

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**NEWSROOM CONVERGENCE IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF KESSBEN  
MEDIA**



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

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

**JULY, 2020**

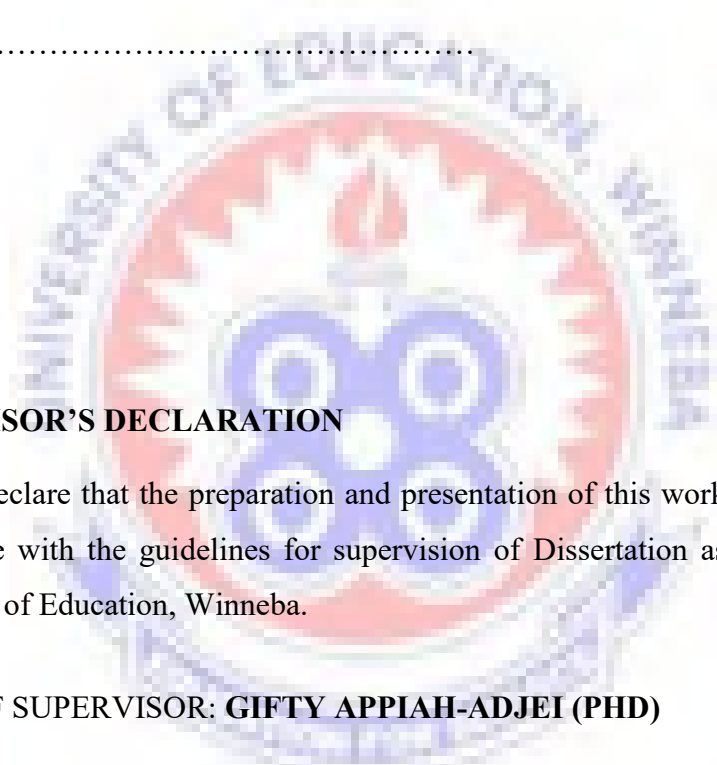
# DECLARATION

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE: .....

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## SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **GIFTY APPIAH-ADJEI (PHD)**

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DATE: .....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family and friends for their continuous love and support  
always.



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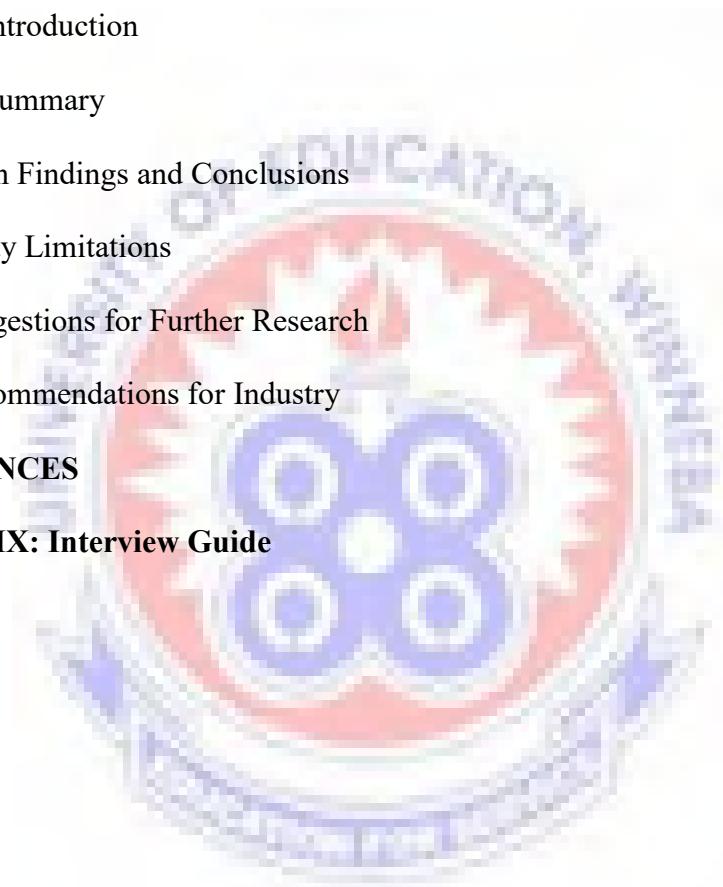
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## ABSTRACT

Journalism practice is experiencing several changes in its operations. Scholars have studied and attributed these changes to media convergence due to digitisation. However, in Ghana, media convergence studies are scant. This study, therefore, explores the practice of media convergence in Ghana using Kessben Media as a case study. It examines the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media; investigates the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media; and analysed the perspectives of journalists on the practice. Employing the media convergence theory and the multimedia models of newsroom convergence, the study used observations, interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from journalistic operations as well as purposively selected journalists in Kessben Media's newsroom. Thematically analysed data revealed that Kessben Media's newsroom practised a hybrid convergence model that has aspects of both the integrated and cross-media models under the multimedia models of newsroom convergence. The study established that profitability was one of the key motivations for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. Findings also showed that journalists at Kessben Media share both positive and negative views on the practice of newsroom convergence. Journalists see the practice as a challenging practice and at the same time a skill-enhancing practice. The study recommends that management should consult journalists to have their inputs in the policy framework that would govern the implementation process to address any form of resistance towards the implementation.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background to the Study

The news media are facing an intense and protracted transition due to innovations from technology (Saridou, Spyridou & Veglis, 2017). That is, new media technologies have changed the journalism practice in numerous ways: means of sourcing, packaging and disseminating media content have been reformed (Paulussen, 2016). The traditional means through which journalists carried out routines and duties have been changed and enhanced. As a result, there have been changes in media funding, content distribution and content accessibility (Saridou, Spyridou & Veglis, 2017). One of the key innovations that has characterised the journalism industry is convergence (Garcia-Aviles, Kaltenbrunner & Meier, 2014).

Convergence, according to Singer (2004) refers to “some combination of technologies, products, staffs and geography amongst the previously distinct provinces of print, television and online media” (Singer, 2004, p. 3). For García-Aviles (2006), media convergence can be studied from at best four viewpoints: technological, ownership, communicative and professional, which are intertwined in a media environment in continuous evolution. Convergence is reshaping the landscape of journalism in a variety of ways. As Pavlik (2004) puts it, newsroom structures, journalistic practices and news content are all evolving. The process has also been described by Deuze (2004) as an increased cooperation and collaboration between previously separated media newsrooms and other parts of the modern media company. Some scholars have theorised the evolution in journalism to explain the changes occurring at different levels under the rubrics of convergence (Boczkowski &

Mitchelstein, 2009; Garcia-Aviles, Kaltenbrunner & Meier, 2014). For instance, some studies have focused on how journalists and media organisations are dealing with new technological innovations as well as how convergence is fostering journalism practice in the newsroom (Thurman & Lupton 2008; Domingo & Paterson 2011; Paulussen 2016). It has been established in literature that technological change in the media industry is perceived in a positive manner and journalists are increasingly convinced of the merits and the necessity to adapt their practices to newer technological capabilities (Ekdale, Singer, Tully & Harmsen, 2015) and the Ghanaian media industry is not an exception. For instance, in Ghana, journalists can cover events, package information about the event in digital content and send to the editor for dissemination even before a reporter leaves a location (Jamil & Appiah-Adjei, 2019).

Wanjiku (2009) reckons that the increasing rate of media convergence as well as the availability of different media platforms has further led to a wealth of experience between media platforms, the producers and also consumers. As a result, most newsrooms are in a remodelling process that depicts the changes that are happening in the media world especially technological changes (Garcia-Aviles & Carvajal, 2008). Digital devices with a display, whether a smartphone, tablet or a computer, are now enabling the distribution of different kinds of information, with wide and trans-media implication (Jenkins, 2006). The editorial staff too are being converged depending on the content they deal with (Garcia-Aviles & Carvajal, 2008). This is also known as professional convergence.

Professional convergence is concentrated on the modifications of professional practices in media firms and content distribution in the newsroom (Killebrew, 2004). Thus, the media have implemented a multi-platform method of content production and distribution through the development of websites, social media pages and other digital

platforms capitalising on prevalent content products (Doyle, 2010). Under professional convergence, the focus is on the professional practices than physical structures of the media organisation. According to Namasinga (2011), this development has had a profound effect on the job description of reporters and, therefore, necessitates the need for a multifaceted education of journalists. Globally, the newsroom is becoming smaller as a less number of reporters can work for different platforms, which are television, print and online (Garcia-Aviles & Carvajal, 2008). According to Marc (2012), convergence has managed to achieve two goals set by the media organisation, that is, as a tool for cutting down on expenses and at the same time, the ability to get a wider audience.

The professional culture of journalism, according to Saridou *et al* (2017), remains one of the most challenging domains in the media industry as journalists tend to resist changes related to new forms of skillsets, novel identity and role perceptions. Ryfe (2012) avers that habit of journalists is also a challenge when it comes to the introduction innovations in the newsroom. Thus, new journalists who enter the newsroom are socialised into the traditional ways of producing content for a particular platform. This becomes part of their daily habits in the newsroom and socialise them to assume that routines in the newsroom must be carried out in a certain way. As the routines are deeply engrained in the daily work practices, they are largely invisible and become so taken-for-granted that journalists find it hard to even imagine other ways of doing journalism. For Deuze (2008) such routines also serve as ‘strategic rituals’, since doing things the way they have always been done feels safe and comfortable and reduces the risk of being criticised. Organisational constraints also stem either from the bureaucratic nature of newsroom authority (Boyles, 2016; Mico’, Masip & Domingo, 2013) or from multiple emerging contradictions when attempting to foster

deep-changing innovation, tend to hinder change and convergence levels (Usher 2014). According to Huang, Davison, Davis, Bettendorf and Nair (2006) the quality of production, compensation for multiplatform productions and the legitimacy of media convergence are some of the concerns faced by media industries that produce content for multiple platforms

From media management perspective, convergence is analysed through the lens of innovation and efficiency (Doyle, 2013; Lawson-Borders, 2003; Quinn, 2004) while neglecting the potential negative effects of convergence on the practice of journalism. The idea of convergence as a strategy to satisfy both good journalism and good business practices is predicated on a misapprehension of the fundamental structures of the news industry which is corporately owned, profit-driven and faced with extensive uncertainty (Spyridou and Veglis 2017). As such, less attention has been paid to how convergence ideals and practices are impacting on editorial practices and content per se. It has been found that journalists are in favour of changes that increase the quality of journalism, and reject those that are disruptive of journalistic autonomy and detrimental for accuracy and economic independence (Ekdale et al., 2015; Singer, 2006). However, there is counter-evidence showing that a culture of monetization has gained grounds in the journalism industry (Spyridou & Veglis, 2015). This shift is reflected in the proliferation of editorial practices fostering low-cost and spreadable news production (Bakker, 2012).

Convergence in the economic or business sense provides more platforms for revenue generation (Klinenberg, 2005). This is because it caters for effective targeting of audience (Domingo, Salaverri'a, Aguado *et al.*, 2007) and facilitates branding strategies designed to build loyalty and increase website traffic (Vujnovic, Marina, Singer et al., 2010). In practice though, research has shown that convergence can be

used as a strategy for cost reduction, and as such, it can be a threat to quality journalism, especially in times of revenue hardship and fierce competition (Tameling & Broesma 2013).

To understand convergence fully, it is necessary to take into account the cultural context (Quinn, 2004) and the procedure of implementation (Mico', Masip, and Domingo, 2013). Thus, the level and type of convergence implemented relate to the newsroom culture and the factors affecting it. At a time when economic uncertainty for the media sector persists (Franklin, 2014) and pervasive monetization culture has affected newsrooms (Spyridou & Veglis, 2015), thoughts that “everyone in journalism must become more commercially minded and more entrepreneurial” have come to stay (Kaye & Quinn 2010, p. 128), especially in Ghana. This has significant consequences for editorial choices and output.

