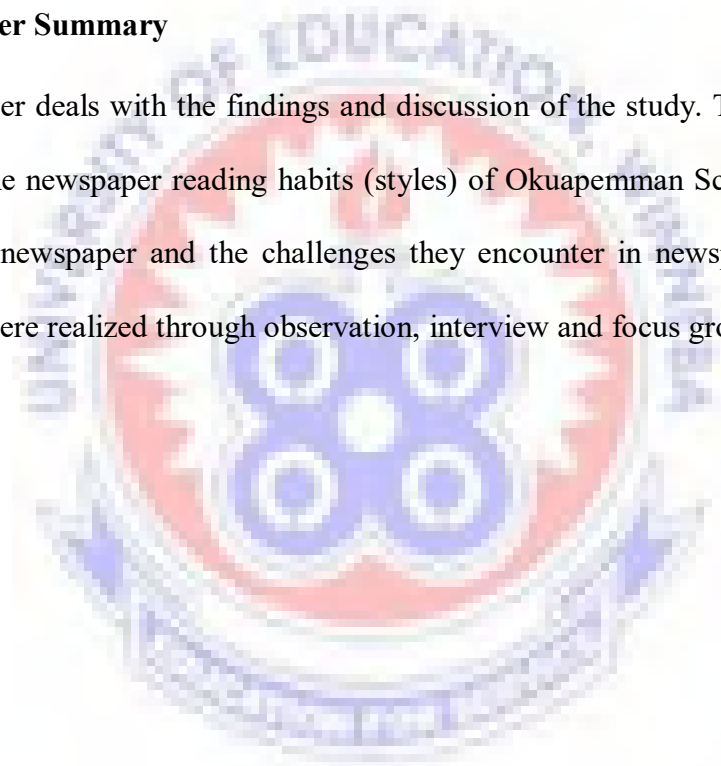
At certain times, the librarians become hostile to students especially when some students make noise at the library. This sometimes disrupts silent reading. On few occasions, librarians do not encourage final year students to read newspapers. They claim newspapers will not help answers to examination questions. At other times, after reading or seeing something interesting in the newspaper, there is no room for discussions due the requirement from library staff to keep the place free from noise.

In addition, six (6) participants were of the view that sometimes the language of the *Daily Graphic* does not permit easy understanding of news stories and some articles. As occasional readers they find it boring to read along using a dictionary. Two of the female participants readily expressed their displeasure about how some Ghanaian newspapers pose language problem. One sadly said that when reading the *Daily Graphic* “one has to read it using an English dictionary and this is uncalled for.” “After all, this is not an English Grammar class,” she added. The other participant said she has observed that the newspaper that are available at the school library sometimes have news articles or stories presented in a complex language and so makes the diction not easily compressible to senior high school students. She frankly said, “I agree with my other friends on what said. Sometimes you need a dictionary by your side to understand what you are reading.”

Fosu (2016, p. 4) asserts that Ghanaian newspapers are ‘beyond the reading and comprehension level of the average literate Ghanaian.’ Due to this challenge, participants pointed out that they may resort to looking at pictures to interpret the seemingly complex language. During weekend, they would have loved to spend more time in reading the *Mirror*, which is ‘more senior high school friendly.’ Unfortunately for the learners, the library is not opened and going to town to buy one is a difficult option for them.

4.2 Chapter Summary

This chapter deals with the findings and discussion of the study. The study sought to find out the newspaper reading habits (styles) of Okuapemman School students, why they read newspaper and the challenges they encounter in newspaper reading. The findings were realized through observation, interview and focus group discussion.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter sums up the newspaper reading habits of the Debaters' club of Okuapemman School. It contains the findings of the study, conclusions from the findings, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research, recommendation to teachers of English Language, top management of Okuapemman School as well as educators and policy makers for senior high school language learning.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study incorporated three theories that served as theoretical framework of the study and the conclusions were drawn that most students of Okuapemman School especially members of the school's debaters' club have varied newspaper reading habits (styles).