In a convergence experiment of Tampa News Center in the United States that sought to examine newsroom changes and journalists' reaction due to convergence, Dupagne and Garrison (2006) revealed that convergence was primarily viewed as a tool to gather more resources in terms of people, equipment and ideas. Findings also showed that convergence enhanced communication within the newsroom; induced a more commercialised understanding of news competition and the market served, and emphasised multimedia reporting and breaking news stories. In terms of reaction from journalists, the experiment showed that the responsibilities, daily duties and skills needed (to carry out the duties and responsibilities) increased even though journalists were still required to report for the various platforms they were initially employed for. Singer and Quandt (2009) underline that convergence weakens journalistic ethics in contrast to commercial, audience-driven or managerial encroachments.



The phenomenon of convergence has been a feature of the news industry for quite a while now (Larrondo, Domingo, Erdal, Masip & Van Dan Bulck, 2016). According to Miller (2011), media convergence is a very old concept which dates back to the nineteenth-century. Spyridou *et al.* (2017) note that convergence has been examined and analysed widely for almost two decades (Spyridou *et al.*, 2017). To Dupagne and Garrison (2006), media convergence was first practised in Large North American media groups such as Media General, Bello Corporation and Tribune Corporation in the year 2000. This convergence process at these media organisations took the form of newsroom convergence. Thus, journalists were working for the newspaper, television station and online platform operating under one roof. This according to Dupagne and Garrison (2006) triggered researchers interest in examining the actual changes in the newsroom and the effect of these changes on reporters.

The Large North American media groups were soon followed by other groups with flagship publications: *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* (Thurman & Lupton, 2008; Saltzis & Dickinson. 2008). Findings from studies on these flagship publications revealed that these media organisations too integrated their newsroom like the studies on Media General, Bello Corporation and Tribune Corporation. *The New York Times* started the integration of its print and online editions early in 2007 followed by *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Journalists in these media groups were required to produce content to both the newspaper and online edition (Thurman & Lupton, 2008; Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). These media groups engaged in more collaboration with other media companies and also developed a converged news desk that handled stories regardless of medium or distribution method.

Although there are many ways of understanding the concept of convergence, there is consensus among researchers that convergence is viewed as a multifaceted process (García Avilés, Kaltenbrunner & Meier, 2014) that can take various forms (Infotendencias Group, 2012; Quandt & Singer, 2009; Silcock & Keith, 2006). Convergence, to some extent, is a reaction to the turbulent situation experienced by the media industry (Larrondo *et al.*, 2016). Thus audiences of traditional media (especially the print) are declining; habits of news consumption are changing, and advertising revenues are diminishing even though there is increasing competition to retain them. Amid these uncertainties, media organisations are going digital to face up to the uncertain future (Larrondo *et al.*, 2016). Digitization of news production systems facilitates the erosion of borders that have traditionally separated the creation of content for print, the internet, radio and television, thus bring about media convergence (García Avilés & Carvajal, 2008).

Dave (2011) classifies media convergence into two typologies: media technology convergence and media organisation convergence. He defines convergence in media technology with two trends: the ability of different network platforms (broadcast, satellite, cable, and telecommunications) to carry similar kinds of services and the merging of consumer devices such as telephone, television and PCs. For him, convergence affects the two-step process at the heart of any media-based industry: content creation and distribution. The first step entails selecting, packaging and encoding content in a medium. The second step involves transporting content to its destination and then decoding it for use. In most instances, it is the second step that defines the particular media market which influences the form taken by the content in the first step.

Under the media organisation convergence, Dave (2011) argues in support of Jenkins (2006) that convergence is not just a technological phenomenon. Technology is just half of the story while the other half is business which is the driving force behind the convergence. For Dave (2011), this assertion is based on the competitive nature of the media market and the fact that media organisations must continue to remain relevant by reaching out to audience members to attract adverts to maximise profit. He classified this type of convergence into four in his discussions: ownership convergence (which has to do with the ownership of multiple content or distribution system. Thus a company that own newspaper, television, internet and other media properties); tactical convergence (this happens through collaboration between different media houses in terms of content generation and distribution); convergence of journalism skills (this is where journalists are equipped with multimedia competence to be able to produce for more than one platform); and newsroom convergence, which Dave (2011) also termed as structural convergence. This type of convergence is the focus of this current study.

According to Grant and Wilkinson (2010), newsroom convergence is the process whereby journalists of different platforms unite themselves in one newsroom. These journalists work on tasks consistent with the media platforms they are responsible for. Dave (2011) also states that newsroom convergence is related to the job description of journalists and the structure of the organisation. For instance, a photographer for print may be required to work on the photographs for online platforms, shoot videos and prepare content for multiple platforms. Also, in a converged newsroom, digital data in any form (text, audio and video) can be stored in one place and used in different platforms. Several studies and models are presented by media researchers and professionals on newsroom convergence across the world (Garcia Aviles *et al.*, 2014). However, there has not been any identified model within the

Ghanaian context in literature. This may be because the convergence phenomenon is fairly new in Ghana, therefore, the need for more investigation of the phenomenon. Scholars like Dave (2011), Garcia -Aviles *et al.* (2014) and Domingo *et al.* (2016) have argued that newsroom convergence promotes synergy in news production and distribution. This is because, in a converged workspace, journalists can move freely between print, television, radio and internet outlets, interact with each other, and work together on news stories and share content.

Singer and Quandt (2009) however have noted that few journalism researchers have focused on newsroom convergence, particularly concerning changes in work routines and organisational structures connected to the production of content across media platforms. Nevertheless, Larrondo *et al.* (2016) have noted that studies on newsroom convergence have increased in the last decade but Ghana seems to be an exception to this assertion. As indicated earlier in this study, Ghana's media industry is not an exception to the ongoing innovations in terms of the practice of media convergence. However, these innovations in the Ghanaian media newsrooms seems to be undocumented in literature. The foregoing justifies the need for this study.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The news media is an essential part of our everyday activity, especially as they help provide information to meet the diversified needs of the public (Zakaria, 2017). The introduction of the internet, digital devices and social media technologies have united to create a favourable environment for audiences to access multiple news stories on time outside the traditional media package (Alejandro, 2010; Newman, Dutton & Blank, 2012). This has resulted in audience fragmentation within the media industry. However, news organisations have implemented newsroom convergence models with different business strategies, newsroom structures, and production processes and cross-

media delivery (Zhang 2012) to meet the challenges of audience fragmentation, the decline of the advertising model and shrinking revenues as well as hyper-competition coming from old and new media and most recently social networks (Bell 2016)

The introduction of digitalisation at the beginning of the twenty-first century, brought about high hopes regarding the benefits that convergence would bring (Saridou, Spyridou & Veglis 2017). This was particularly not only in economic terms, but also in enabling news media to benefit from the technological capabilities to produce reliable, diverse and adequate content to serve an informed citizenry (Saridou et al., 2017). Besides, in terms of business, convergence was to foster cost-effective production by expediting the sharing of information and resources, as well as coordinating the distribution of content across multiple platforms (Mico', Masip & Domingo, 2013).

Research on convergence in the field of journalism has increased notably in recent years (Erdal 2011; Infotendencias Group 2012; Kaltenbrunner & Meier, 2013) and newsroom convergence is one of the areas that scholars are giving attention to. Though scholars such as Alzahrani, A. (2016), Van den Bulck and Tambuyzer (2013), Garcia-Avilés and Carvajal (2008), García-Avilés et al (2014), Gu (2016), Larrondo, Domingo, Erdal, Masip and Bulck (2014), Saridou, Spyridou and Veglis (2017) and Verweij (2009) have carried out studies in newsroom convergence, it appears most of these works are usually situated within the Western context.

For instance, García-Avilés and Carvajal (2008) studied how converged newsrooms operate in Spain using three media organisations as case studies. Their study builds on the relevant literature about the implementation of newsroom convergence in Europe and the USA. The results suggest the emergence of two different models of newsroom convergence: the integrated model and the cross-media model,

each with a different production system, newsroom organisation, degree of journalists' multiskilling and business strategy.

Also, García-Avilés, Kaltenbrunner and Meier (2014) did a comparative study that monitored convergence and integration processes in newsrooms in Spain (*El Mundo*), Germany (*Die Welt*) and Austria (*Der Standard*). The study revealed that multi-media content production brought with it more demands and more workload to journalists. However, production collaboration amongst newspaper, television and online editors was partially working. The study further recommended the need for training to improve on convergence delivery in converged newsrooms.

Furthermore, Larrondo *et al.* (2016), in multiple-case study design investigated the current convergence processes of five European mid-sized public broadcasting corporation in the United Kingdom's *BBC Scotland*, Spain's *CCMA* and *EITB*, Norway's *NRK* and Flemish-Belgian *VRT*. The study explored the opportunities and limitations of newsroom convergence and found out that public broadcasters tend to follow a similar pattern in basic aspects, like grouping radio, television and online newsrooms together in the same physical space. The findings also showed that media professionals in all the case studies perceived convergence in newsrooms as an unavoidable and progressive.

Within the African context, few studies (Van Noort, 2007; Gicobi, 2018) have been done on newsroom convergence. For instance, Van Noort's (2007) study focused on newsroom convergence in the *Mail* and *Guardian* newspapers and their online editions in South Africa. The study focused on the attitudes and views of reporters and editors towards newsroom convergence and the notion of cultural resistance against change in the newsroom; one of the major challenges in the process (Huang, 2006). The study found out that communication problems between the newsrooms, different

production cycles and time management issues were the prominent difficulties faced by these organisations. Gicobi (2018) also examined convergence at Nation Media Group in Kenya, using the business section as the case study. The study found out that convergence at the Nation Media Group's business desk kept changing with new ideas and strategies being employed. The study revealed that the production of multi-media content for different platforms brought with it more demands and more workload.

In the Ghanaian context, it appears studies on media convergence are scant while that of newsroom convergence is non-existent. Review of studies on newsroom activities in Ghana mainly focused on the integration of new media technologies in the work routines of traditional newsrooms, and how journalists abide by professional practices. Available studies have examined how technology and social media are enhancing news production and dissemination (Deo-Silas, 2013; Zakaria, 2017; Gomez-Mensah, 2016). The study by Deo-Silas (2013) on the influence of social media among newsroom journalists and their organisations in Ghana revealed that the news media in Ghana were largely open to using social media. The findings revealed that the news media in Ghana were largely open to using social media as part of their newsgathering and distribution processes. Zakaria (2017) also in examining social media use by two radio stations in Accra (*Peace FM* and *Citi FM*) adds that social media has been useful in enhancing journalistic tasks of news gathering, sourcing, news reporting, news editing, and public engagement or interactivity.

Also, Gomez- Mensah (2016) in his thesis research on how new technologies are affecting newsgathering, production and delivery in Ghana, found that technological innovations in the newsrooms of Ghana have brought about changes in newsgathering, production and dissemination. Thus, the use of memory cards in storing information gathered and online streaming of news

In another study, Fosu and Akpojivi (2015) focused on media convergence practices and production in Ghana and Nigeria and their implications for democracy and research in Africa. The study presented an overview of the media convergence practices in Ghana and Nigeria and their potential impact on the countries' democracy. The authors avowed that although media convergence has been in the literature for more than two decades and has referred to various merging and interactive processes of organisations and productions, the concept is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa because of the late and slow impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the continent. This assertion may justify the reason that not much empirical attention has been given to media convergence in general and newsroom convergence in particular: even though media convergence practices are becoming common in Ghana.

Therefore, this study attempts to investigate newsroom convergence in Ghana, using Kessben Media as a case study. Specifically, it seeks to explore how newsroom convergence is practised. This study is motivated by the necessity to analyse each newsroom convergence model in its context (Quinn, 2005) and the scantiness of empirical evidence in newsroom convergence studies in Africa (Gicobi, 2018). There is a gap in the study of newsroom activities with the advent of media convergence in Ghana and this study aims to fill this gap.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The study seeks to address the following objectives;

1. To examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media
2. To examine the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media



3. To analyse the perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media

### **1.3 Research questions**

Based on the above objectives, the study, therefore, seeks to find answers to the following questions;

1. What model of newsroom convergence is practised at Kessben Media?
2. What are the motivations for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media?
3. What are the perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence in Kessben Media?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study will enrich the current discourse on media convergence in general and convergence in Africa and Ghana in particular. It will do so by not only adding to the scanty literature on convergence practices in Ghana but also fill the academic lacuna inherent within the broader discourse in the world.

The findings of this study will also assist to give knowledge on how converged newsrooms operate and the various activities that goes on in such newsrooms. Also answers from editors and reporters will be useful to managers and owners of media houses who are on the verge of introducing such phenomenon.

Beyond this, findings arising out of the study will provide the media organisation under investigation documentary evidence as to how they are leveraging newsroom convergence for news production. This is expected to help inform and shape policies and strategies regarding newsroom convergence.

## **1.5 Delimitation/Scope of study**

This study focused on examining how newsroom convergence is practised in Ghana. However, research was limited to the Ashanti region with the study of Kessben Media in Kumasi. The study also examined the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence. For this study, the researcher examined one media outlet in Ghana-Kessben Media. The aim was to provide a case analysis of how Kessben Media practice newsroom convergence.

The selection of this media house enabled the researcher to collect credible and reliable information on how newsroom convergence is practised in Ghana. The researcher operationally defined newsroom convergence as the coming together of journalists who work for various news platform in one newsroom to produce and distribute content for multiple platforms.

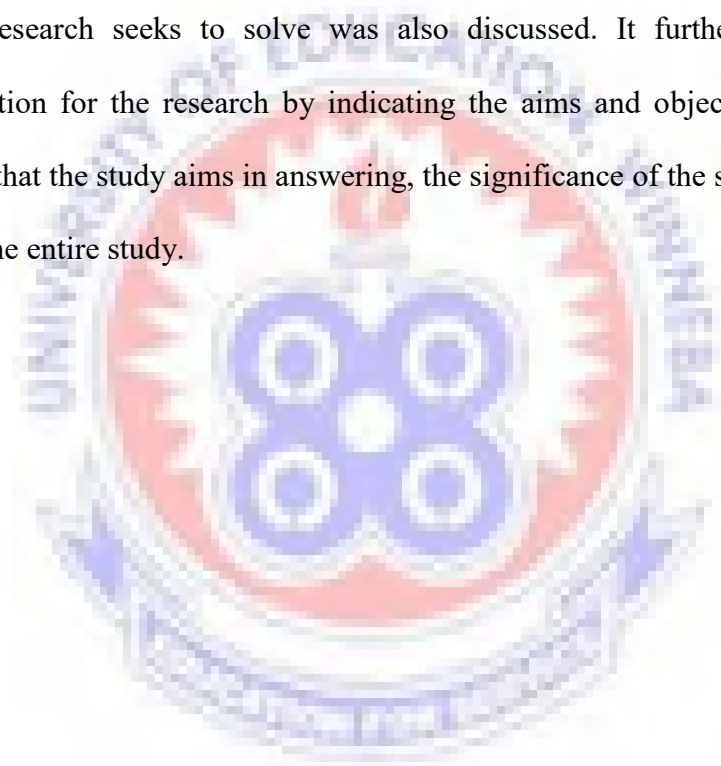
## **1.6 Organisation of the Study**

The study is made up of five chapters. The first chapter, which is the introductory part, consist of the background of the study, the objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and organisation of the study. The second chapter, on the other hand, centers on the literature review and the theoretical frameworks of the study. Again, the research approach and design is presented in chapter three. The chapter three also features the process and procedures in the collection and analysis of data, sampling technique and sample size, data collection methods and procedure, data analysis process, the data analysis method, ethical issues, trustworthiness and credibility. Conversely, the next chapter which is chapter four focuses on the findings and analysis of the data collected. The issues are

presented in themes and explained by using concepts in the literature review and the theoretical frameworks. The final chapter (chapter 5) provides a summary of the entire study, draws conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations for future studies.

## **1.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented an introduction to the entire thesis as it sought to give background information on the study. Aside from the background, the main problem that the research seeks to solve was also discussed. It furthermore provided a rationalisation for the research by indicating the aims and objectives, key research questions that the study aims in answering, the significance of the study, as well as the scope of the entire study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature on the following: media convergence; motivation for media convergence; stakeholder's perspectives on media convergence; newsroom convergence practice; models of newsroom convergence and newsroom convergence in Africa. Again, the chapter discusses the media convergence theory and models that underpin the study and their relevance.

#### 2.1 Media Convergence

There have been several attempts by scholars to define media convergence. For instance, Singer (2004) in his seminal work defined media convergence to be the combination of technologies, products, staff, and geography among the previously distinct provinces of print, television, and online media. Lawson-Borders (2003), defines media convergence as a combination of traditional media (newspapers, television, radio) alongside new media systems like computers and the internet to guarantee the distribution of media products to different, varied audiences. He avers further that it is the bringing together of strategic, operational, content, and culture of newspaper, audio, video, and collaborative digital news services and organisations. More so for Kemboi (2010), convergence could also mean online journalism, digital journalism, internet journalism, citizen journalism, or web journalism.

Scholars like Pavlik (2004) have intimated that convergence is reshaping the landscape of journalism in a variety of ways to the extent that newsroom structures, journalistic practices, and news content are all evolving. The process has been described

by Deuze (2004) as the increasing collaboration and cooperation between a formerly distinct media newsroom and other parts of the media. It often consists of partnerships among media organisations to meet a variety of technological, editorial, regulatory, and market-based challenges (Garcia-Aviles & Carvajal, 2008).

According to Miller (2011), the concept of media convergence is very old, even though it is seen as a recent development. This assertion is evidenced by Biagi's (1996) claim that convergence journalism started when media houses began delivering news and newspapers electronically in the 1990s. Quinn (2005), also states that a large number of media companies in Europe and the USA began a process of convergence in the late '90s and early 2000's even though the concept was still in its infancy at the time of his study. He further cautioned that the introduction of media convergence poses relevant questions about the future of journalism. Quinn (2005) attributes this to the fact that the digitization of news production systems would facilitate the erosion of borders that have traditionally separated the creation of content for print, the internet, radio, and television, thus allowing media convergence. He adds that digital systems allow journalists to share data files (audio, video, and text) with increasing versatility, to elaborate content for the various platforms. Fidler (1997), also posited earlier that a true transformation in the media is taking place based on the multimedia integration provided by the internet, while at the same time specific content is being developed for each platform. Such convergence occurs in a market context characterised by the fall of newspaper circulation worldwide, the stagnation of television audiences, the growth of internet news users, the introduction of budgetary cuts in news departments, and media diversification (Deuze, 2004; Klinenberg, 2005).

Moreover, Jenkins (2001) expands the concept of media convergence by describing media convergence in five processes: technological convergence, economic

convergence, social or organic convergence, cultural convergence, and global convergence. Grounded on his expansion, the five processes are explained as follows: First, he indicates that technological convergence denotes the digitization of all media content. That is the transformation of words, images, and sound into digital information, it expands the potential relationships between them and hence enables them to flow across media platforms. The second process which is, economic or ownership convergence refers to the horizontal integration of the entertainment industry. For instance, an organisation like Time Warner controls interests in film, television, books, games, the Web, music, real estate, and countless other sectors. Fidler (1997) sees this process as corporate mergers. He explains that “merger infers that two or more companies (for example companies, technologies, or media) are coming together to form a single, integrated entity” (p.27).

The third process, social or organic convergence, according to the author means consumers’ multitasking strategies for navigating the new information environment. Jenkins (2001) exemplifies this process as what happens when a student in a high school is watching football on a big-screen television, listening to techno on the stereo, word-processing a paper, and writing an e-mail to his friends. The next one is cultural convergence, which exploits innovative methods of creativity at the connections of several media technologies, industries, and consumers. Jenkins contends that media convergence inspires transmedia story-telling and content production across multiple channels. The last process as espoused by Jenkins (2001) is a global convergence. This process refers to the cultural hybridity that is based on the international circulation of media content.

Despite the variations in the definition of media convergence, critical analysis of the literature shows that it is inseparably related to industry convergence. Since 1996,

the communications, computer, and media sectors have found a common path, facilitated by the deregulation of communications law, media digitalization, and the global reach of the internet (Wirtz, 2001). As the business of content providers and distributors came closer, many companies positioned themselves strategically in the new scenario, forging alliances with partners from other sectors (Chan-Olmsted & Chang, 2003). Thus, the process of fusions, mergers, and acquisitions of traditional and new media accelerated the transition to the converged era, where media cross-ownership and business economics shape market structure (Jenkins, 2006). As managers perceived the internet as a multimedia platform, convergence has grown to currently become the strategic option for many media companies. This leads us to the discussion for the next section of this chapter. The next section discusses the reasons that have been identified in literature as the rationale behind the increase in the implementation of media convergence practices in media organisations around the world.

### ***2.1.1 Motivations for media convergence practice***

Studies have made attempts to provide reasons for the implementation of convergence practices by media owners across the globe. Review of the literature indicates that these reasons are argued from two perspectives, that is, economic and professional. For instance, Scholars like Doyle (2002) argue that most of the major decisions made by media owners are influenced by economic factors such as resources and financial issues. This is so because, Hoynes (2013) avers that media organisations do not work in isolation from the social world. Instead, they work within the constraints of an existing organisation, broader media industry, and a larger social context. Doyle (2002) adds that media industries operate in what Picard (1989) refers to as a “dual product” market. That is, media organisations generate two types of commodities.

The first commodity, according to Doyle, is content (such as, television programs, newspaper copy and magazine articles) which are consumed by audiences, and the second is audiences. The commodification of audiences is because media organisations sell their audiences to advertisers. This is based on the fact that advertisers are also interested in reaching out to these audiences with their products and services (Doyle, 2002). This leads us to one identified motivation for the implementation of convergence practices at several media organisations under the economic perspective. Zyang (2008), identified profit-making as one of the reasons for this practice. This reason is affirmed by Hoynes's (2013) belief that in a capitalist system, mass media organisations must focus on one underlying goal: the creation of products that will bring about fiscal benefits. One of the most sensitive treatments to the issue of profit requirements influencing media production is Gitlin's (2000) classic analysis of network television in *Inside Prime Time*. The study explored the decision-making processes at the then three major U.S networks (Media General, Bello Corporation and Tribune Corporation). The study found out that the pressure of making profits sets the framework for programming decisions. The author realised that the goal of network executives is steady profits. It was revealed that executives achieve profits by broadcasting programmes that will attract large audiences that will, in turn, lead to the sale of advertising slots.