5.2 Key findings

The researcher sought to find answers to these three questions: what are the newspapers reading habits (styles) of Okuapemman School students, why do they read newspapers and what factors affect their newspapers reading?

1. The study revealed that majority of learners are occasional readers and a few habitual readers. When learners were at the school library, they engaged in silent reading but when they were not at school and they had access to newspapers they sometimes practiced reading aloud. They do not spend more than sixty minutes for newspaper reading at the library.

2. The major challenge learners faced in newspaper readership is the problem of availability, accessibility and inadequate time for reading. There were inadequate current newspapers for learners to read during their weekly visit.

Also, it was identified that learners were restricted in the use of newspapers at the library by the unwelcoming attitude of supervisors or librarian.

3. Among the outstanding reasons why students read newspapers, it included reading to keep abreast of the latest information that the media reports, reading to get additional information to complement knowledge from teachers and textbooks, reading for fun, reading to be socially acceptable, reading for emotional satisfaction, reading to kill time and reading as a hobby.

5.3 Conclusion

Although many educators and stakeholders in education believe that senior high schools are supplied with newspapers, just a few of these stakeholders have considered how effective the newspapers have been utilized by students who are considered the future leaders of every country. The evidence from the methodology employed showed that Okuapemman School has a schedule on the school time table which gives students the opportunity to read newspapers. The availability and easy accessibility of newspapers in senior high schools will help improve students' vocabulary and other language learning skills. Although it is evident that the students could not be described as habitual readers much efforts must be made to sensitize students on the importance of newspapers in education, and the need to develop good newspaper reading habits as well as overall reading.

5.4 Limitation of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the newspaper reading habits of Okuapemman School students.

One clear limitation of the study was that the researcher decided to use final year (form three) students who were members of the debaters' club. Although other year groups could have been involved, the current the free senior high school policy did not permit first and second year students to be available at school during the period of data collection.

5.5 Area for Future Research

Future researchers who desire to conduct a study on newspaper reading habits of students could extend the sample size to all year groups of students and also examine out-of-school factors that influence newspaper reading.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings so that there could be improvements in the newspaper reading habits of students of Okuapemman School as well as public senior high schools in Ghana that show interest in newspaper reading.

5.5.1 School Authorities

Some of the respondents indicated that newspaper reading needs much more attention than it is now. Therefore:

- I. It will be more appropriate if authorities help designate a newspaper section at the library to help identify habitual readers and consequently choose them to

augment the services of the “Editorial Team” that reads and discusses newspapers to the student populace once in a month.

- II. A ten minute compulsory newspaper reading schedule should be instituted in the school. This exercise should be conducted preferably during the first ten minutes of evening prep.
- III. Awards should be instituted to motive students to engage in active newspaper reading.
- IV. School authorities should acquire at least three copies of the *Mirror* and any other senior high school-friendly newspaper for student use at the library or at a convenient place but under supervision of language teacher.
- V. It will be more appropriate that authorities ensure that newspapers are catalogued for reference purposes and also to help in future research purposes.

5.5.2 Teachers

It is recommended that teachers cultivate the habit of using newspapers as teaching-learning materials especially in the language classroom.

5.5.3 Parents

I. Parents and guardians of Okuapemman School must be sensitized on the benefits of newspaper reading during parent-teacher association meeting in the school to encourage their children to read.

II. Parents should provide reading materials for their children to help them develop good reading habits.

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APPENDIX

Interview Questions for the Four Principal Speakers

1. Do you have any other source of newspapers apart from those at the library?
2. If your answer to question one above is 'Yes,' what is that source?
3. How often do you read newspapers in week?
4. What is the estimated time you spend on newspaper reading per week? For example, 10-30 minutes per week?
5. Why do you read newspapers?
6. Mention some challenges you face in newspaper reading at Okuapemman School.
7. What measures could the School authorities take to help students improve their newspaper reading habits?

Thematic areas for focus group discussion

1. Reasons for reading newspapers.
2. Challenges students face in newspaper reading at Okuapemman School.
3. Measures to help students improve newspaper reading habits.