According to Hoynes (2013), the media currently is commercialised; hence advertising has become the main source of revenue. Adding that the media attracts these advertisers based on audience patronage of their programs. The main concern for editors, publishers, and media owners is, therefore, to avoid losing advertisers or displeasing owners. Again, Zyang (2012) argues that with the practice of convergence, specifically newsroom convergence, media organisations can distribute news and



entertainment to a wider audience using limited resources in terms of humans, material, and financial. This falls in line with Doyle's (2002) assertion that as a result of the potential for economies of scale and scope, in the convergence practice, the greater the number of products and services that can be delivered to consumers through the same communications, the better the economics of each service will be. Doyle (2002) adds that economies of scale and scope are two different dimensions of economies, but they exist in any industry. He further explains that economies of scale happen where marginal costs (which result from producing one more unit of production) are lower than average costs (the cost of providing the product or service divided by the total number of buyers of the product or service). Economies of scope, on the other hand, happen where it is less costly to combine two or more product lines in one firm than to produce them separately. He adds that as the quantity of output increases (produces more content for multiple platforms) the cost for producing each unit, the average cost, drops, and thus large-scale production is more efficient than small-scale production. Thus, scope economies are generally available to media companies that are engaged in multimedia production of news (Doyle, 2002)

A study by Perryman (2008) entitled, *'Doctor Who' and the Convergence of Media*, tried to find out if most of the multimedia approaches used by the BBC have affected their branding and marketing through economies of scale and scope and have aided several related media platforms to work together to create a consistent and pleasing whole. The study realised that the British science fiction series, *Doctor Who*, embraces the culture of convergence on the highest level ever, with the BBC using the series to try a profusion of new technologies (such as mini-episodes on cell phones, podcast commentaries, interactive red-button adventures, video blogs, and companion programming). The study again identified that but for the fact that the mini-episodes on

cell phones programme failed to find an audience, all the BBC's experiments achieved some breakthrough accomplishments in such aspects as the interactive adventures, webcasts, online games, and podcasts. These experiments were conducted by the BBC under the theoretical frame of scope economy even though the author did not explicitly state it. Quinn (2004) avers that cross-promotion of other media outlets in the same group offers a way to market other members of the group or partnership cheaply, and it also presents major opportunities to sell multiple-media advertising campaigns.

Another motivation identified in the literature is the motivation of competitive advantage. Dessler (1999) avers that organisations attempt to achieve competitive advantage for any business they are engaged in. The torchbearer of this idea, Porter (1985), in his *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Super Performance* defines competitive advantage as looking for a beneficial competitive edge in an industry, which in actual sense is a lasting position against the factors that establish industry competition.

In recent times, Wang (2014) espouses that competitive advantage is achieved when an organisation develops a set of attributes that set them apart from their competitors. Porter (1985) as cited in Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung and Yin-Chien (2011) postulate two basic types of competitive advantages: cost leadership and differentiation. The first type implies that a firm sets out to become the low-cost producer in its industry. In a differentiation strategy, a firm seeks to be unique in its industry along with some dimensions that are widely valued by buyers.

Zhang (2008) did a qualitative study at four media conglomerates that have incorporated convergence as part of their journalistic practices and marketing strategies in the US (namely; Tribune Company in Chicago; the Tampa News Center of Media General Inc. in Richmond, VA; The Sarasota Herald-Tribune Media Group (belonging

to the New York Times Co.) in Sarasota, FL; and the World Company, in Lawrence, KS). The study sought to examine whether media convergence brings together good journalism, economic synergies, and competitive advantages. The study, through interviews, revealed that the introduction of media convergence was to minimise the limited resources of the media and at the same time satisfy the wants from both the public and the private sectors. Again, it established that Media General's News Center in Tampa is a typical example that demonstrates the resource-sharing operation of a media convergence. That is, Media General's News Center print, broadcast, and online occupy separate parts of the building and retain editorial independence, but the three platforms cooperate fully in newsgathering and share information freely. Each of the three is strengthened by contributions from its partners. For instance, Tribune reporters appear on TV WFLA while journalists from WFLA write for the paper, and online producers contribute to all platforms. Thus, media convergence offers people a variety of information through various platforms and as a result save resources. Similarly, Chyi and Sylvie (2001) argue that whenever print and broadcast media are made available online, it will increase their audiences and market. This is because internet technology allows for a worldwide market. Thus, media convergence provides gratification for the two ways to achieve competitive advantage: the low-cost leader, and differentiation, which may be understood in the way that Tampa Tribune, The New York Times and Belo Corp models are somewhat unique to their competitors (Zhang, 2008).

Away from economic motivations, studies have also shown that media organisations practice convergence because it brings about good journalism. This according to Zhang (2008) is seen through rich media content and improvement in the credibility of the media. He contends that cooperation among journalists for different platforms has the ability and strengths to improve each other and their outputs. Thus,

convergence enhances content by using pictures, videos, and text to enrich online content. Thelen (2002) adds that for media convergence to be enhanced, it is expedient to do good journalism. He again believes that multimedia news organisation can pick from several story-telling devices and techniques to enhance impact and understanding. It can improve credibility because of the increased transparency of Web presentation.

In furtherance, Zhang (2002) argues that convergence unquestionably augments content by enabling media organisations to distribute news and information by complementary means. For instance, a report in the newspaper can be accompanied by an information box that directs readers to supplemental content online. An online report can include video sections that enable the consumer to see or hear what happened. Also, an investigative series can include all three: print, online, and video. Convergence has a snowball effect, which enables news organisations to tell the story in several ways and with any number of blends. This results in journalism with more details and magnitude. Zhang's (2008) study concluded that there is a strong correlation between media convergence and good journalism. That is, convergence undoubtedly brings about good journalism.

To conclude on this section, Murphy (2002) and Zhang (2008) argue that the most experienced in convergence expect that media convergence will create good journalism, generate profits, and lower cost, thus achieving the media's competitive advantage. The discussions in this section further provide further enlightenment on the dichotomy of the link between convergence and good business: one is that successful convergence satisfies the twin aims of good journalism and good business practices (Quinn, 2004), and the other is that the expected economic advantages have not yet reached their full potential (Dupagne & Garrison, 2006). Also, the discussions here enable the current study to ascertain if findings of research question two (2), which

sought to examine the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence in Ghana, is in line with literature. The current study, therefore, sought to affirm or debunk and at the same time provide additional information by adding to literature. The next section discusses the viewpoint for journalists and media managers on the practice of this phenomenon.

### **2.1.2 Stakeholder's perspectives on media convergence**

The introduction of media convergence, in general, has been met with several views and opinions. Studies have shown that both media managers and journalists who are the key actors of media convergence have different views when it comes to its implementation. Studies have revealed that even though journalists are antagonised with multiple challenges, they do not essentially see media convergence as a bad practice in their evaluation (Xiong & Zhang, 2018). For that reason, Mishra (2016), and Saltzis and Dickinson (2008) argue that the perspectives of journalists on media convergence can be determined by the degree of media convergence and size of a media organisation. Thus, they affect their attitude towards media convergence. Several studies have identified the perspectives of journalists toward the practice of media convergence. For instance, Singer (2004) in his study entitled, *Strange Bedfellows? The Diffusion of Convergence in Four News Organisations*, examined newsroom convergence in four news organisations in the US, namely, Dallas Morning News, Tampa Tribune, Sarasota (FL)Herald-Tribune, and Lawrence (KS)Journal-world. The study, using the framework of the diffusion of innovation theory, employed a mixed-method approach with interviews and questionnaires as a data collection instruments to analyse journalists' responses to newsroom convergence. Singer (2004) found that even though there are issues of culture clashes and other issues of compatibility in the

newsroom, journalists in the four news organisations see clear advantages to the news policy of convergence. That is, journalists perceived experience in the converged newsroom as a career booster. Also, journalists noted that they enjoy working with colleagues whose strengths differ from their own, and admit that convergence has led to respect for people in other parts of the news organisation.

Again, the study established that journalists perceive convergence to be a phenomenon that has enhanced the public service value of their media organisation because of access to expanded resources and avenues for storytelling. The study concluded that even though most journalists acknowledge and even appreciate the relative advantages of media convergence, comments and survey responses indicate concerns with compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Still, the overall view was generally favourable.

Similarly, Singer (2006) in another study sought to find out whether journalists from four converged newsrooms (Dallas Morning News, Tampa Tribune, Sarasota (FL) Herald-Tribune, and Lawrence (KS) Journal-world) in the US perceive convergence as posing threats to public service norms. This study employed a qualitative approach using interviews as the data collection method. The study established that newsroom convergence has made reporters more visible. This was because reporters were writing and reporting stories for multiple platforms and that enhanced their visibility. The study also revealed that journalists, in general, saw convergence as beneficial in dealing with public officials or other prominent sources. That is, an online publication can force a news source to issue a response in the next day's paper. However, the study found out that journalists were concerned about what they saw as excessive use of one medium to promote, or market another. The study concluded that although some journalists saw

convergence as an economic venture that might weaken their news products in several ways, there was no consensus to that effect.

However, in another study, Wallace (2013) qualitatively explored the increase in the practice of multiskilling in the newsroom by examining if such practices were deskilling or reskilling journalists. The study sampled journalists and managers of three regional newsrooms at the BBC. This selection was because the introduction of newsroom convergence was more rapid at the regional level than at the national level. The study followed a grounded theory style of research. Sampling was done purposively and data for the study were collected using a semi-structured interview guide. These were conducted in two phases, the first was between July and September 1997 at BBC West and between January and August 1999 at BBC South. In total there were 24 such interviews. In the second phase of research 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists, editors, and managers, at BBC West, BBC Oxford, and BBC South between June and July 2009. A further three interviews were similarly recorded in 2010 and 2011. The data were supplemented by observation in each newsroom. The study, through the interviews, found that journalists perceived newsroom convergence to be a stressful practice. This was attributed to the increase in multiskilling and the reduction in the workforce in the newsroom.

However, the study established that journalists believed that there was more collaboration, mutual support, and teamwork in the newsroom because of the practice of multiskilling. Again, journalists were enjoying more autonomy because of their ability to act as both solo newsgatherer and editor of their material. Another perspective from journalists in the BBC newsroom, according to Wallace (2013), is that multiskilling which is a requirement in the practice of newsroom convergence has improved the output. This is partly attributed to the fact that there is a greater range of

contributors to different media. The study concluded that multiskilled journalists realised that the practice of multiskilling has added to their overall skill set, and has enhanced job satisfaction as well as career prospects.

In consonance with Wallace (2013) and within the African context, Gicobi (2018) in her study of newsroom convergence in Nations Media Group employed a qualitative approach through interviews and observations and found that journalists at the Nations Media Group also prescribe to the argument that newsroom convergence has increased the work demands of journalists.

In furtherance, a case study of the Shenzhen Newspaper Group in China conducted by Yin and Liu (2014) revealed a pessimistic view on media convergence from journalists in the organisation and emphasised that the analysis of media convergence in non-Western countries must be contextualized within the relationship between state and media. Similarly, Xiong and Zhang (2018), through the mixed-method approach, employed survey and interviews as data collection methods to analyse the perspectives of journalists and managers who work for press groups in Fujian, China. The findings of the study revealed that most journalists held pessimistic views towards the practice of convergence. They believe that though it has enhanced the requirements for timeliness and accuracy of news production, it has as well increased the intensity of journalists' workload. The pessimistic attitude of local journalists in Fujian towards media convergence results from the joint effect of the structural pressure brought by censorship, bureaucratic styles, and administrative barriers as well as the journalists' appeal for professional dignity.

From the above discussions under this section, it can be concluded that journalists have different perspectives on the practice of newsroom convergence. These perspectives are both positive and negative. For instance, Singer (2004; 2006) generally



found that journalists in the US perceived newsroom convergence having enhanced their work. Even though the findings of Wallace (2013) have elements that talk about the positive aspect of newsroom convergence, journalists largely perceived the practice as having negative influence on their work. This was also supported by Gicobi (2018). Again, two studies from China by Yin and Liu (2014) and Xiong and Zhang (2018) generally established that journalists in the media houses studied were largely pessimistic about the practice of media convergence.

Lastly, concerning the current study, the reviews discussed in this section helped the researcher to analyse research question three for this study which sought to analyse the perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. For this study, the discussions expose the researcher to insights that would aid the analysis of the research question.

## **2.2 Newsroom Convergence**

Scholars have made attempts to provide a definition for newsroom convergence. For instance, Grant and Wilkinson (2010) define newsroom convergence as the process of merging multi-platform journalist in a single newsroom for the production of news content for multiple platforms. Also, Dave (2011) posits that newsroom convergence is identified through how an organisation is structured as well as the job descriptions of journalists. That is, newsroom convergence brings about a redefinition of the job description in the newsroom. Cottle and Ashton (1999), in their seminal work on changing journalistic practices at the BBC in the wake of digitization, aver that newsroom convergence emerged as a sub-field of media studies in general, and news production studies in particular. This phenomenon started to gain attention in the early 2000s (Boczkowski, 2004; Klinnerberg, 2005). These scholars studied digital

technologies in newsrooms from the viewpoint of the digitalization of print media and the production of content for multiple platforms.

Subsequently, several studies have been done on the practice of newsroom convergence. For instance, García -Avilés and Carvajal (2008) qualitatively studied the work of journalists in newsrooms that produce content for multiple media: print, radio, television, and the internet in Spain. Their study was an extension of already existing studies on the implementation of newsroom convergence in the USA and Europe. Specifically, the study analyses change in journalistic practice and newsroom workflow in the newsrooms of two Spanish multimedia groups: (a) La Verdad Multimedia, a regional media group owned by Vocento, which publishes the newspaper *La Verdad*, the online site, *La Verdad.es*, the local radio station, *Punto Radio* and the television station, *Punto TV*; and (b) Novotécnica, a regional independent company which publishes the newspaper, *La Voz de Almería*, *Radio Almería (Cadena Ser)* and *Localia television*. The researchers interviewed reporters and news directors and observed newsroom practices. The results suggest the emergence of two different models of newsroom convergence: the integrated model and the cross-media model. Each of the models has a different production system, newsroom organisation, degree of journalists' multiskilling and business strategy

Similarly, Garcia-Aviles, Meier, Kaltenbrunner, Carvajal, and Kraus (2009) used a qualitative approach with a case study as the design to conduct a comparative study of six media organisations in three European countries (Germany, Spain, and Austria). Their study sought to identify the type of convergence strategy employed in each case. The study purposively selected media organisations with print as their traditional core product. The study examined two cases each from each of the three countries. The researchers interviewed 28 managers and also conducted a newsroom

observation in all the six media organisations to collect data for this study. The media organisations selected for this study were the Osterreich and Der Standard in Austria, La Verdad Multimedia and El Mundo in Spain, and in Germany, Die Welt/Morgenpost-group and Hessische-Niedersächsische Allgemeine (HNA) were selected.

The study found out that in Austria, the Osterreich originally set up their newsrooms to enhance the integration of print and online journalists, however, the plan did not work. This is because about 15 journalists working for their online news portal had their newsroom section. The study attributed this to the fact that even though editors in the newsroom wanted the journalists to work together, they still preferred to have specific journalists working for each platform. That is, every journalist is responsible for news production on his or her platform. With regards to Der Standard, the study revealed that both the print and online platforms had a separate newsroom. However, the online platform republishes all stories published in the newspaper. The online company paid for all content republished from the newspaper. It was also established by the researchers that few journalists and editors were sometimes involved in cross-media production, though, it was not part of the management strategy of the organisation.

In Spain, the study revealed that journalists for print and online had an integrated newsroom and also worked together to produce content for the two platforms. The study, however, found that even though journalists at El Mundo resisted the move to have an integrated newsroom in the first few weeks, they later began to appreciate the move because they realised they were able to accomplish a lot by working together as a group in the newsroom to produce content for the platforms. El Mundo's newsroom, therefore, eroded the distinction between print and online journalists through the practices in the newsroom as the newspaper journalists were

required to work on content production for online and vice versa. In contrast, the researchers realised that at La Verdad Multimedia, convergence was seen at the website of the newspaper, which republishes stories from the print edition but it was not a management policy for journalists to work for more than one platform, even though its journalists were aware that they were sometimes expected to cooperate with other journalists for other platforms.

Besides, the researchers noted that when TV and Radio were introduced in 2004 to La Verdad Multimedia, a multimedia co-ordinator was appointed to ensure the sharing of content among the platforms. However, this co-ordination did not include journalists of one medium working for another medium. The various platforms continued to have their independent newsrooms. The study further observed that the levels of collaboration amongst editors were higher than reporters. This was seen in the fact that news editors from print, online, and audio-visual met frequently "to exchange ideas, provide each other with feedback, share material from the stories they have covered, plan longer investigative pieces together and share the cost for special projects" (pg 291).

In Germany, Garcia Aviles *et al.* (2009) aver that at Die Welt/Morgenpost-group the steps towards newsroom convergence started with the merger of the newsrooms of their national and regional newspapers (Die Welt and Berliner Morgenpost) in 2002. This process continued until all newsrooms were converged in 2007. The study added that 70% of the journalists in the newsroom were involved in multi-platform content production while 30% were only involved in working for a single platform. Journalists in the newsroom admitted to an increase in workload as well as a change in the organisation of work in the newsroom. The study also established that there were differences in the employment contracts for print and online

journalists, even though the workload had increased in the newsroom due to the convergence and the demands that come with it. Online editors' salaries were lower than their print counterparts and the differences in contracts cause unrest among many staffers. In terms of training, the study observed that more than 100 journalists had received training, especially on mindset and how to work on the online platform.

Furthermore, the study revealed that at Die Welt/Morgenpost-group, the newsroom convergence process led to an increase in profit and job cuts among the editorial staff. It was identified that almost 100 workers in 2002 and 57 in 2006 were laid off as a result of the practice of newsroom convergence, even though newsroom convergence brought with it the expansion of the online section. The study noted that Die Welt had never made a profit since its introduction in 1946 but after the convergence, it recorded its first profit in 2007.

At the second media organisation selected for the study in Germany, Hessische/Niedersächsische Allgemeine (HNA), Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2009) noted that Print and Web contents are produced in a joint office work the online team and print team work together. However, the study realised that Hessische/Niedersächsische Allgemeine (HNA) practices more of the cross-media co-operation as online journalists are responsible for online operations while print editors are in-charge of supplying them with content. Managers of the media house espoused that 50% of contents for the newspaper are published online. Unlike the case of Die Welt/Morgenpost-group, print and online journalists at Hessische/Niedersächsische Allgemeine (HNA) enjoyed the same employment contracts and similar salaries. This led to job satisfaction even though the workload had increased. Based on the findings from the six case studies, the authors identified three models of newsroom convergence (Integrated model, Cross-

Media model and the Coordination of Isolated model). These models are discussed extensively in the next section.

In 2014, Garcia-Aviles, Kaltenbrunner, and Meier (2014) conducted another study using three media organisations from the same countries used for the 2009 study (Germany, Austria, and Spain) to confirm the existence of the models identified in 2009. The study used the same approach (Qualitative), same design (case study), and the same data collection methods (interviews and observation). The study, however, used three out of the six media organisations used in 2009 (Der Standard in Austria, El Mundo on Spain, and Die Welt in Germany). The focus of the study was to examine the progress of newsroom convergence and integration in these countries. The study sampled 11 journalists as interviewees for the study as well as conducted a newsroom observation in the three media organisations. The study revealed that El Mundo was still practising the full integration model, where journalists for both print and online share the same newsroom for news production and at the same time working together to produce content for the two platforms as indicated in the 2009 study. The study also confirmed the erosion of traditional boundaries between print and online operation. This manifested in the fact that journalists for print were expected to work on online projects. There was, therefore, no difference between a print and an online journalist.

In contrast, the study found that at Der Standard in Austria journalists from the various platforms did not work together to produce content for the various platforms even though there had been a merger of the newsroom for all the platforms. The merger had only enhanced communication amongst journalists in the newsroom. The study further observed that the move to a shared newsroom was gradually helping them to move from the practice of the coordination of isolated platform model, as identified in the 2009 study, to a more integrated model.

In a comparative study of European public service broadcasting organisations, Larrondo *et al.* (2016) also studied the opportunities and limitations of newsroom convergence. The study found that public broadcasters tend to follow a similar pattern in basic aspects, like grouping radio, television, and online newsrooms together in the same physical space, even if this model had different outcomes in terms of cooperation across media and journalists' involvement.

From the discussions under this section, it can be said that in recent times in Europe, the phenomenon of newsroom convergence has gained much attention in the literature. Again from the above, the practice of newsroom convergence differs from organisation to organisation. In terms of its definition, the general idea in the reviewed literature is the coming together of journalists in a single newsroom for news production. This study, with its focus on the practice of newsroom convergence in Ghana, however, defines newsroom convergence as the process whereby multiskilled journalists work together in a single newsroom to produce news stories for multiple platforms. Notably, studies on newsroom convergence have come up with various models to help explain the phenomenon. These models are therefore discussed in the next section.

### **2.2.1 *Newsroom convergence models***

The literature on newsroom convergence has identified various models being practised by various media organisations that have implemented newsroom convergence. Lawson and Borders (2003) developed a model in their study entitled *Integrating New Media and Old Media* by arguing that media convergence is both a concept and a process. They define convergence as the wedding of technology and content delivery by a computer. They characterise convergence as the realm of

possibilities when cooperation occurs between print and broadcast for the delivery of multimedia content through the use of computers and the internet. In this model, the computer and internet are central in how information is connected from different platform's data. One of the consequences of this convergence is the interactivity that means the traditional one-way communication system modified into two-way communication.

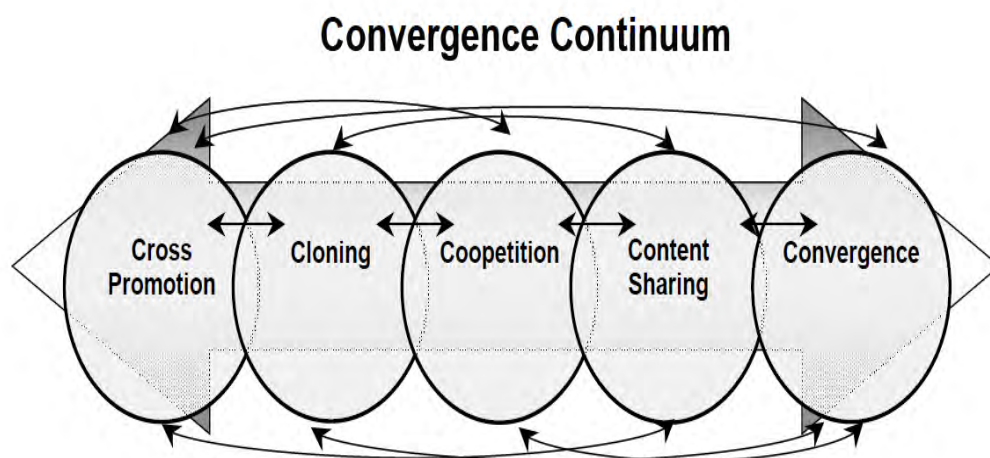
Apart from the technological aspect, Lawson- Borders model also presents seven observed elements which are practised by media organisations to integrate convergence into their business. These seven elements beginning from the letter (C) are: communication, commitment, cooperation, compensation, culture, competition, and customer. According to the authors, all the seven components are very relevant in the debate of media convergence but three elements make this model different. These are compensation, culture, and customer. Compensation is a big issue for the journalist working across platforms. Culture explains the adjustment of journalists in a converged media organisation. There are different cultures, languages, production methods, and practices for a journalist working in print, broadcast, and electronic media. The customer describes the changing relationship between the media and the audience. In traditional media theories like gatekeeper theory, it was journalists, editors, and reporters who determine the flow of information. But in a converged media it is the audience who decides when and what they select to access. Convergence has, therefore, eroded the boundaries between producer and customer. Customers do not only consume the content, but they also produce the content which is accessible to millions of people.

Also, Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005) developed a model called 'the convergence continuum'. This model is based on a behavioural approach towards convergence because the authors believe that there is no standardised definition of



convergence and a lack of common instrument which can measure the convergence efforts. This model is modelled around the degree of interaction, cooperation, and content sharing. It contains five levels of convergence, which is known as the 5 Cs. These are; Cross-promotion, Cloning, 'Coopetition', Content Sharing, and Full Convergence.

**Figure 1: Convergence Continuum, cited in Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005)**



In their graphical representation of the model, Dailey *et al.* (2005) showed 5 overlapping circles. Each circle represents a level of convergence which is defined by a set of behaviours expected to be performed by the staff at the partnering news outlets. When partnership moves towards the right or left in the next level it must be in a continuum. It means all of the interaction and cooperation expected at the previous level will remain with new behaviour. The overlapping part shows some sharing of behaviour during the transition from one level on the continuum. For instance, cloning happens when a content in a newspaper is republished on the media organisation's website without any editing.

According to this model, cross-promotion is the stage where media partners only promote each other through their respective channels; that is, publishing or

broadcasting partner's logos, allow reporters or commentators from one medium (newspapers) to appear in another medium (online) to promote their project. At the competition level, media partners reflect both cooperative and competitive characteristics. Content sharing is the level where a greater degree of interaction and 'cooperation' is shown between the staff of the media partners. They share their content, work together on special projects and investigation, exchange material to each other, and repackage it for their channel. The full convergence level is the highest level of cooperation and interaction among the partners. The partners share a central news-desk. The assignments given to the team, comprised of members from each outlet. Story is distributed and presented in each outlet as per its strength so that it can reach to the audience in a most meaningful manner.

However, Domingo *et al.* (2007) criticises that this model was presented in a linear form. They further argue that this means any form of convergence that is not full convergence is just a stage in the process. For them, convergence cannot be a linear process otherwise it will leave some part of the organisation untouched. They conclude that the convergence continuum model is only applicable for convergence of newsroom and it is also not helpful in comparison to the effect of the convergence since convergence is not measurable unless target variables are introduced.

As a result, Domingo *et al.* (2007) present another behavioural model of convergence. This model believes that convergence is a polysemous concept, but one common observation in various descriptions is the blurring of the limits between different media professional skills and roles. The model enunciates convergence into four dimensions that cover different phases of the communication process: integrated production, multiskilled professionals, multiplatform delivery, and active audience. Integrated production is related to the reorganisation of the newsroom, redefinition of

professional roles, technological innovation, and new news formats. The parameters for integrated production are collaboration (independent newsroom collaborates more or less often); coordination (more interaction through coordination desk of separate newsrooms) and integration (one newsroom that produces content for different outlets).

Multiskilled professionals analyse the redefinition of professional roles and skills of journalists. The indicators for multiskilling are media multiskilling (journalists produce content for different media); issue multiskilling (professionals report on news related to different thematic areas); and technical multiskilling (reporters are responsible for performing most of all production tasks). Furthermore, multiplatform delivery is related to the convergence of the distribution of content. The key indicator to analyse this dimension is how multiplatform delivery is managed. It can be managed by automatically redirecting content from one medium to others, or redirecting content by journalists and coordinating the production of content for multiple media by a journalist. The last dimension under this model is an active audience. This explains the convergence between producers and the audience. The indicator for this is the user's contribution in the form of comments, stories, photos, and videos.

Moreover, García -Avilés *et al.* (2009) identified three newsroom convergence models in their study on the development of newsroom convergence in six media houses in Spain, Germany, and Austria. These three models were confirmed in 2014 by Garcia- Aviles, Kaltenbrunner and Meier (2014). These models are full integration model, cross-media, and collaboration or isolated platform. According to the authors, it is important to note that none of these models exists in its 'pure form'. Also, no media company analysed in their study was dedicated to full integration, cross-media, collaboration or isolated newsrooms.

Under the full integration model, managers regard convergence as a strategic goal for the media company. Production and distribution on different platforms are subordinated to news content production. Online first became a symbol for a paradigmatic shift from newspaper production towards multimedia production. Full integration also means that training for all journalists is provided to prepare them for multimedia production. The convergence of all platforms under the same ownership becomes the primary management goal.

However, under the cross-media, journalists work in separate newsrooms or sections for different platforms but are interconnected through multimedia coordinators and work routines. Cross-media collaboration refers to a process whereby more than one media platform is simultaneously engaged in communicating content. This does not necessarily happen in a completely integrated way. Usually, the production involves different kinds of cooperation. This may range from information sharing between journalists and desks on different platforms, through reporters producing content for more than one platform, to various forms of content reproduction for different platforms.

Lastly, under the coordination or isolated platforms, journalism sections remain separate; newsroom design does not strive towards integration. Borders and differences between online, print, radio, and television sections in the same media company do not seem surmountable and convergence is not even seen as an appropriate means of quality improvement. Cooperation in news production takes place – if at all - as a bottom-up process and more or less by chance, depending on individual journalists. Managers are not yet ready for – or interested in - organized cross-media strategies or convergent production, aggregation, or distribution of news. Sometimes there is a coordination of

single topics. For example, with cross-promotions – and some journalists might attend the editorial conferences of the other platform.

Another model is the Infotendencias Group's (2012) analytical framework and its four dimensions of news convergence. These dimensions are; business convergence, professional convergence, technological convergence, and content convergence. According to them, business convergence analyses the corporate strategies of a news organisation, including newsroom integration and new forms of logistical arrangements designed to increase productivity; professional convergence looks at skills polyvalence, which refers to a journalist's multimedia and multi-tasking expertise; technological convergence emphasises cross-media and multiplatform news production and dissemination. This trend sees news companies adopt new production patterns, including multimedia content management systems that facilitate news publishing on multiple platforms simultaneously. Finally, the convergence of contents focuses on the impact of increasing demand for multimedia news on media organisations' production and dissemination strategies. This analytical framework allows for a broad analysis of social actors and technological actors in diverse activities related to convergence.

While the Infotendencias Group's (2012) framework represents a multidimensional model for examining news convergence, Chua and Westlund (2019), argue that it omits the dimension of the audience, hence, does not address the different ways social actors approach their audiences. They then propose a fifth, audience-oriented dimension to the analytical framework. This fifth dimension takes its motivation from Carlson (2018), who argues that as more newsrooms adopt more complex digital methods of quantifying and tracking their online audiences in real-time, greater attention must be paid to how the factors of materiality, practise, culture, and economics shape the relationship between newsrooms and their audiences.

To this end, Carlson (2018) outlined eight dimensions of measurable journalism: (i) material -digital news infrastructures and digital analytics software; (ii) organisational - new roles in newsrooms responsible for analysing and reacting to the metrics, and new types of digital service providers; (iii) practice - new audience engagement methods and the use of data in news decisions; (iv) professional - concerns over journalistic autonomy that includes the acceptance or resistance towards audience metrics; (v) economic - the use of data to monetize content, make resource decisions and facilitate advertising; (vi) consumption - introducing content recommendation algorithms to personalize content for audiences; (vii) cultural - wider concerns and debates over the use of story performance metrics as the deciding factor in determining newsworthiness and (viii) public policy - concerns over data security and privacy issues. Carlson (2018) stresses that these eight dimensions are “mutually constitutive” (p. 409) and researchers should approach them holistically rather than avoid over-emphasizing any element.

This section has discussed some of the models of convergence identified by previous studies on convergence. The discussion included models by Lawson - Borders (2003); Demo and Spillman (2005); Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2009); Garcia- Aviles, Kaltenbrunner and Meier (2014); and Infotendencias Group (2012). All these models in one way or another have helped various studies as well as the current study to understand what newsroom convergence is.

### **2.2.2 *Newsroom convergence in Africa***

Though implementation and study of newsroom convergence date as far back as the early 2000s in the US and Europe, that of Africa is in 2007. Van Noort (2007) studied newsroom convergence in South Africa. Her study revealed that the concept of

media convergence had gained prominence in the ongoing discussion in South Africa. She further stated that the past five Highway Africa conferences in Grahamstown had focused on media convergence. The annual Highway Africa conference is the premier ICT and journalism conference on the African content. Pioneering academic works (Berger, 2001; Berger & Mgwili-Sibanda, 2006) sparked the interest for more research on this new concept. Van Noort's (2007) thesis uses both the *Mail* and *Guardian* newspapers and their online version as the cases for the study. The study, using the mixed-method approach, viewed convergence as a process at these two media houses. The study focuses on the reporters and editors attitude towards newsroom convergence and the cultural resistance against change. Triangulation of data indicated that there were communication problems between the newsrooms as well as different production cycles and time management issues when it comes to the process of newsroom convergence.

Since then Africa has been experiencing its fair share of the digital revolution, necessitating radical adaptation and transformation of not only the media industry but also audience composition and how people access information (Fosu & Akpojivi, 2015). There is evidence that the debate on media convergence is gaining ground in Africa. For instance, Mukhongo's (2013) study on social media and youth interest in politics in Kenya and Juma's (2013) study on the adoption of new convergence technologies in journalism in Kenya acknowledge that Kenya's media is fast implementing convergence with some level of success.

Mudhai (2011) on digital openness and network convergent journalism in Kenya shows Nation Media Group and Standard Media Group have adopted structural convergence where they have created staff specifically for the digital platforms whose main task is putting the task received from print and broadcast reporters into content

for the online audience. Juma (2013), however, in her study qualitatively examined the challenges of implementing convergence journalism at the Nation's media group in Kenya. She argued from her findings that new media was quickly being adopted by Kenyan media. The study also found out that the lack of equipment and resources, as well as inadequate training, had slowed the adoption of media convergence in Kenya.

Another study in Kenya by Aduda (2016) used a mixed-method approach to study the impact of media convergence on the corporate performance of media organisations in Kenya. The study focused on the business side of the media houses like ratings, advertising, circulation, and profits without a mention of how sections of the newsroom had converged and how that affected journalist's workflow. The study found out that media convergence had affected advertising and circulation of papers leading to reduced profitability. Gicobi (2018) also examined convergence at Nation Media Group in Kenya, using the business section as the case study. The study found out that convergence at the Nation Media Group's business desk had kept changing with new ideas and strategies being employed. The study revealed that the production of multi-media content for different platforms brought with it more demands and more workload.

Ghana is no exception to the many changes that are happening in the news production processes. Several traditional media organisations at present produce news content for mobile websites and apps in part to cross-media policies, mirroring structural changes in the journalism industry and a shift in the process of news production (Jamil & Appiah-Adjei, 2019). Within the Ghanaian context, Fosu and Akpojivi (2015) have done a study on media convergence practices and production in Ghana and Nigeria and its implications for democracy and research in Africa. The study presented an overview of the media convergence practices in Ghana and Nigeria and



their potential impact on the countries' democracy. The study's aim in part was to show how the innovative use of different media platforms and audiences was leading to broader inclusion of citizens in the media discourse of Ghana and Nigeria. They employed the qualitative method through the use of interviews and observation as data collection methods to find out how the audience converge on a programme through audience participation on programmes like Peace FM's Kokrokoo in Ghana to contribute to national democracy. The study found out that one of the major motivations for these innovative practices has been the need to broaden access to media information and enhance the inclusiveness of the hitherto excluded citizens in the public space of the two countries. Also, the study argues that the use of local language by the media house in their programming ensures that accessibility to issues making the headlines in the political sphere enhanced.

However, studies on newsroom convergence remain scant within the Ghanaian context because most studies have focused on other innovations in the newsroom. For instance, Deo-Silas (2013) did a study on how journalists in the newsrooms in Ghana use social media. This thesis used in-depth interviews and a survey to investigate the influence of social media among newsroom journalists and their organisations in Ghana. The findings of the study revealed that the news media in Ghana were largely open to using social media. The findings revealed that the news media in Ghana were largely open to using social media as part of their newsgathering and distribution processes. The author espoused further that this was indifferent from the happenings in other parts of the world. Like their peers around the world, Ghanaian journalists are also adopting social media for work purposes with many noting that these new media have, to an extent, impacted the way they went about their work (Jamil and Appiah-Adjei, 2019). More so, Zakaria (2017) concluded in his study that generally, it appears

social media has not affected journalists' gatekeeping function or disrupted newsroom routines even though social media has become a part of journalistic activities in Ghana.

Zakaria (2017), in his thesis, employed cyber ethnography, interviews, and document analysis, as well as the Technology Acceptance and Technology Appropriation models, also examined social media use by two radio stations in Accra (Peace FM and Citi FM). The research revealed that social media has been useful in enhancing journalistic tasks of newsgathering, sourcing, news reporting, news editing, and public engagement or interactivity. However, the point of departure, in terms of the appropriation of social media by the two radio stations, lies in the area of news dissemination. What is, however, significant is that the two radio stations do not have any documented policies to help tackle credibility issues associated with some social media content. These studies fall under the technological convergence concept as indicated by Garcia- Aviles (2008).

Furthermore, Gomez-Mensah (2016) studied how new technologies are affecting newsgathering, production, and delivery in Ghana, using the diffusion of innovation theory and qualitative interviews. He found out that the use of technology in the newsroom of Ghana Television (GTV) has brought changes in all three processes of news gathering, production, and delivery as well as the degree of success of the diffusion of new technologies in the GTV newsroom. The study also revealed that news gathering has migrated from using tapes that record 30 to 60 minutes footages, to the use of memory cards that record many hours of an event or process, (depending on memory size) to tell a story. News processing has also shifted from cutting and joining tapes to downloading footages from cards to computers to determine which shots best tell a story. Delivery is done using new technologies that allow access on multiple platforms from digital sets to online streaming of television content.

Another study done by Jamil and Appiah-Adjei (2019) used the multiple method approach to examine the changing pattern of news production and the thriving culture of fake news in Ghana and Pakistan. The study used the lens of technological convergence, diffusion of innovation and social responsibility theories to examine how mobile journalism is altering the news production process and fostering the trend of fake news in Ghana. The study in other to accomplish its aim used the qualitative methods of document analysis and in-depth interviews to gather data that were thematically analysed. The study revealed that the use of mobile technology in news production and distribution in Ghana has enhanced the easy mobility of journalists, fast and economical production of news, and better safety level of journalists.

The discussions under this section point to the fact that the Ghanaian media is also undergoing media transformation in terms of news production and distribution. This ongoing transformation moreover, is enhancing the work of journalists in the newsrooms in Ghana. This is critical to the current study in the sense that the current study is premised on the fact that the media industry in Ghana, as it has been seen in other parts of the world, is also going through a transition and this transition has altered their operations. However, within the Ghanaian context, even though one of the changes in the media has to do with the implementation of media convergence practices, literature has given less attention to the phenomenon. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to study one aspect of media convergence practice in Ghana, which is newsroom convergence. To situate this study within a theoretical framework, the next section looked at the theories that underpin this study.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), a theory is defined as a combined or comprehensible form of propositions that provide a philosophically consistent picture of a subject. They argue that theories reduce complex experience into a manageable set of concepts and propositions to make for easy understanding. Deo-Silas (2013), sees the relationship between theory and research as a transaction where the theory determines the data to be collected on one hand and how the research findings or data support or challenge the theory on the other. Thus, theories provide the framework or model to explain and make sense of data collected. In the context of this study, media convergence theory, specifically newsroom convergence and the models of multimedia newsroom convergence are used. The current study sought to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media in Kumasi. Since the study seeks to explain how convergence works and how it has affected the work of journalists, the Media Convergence Theory and Garcia-Aviles *et al's* (2009) multimedia models of newsroom convergence have been used to explain and contextualize findings arising out of the research.

### **2.3.1 Media convergence theory**

The media convergence theory was propounded by Henry Jenkins in 2006. The theory explains the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the acceptable behaviour of media audiences who will bend over backwards in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. It posits that media convergence goes beyond a technological shift because it has also brought about changes in the relationships that exist between current technologies, industries, markets, genres, and audiences. The theory is based on the assumption that

media convergence is a process, but not an endpoint. Jenkins espouses that media convergence should be perceived as a culture. In the sense that it has revolutionised the connection that binds technology, industry, market, product type and audience. Thus, cultural shifts that fuel media convergence precede technological infrastructure. These changes from media convergence manifest in the same device, franchise and company. Again, Jenkins articulates that there is relationship between media institutions and practitioners together as a result of the culture-oriented approach of media convergence. This has therefore brought about a re-evaluation of the interplay that exists between conventional arrangement of media convergence and the thoughts and beliefs of actors and also, a reassessment of the social structure on a diminutive level resulting in bridging the gap between economics and media performance measures.

Quandt and Singer (2009) enhance this view by avowing that convergence approach has to do with the production of equal content for multiple media platforms, of which one is digital. According to the authors, journalists are deviating from creating a story for a single platform due to multi-platform content production. Rather, they are gathering information in a content pool and distributing it in different formats, comprising not only the internet but, increasingly, portable devices such as cellular phones. Singer (2004) in his seminal work posits that media convergence involves an amalgamation of various aspects of the media that were previously separated from each other. Grant and Wilkinson (2010) also argue further that the media convergence theory stresses the merging of different tools and equipment for news production and distribution since it has to do with the amalgamation of the media, telecommunications, and computer industries. The media convergence theory, however, contends that media convergence is more than a technological shift. It assumes that beyond the technological

shift, it has also brought about a change in the relationship between existing media industries, markets, genres, and audiences as well as a change in the existing relationship between technologies.

The theory further proposes that new technologies combine different mediums and as such, they redefine the media environment. Jenkins (2006) adds that consumers of media lives are normally structured and disrupted by the changes in communication and information technologies. Again, the theory also suggests that media convergence can be viewed as a top-down process pushed by media organisations and a bottom-up process pushed by consumers. Thus, on one hand, media organisations are cultivating how to persistently produce news content across multiple platforms (TV, Radio, Newspaper, Online), as they try to broaden their income base through a wider reach to reinforce the commitment of audience. On the other hand, the audience is also learning how to enhance their participation in the flow of media content and also interact with other media users.

In furtherance, Jenkins (2006) assumes media convergence to be the circulation of information across different media products, the collaboration between different media organisation and the drifting conduct of media users of media products who bent over backwards to get the kind of amusement they desire. “In the realm of media convergence, every significant story gets to be told, each brand gets to market and all the audiences are captured by any of the multimedia platforms” (Gicobi, 2018, pp13). Jenkins (2006), therefore, admonishes media content creators to clinch to the shifting media audience else they will not be profitable.

### **2.3.1.1 Relevance of theory to current study.**

The researcher employed this theory in the current study for two major reasons. The first reason is that the media convergence theory has been used by other scholars to conduct similar studies elsewhere. For instance, Gicobi (2018) used the media convergence theory to study newsroom convergence at The Nations Media Group in Kenya. The second reason is that the media convergence theory helped the researcher to analyse and answer research question two (2) which sought to analyse the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media and research question three (3) which also sought to analyse the perspectives of journalists at Kessben Media on the newsroom convergence practice.

### **2.3.2 *The models of multimedia newsroom convergence***

The models of multimedia newsroom convergence were propounded by Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008). The authors propounded the models of multimedia newsroom convergence to affirm a gap in the convergence continuum model propounded by Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005). The convergence continuum model defines news convergence as a sequence of behaviour-based activities showing the cooperation and interaction phases of journalists at newspapers, television stations, and web organisations with news partnerships along with five levels. All five levels are made up of a sequence of activities that alters the convergence continuum. The main assumption of the convergence continuum is that any form of convergence that is not full integration is just a stage in the convergence process.

However, Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008) argue that convergence is non-linear and does not necessarily mean there must be full integration before convergence can take place. That is, journalists should not necessarily share a single newsroom to

create news content for multiple platforms before convergence can be achieved. Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008) add that cooperation includes the sharing of information between journalists in different newsrooms, reporters producing for more than one platform and several kinds of repackaging of content for diverse platforms. In other cases, a single newsroom produces news for multiple platforms.

As a way of affirming the above assertions which question Dailey *et al's* (2005) convergence continuum model, Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008) identified two models of newsroom convergence in their study of newsroom convergence in Spain. These models were thus labelled as 'the models of multimedia newsroom convergence'. The two models identified are the integrated model and the cross-media model of newsroom convergence. According to Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008), the integrated model is linked to the objective of forming one journalistic culture which flouts traditional media boundaries. It guarantees that the internal company news design and structure for multimedia production are put together in a single newsroom, controlled by a central news desk. According to the authors, this makes journalists in the newsroom see and think about the organisation as a whole, and not as separate platforms.

This model, therefore, wins over the traditional culture of one medium, one newsroom and, thus, promotes the coming together of different journalistic culture that is mainly content-based, instead of platform-based. This process washes away the dedication of journalists to a single newsroom and compels them to see the news as the basic product, which they develop, regardless of the channel. This emerging integrated culture is defined by journalists' complete multiskilling, negotiated resolution of the news flow and multimedia production, with a special focus in immediacy and adaptability. In this model, journalists are supposed to have skills in voice recording,



video editing, voice-over narration, and web publishing because they are required to cover stories for multiple platforms.

Apart from this characterization via external features, convergence also is a strategic goal (Garcia-Aviles, Kaltenbrunner & Meier, 2014). They espouse further that the integrated model calls for the training of all journalists to make them suitable for multimedia production. The full convergence of all platforms under the same ownership is the primary management aim under this model. Again, the integrated model is increasingly characterised by a combination of multiple organisational structures with strong sections and a topic-oriented planning process, within the condition of more transparency in the newsroom and also towards the public. A threat to quality is the ever-growing speed of the fast-online world taking over the production rhythm and defining workflows in the newsroom. Long-term research for exclusive stories could improve quality-whereas the daily production rhythms of printed editions have taken a back seat.

The cross-media model of newsroom convergence, on the other hand, is coupled with the resource and organisational strategy, whereby producing news content for multimedia is based on cooperation. In this model, cross-media work is seen as a tool to achieve a goal rather than a goal in itself. Managers express a desire to strengthen the company as a news provider on the whole, regardless of media platforms. Also, journalists work in different newsrooms for different platforms but are unified through multimedia coordinators and work routines. The authors postulate that these coordinators drive cooperation and communication between the media as well as cross-promotion measures. Each medium has its own culture when it comes to newsroom organisation and activities. Additionally, journalists in this model remain platform-experts, even though multiskilling is allowed but not a requirement by management.

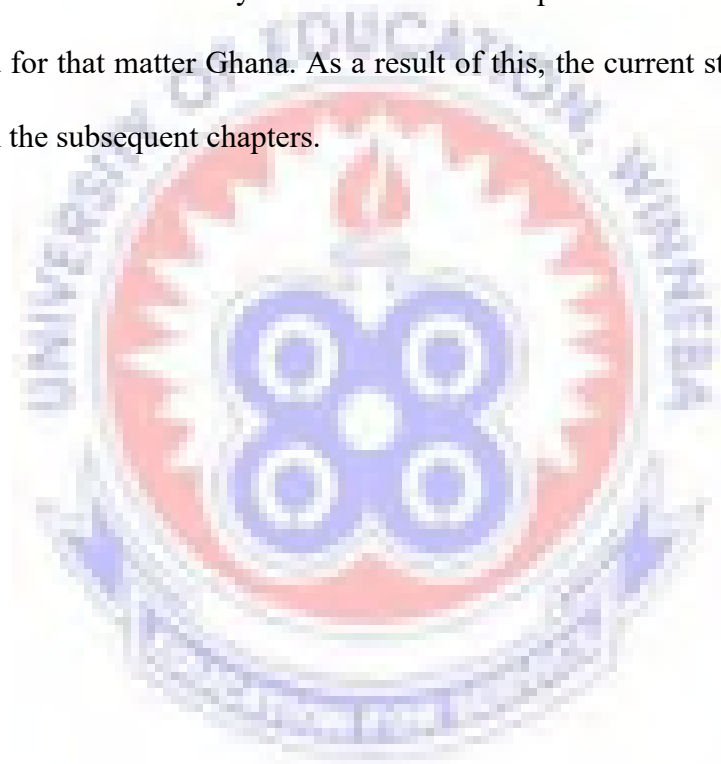
More so, the cross-media model allows for content promotion to be done across the various media platforms. There is a multimedia editor who coordinates daily multimedia production whereas the journalists occasionally cross borders. Again, another feature of this model is that training of journalists to develop an interest in other media is encouraged but participation in such training is not enforced by management. That is, journalists are not obliged to acquire training to report for other platforms. Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008) aver that journalists in this model adopt the wait and see attitude towards its implementation.

#### **2.3.2.1 Relevance of the models to current study**

Reviewed literature in this study has shown that newsrooms across the globe are implementing various forms of newsroom convergence models. The models of multimedia newsroom convergence aided the researcher in analysing and answering research question one (1) which sought to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media. The researcher was able to examine the features of the newsroom convergence practice at Kessben Media through the lens of the features of both the integrated and cross-media models of newsroom convergence under the multimedia models of newsroom convergence. This enabled the researcher to appreciate and explain the type of newsroom convergence model been implemented at Kessben. Again, the researcher applied these models in the current study because these models were confirmed by Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2014) in their study of newsroom convergence in three major media organisations in Spain, Austria, and Germany.

## 2.4 Summary of Chapter

The chapter was concerned with establishing works that have been done in the area of the current study and the process established research gaps that exist in previous studies. This was purposively aimed at providing a new path for this research to reinvent what exists already in the literature. It is also to allow for this study to contribute to a large extent fresh ideas and perspectives to body literature on media convergence in general, and specifically newsroom convergence. From the reviewed literature, it is unequivocal that there is very little attention to the practice of media convergence in Africa and for that matter Ghana. As a result of this, the current study attempts to fill the void in the subsequent chapters.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This section presents the methods and strategies employed in data collection and analysis. In doing so, this chapter examines the study's approach, design, sample size and sampling strategy, data collection methods and the procedure used for data collection and analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

This study employed a qualitative research approach. This is because the qualitative research approach helps researchers to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). The current study sought to understand how newsroom convergence is practised at Kessben by observing the practices and speaking to editors and journalists in the newsroom to understand the meanings they ascribe to the phenomenon. To Lindlof and Taylor (2002), qualitative research seeks to identify, explore and explain the attitudes, actions and perceptions of people within a social setting and the meanings they make of their actions - without subjecting it to rigorous mathematical computations. In line with, this study examined the attitudes and perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. Furthermore, the qualitative research approach enabled a researcher to collect data from the participants' settings, and analyse data inductively by building from particulars to general themes and making interpretations of the meanings of the data (Creswell, 2014). Consequently, the qualitative approach assisted the researcher to explore such meanings from data gathered from reporters and editors at the newsroom of Kessben Media. In qualitative

research, the researcher's goal is to unveil the facts without interfering or manipulating the natural setting of the phenomenon of interest (Patton & Cochran, 2007). Similarly, this study was conducted in the natural context of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media without any attempt whatsoever to manipulate or influence the practices in the newsroom and journalists perspectives.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is a comprehensive plan or method for obtaining data scientifically (Schaefer, 2004). It is the master plan of research because it indicates how the research is to be conducted. It demonstrates how the major parts of the research – the samples, data collection methods – work collectively to address the research questions (Thomas, 2010). Research designs also refer to the processes or tactics of inquiry. Significantly, the selection of a suitable design is hinged on the nature of the research, the research problem and questions, personal experiences of the researcher, and the type of audience for the study (Creswell, 2014). Research designs, particularly in the qualitative research, includes narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study (Creswell, 2014). This study adopted a case study design. This design was selected because Wimmer and Dominick (2011) indicate that a case study can be applied if a researcher is seeking to understand or explain a phenomenon. In the context of this study, the researcher sought to understand or explain the phenomenon of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. The case study design, therefore, is resourceful in gathering detailed information on the phenomenon to explain it.

### 3.2.1 *Case study*

Case study is a design of enquiry in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Yin, 2009). A case study also “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (observations, interviews, audio-visual materials, documents and reports) and reports a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2014 p. 97). Additionally, a case study is an empirical inquest that examines a phenomenon within its real-life context. According to Yin (2009), the case study approach is especially useful in situations where the context of the events being studied is critical and where the researcher has no control over the events as they unfold. Similarly, the current study or case examines how newsroom convergence is practised in Ghana, an activity which occurs in the real-life context of journalists in Kessben Media. Also, the study was conducted within the organisational setting where the researcher did not have control over the site.

This study employs the case study design because it has frequently been used as a design to study newsroom convergence (Dupagne & Garrison, 2006; García-Avilés & Carvajal, 2008; Kaltenbrunner & Meier, 2014; Gicobi, 2018; Huang, Davison, Shreve *et al.*, 2006). The case study design is regarded as a valid tool to analyse a complex issue and it allows one to research a contemporary phenomenon in its context (Yin, 2003). A case study has also been used as a methodological tool to describe changes in the professional roles of journalists in Finnish Public Broadcasting (Rintala & Suolanen, 2005); to examine the implications of newsroom convergence at the Tampa News Center, in Florida (Huang, Rademakers, Fayemiwo & Dunlop, 2004; Dupagne and Garrison, 2006); to study the reactions of journalists in four media

companies which initiated convergence in different geographical locations in the USA (Singer, 2004); and to analyse new journalistic competencies in multimedia newsrooms in Catalonia (Scolari, Navarro, Pardo, Mico & Coll, 2006).

Moreover, a case study is one of several ways of doing qualitative research because it aims to understand human beings in a social context by interpreting their actions as a single group, community or a single event (Creswell, 2014). This was implied in the current study because the current study sought to understand, in detail, how Kessben Media in Ghana practice newsroom convergence, the motivations for the practice of newsroom convergence, and the perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. As with case studies, the current study employed multiple data collection methods and procedures: newsroom observation, interviews with management and journalists and a focus group discussion with journalists.

In furtherance, Yin (2009) indicates that there are different types of cases that can be studied, thus, single cases and multiple case studies. Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) define multiple or collective case study as examining cases across multiple sites. This involves the selection of several events or situations to show different perspectives on the issue. A multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. The goal is to establish findings across cases so comparisons are drawn (Yin, 2009). For this research, the single case study was used. This is because Stake (1995) indicates that each case study should be studied holistically even though a researcher can study more than a case at the same time. Yin (2003) adds that it is essential to find relevant and manageable samples to collect empirical data from. The author further argues that a single case study has the opportunity to include subunits of analyses, which leads to a better insight through a more complex design. More so for

Stake (1995), single case studies provide more convincing data to test theories, as long as the case possesses unique features or attributes needed to meet the study objectives. In this study, Kessben Media which is the case for this study is a typical case of newsroom convergence in Ghana and as such possesses unique attributes needed for the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. Lastly, the choice of a single case is justified by the fact that other scholars have employed the single case study type in their studies (Arief, 2017; Gicobi, 2018; Sullivan, 2012; Dupagne & Garrison, 2006)

### **3.3 Sampling Technique**

Sampling technique in simple terms is the process used by a researcher to select a sample for a study. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), the right choice of a sampling technique helps researchers to make a methodical connection with communicative phenomena with a least of wasted effort. This means that the sampling technique is important in every research to ensure that data is appropriately collected. Daymon and Holloway (2011) propose that the underlying principle of gaining rich, in-depth information guides the sampling strategies of qualitative researchers. The selection of participants for a study, where and when depending on certain criteria which are determined by the purpose of a study. The purpose of the current study was to examine the practice of newsroom convergence in Ghana. This necessitated the need to select a particular media organisation that practices newsroom convergence to study. Kessben Media was thus selected due to the purpose of this study.

According to Wimmer and Dominic (2011), there are two types of sampling procedure. These are the probability and non-probability sampling procedure. They add that probability sampling employs the use of mathematical rules whereby each unit has an equal chance of being selected. Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, does



not follow any mathematical rules. The current study did not use any mathematical rules in the sampling process, therefore, the non-probability sampling procedure was applied. Wimmer and Dominic (2011) intimate that there are several types of sampling strategies under the non-probability sampling procedure. These strategies include; the convenience sampling, the purposive sampling, the unqualified volunteer sampling and the snowball sampling (Wimmer & Dominic, 2011). Specifically, the researcher employed a purposive sampling technique.

Creswell (2013) defines purposive sampling as the selection of sites or participants that will help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. To Wimmer and Dominic (2011), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method which purposively selects respondents for a study based on specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) describe purposive sampling as a non-probability approach in which sites and cases are chosen because there may be good reason to believe that what goes on there is critical to understanding some process or concept. In line with the above assertions, Kessben Media was purposively selected as a case for this study.

Kessben Media was purposefully chosen as the site for the study because the researcher, after a preliminary study found that out of the five media houses practising some sort of newsroom convergence in Ghana, Kessben Media was the only media house outside the Greater Accra Region. Also, the study found from the Media Foundation for West Africa report (2019) that Kessben Media has a market share of 3.6% in terms of audience. This was the highest after Multimedia and Despite Media who are all based in Accra. Though any of the five media houses could have been selected for the study of newsroom convergence in Ghana, Kessben Media seemed to be the odd one out because of its location and this also made it possible for the study

objectives to be achieved. Also, the study purposively selected participants who had been at Kessben Media since the introduction of the newsroom convergence and who could best help the researcher to understand the phenomena under study and can provide appropriate data to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2013). The participants were selected because of their experiences and knowledge of the issue under investigation (Berg, 2004).

### **3.4 Sample Size**

Sample size is critical to data collection and analysis. For qualitative studies, Bryman (2012) argues that usually, its sampling is made of small sampling units studied in-depth. To Lindlof and Taylor (2002), qualitative studies aim to collect extensive detail about a case under investigation. Thus the intent is not to extrapolate its findings to the general population. As a result, qualitative studies use small sample sizes (Creswell, 2014). This current study does not aim at extrapolating its findings over a population so the sample size for case selected is one. This is because Walcott (2008b) as cited in Creswell (2014) posits that the use of multiple cases weakens the level of detail that a researcher can provide. Nonetheless, the researcher ensured that the sample size was not too small to allow for data adequacy and thick analysis - a position supported by Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007).

In terms of sample size for respondents, Daymon and Holloway (2011) declare that the appropriate number of participants chosen for qualitative research depends mainly on the type of research question, the type of approach used in the study, material and time resources available to the researcher as well as the number of researchers involved in the study. Based on this, thirteen respondents were purposively selected for this study (an informant and seven respondents). The informant is the General Manager

at Kessben Media. The respondents included the main editor, two sub-editors and four reporters. The study also had a focus group discussion with other 5 journalists.

### **3.4.1 *A profile of Kessben Media***

Kessben Media is a private and commercial media house that broadcasts from Aseda House in Kumasi. Kessben Media started with a radio station called Kessben 93.3 FM. The station began its test transmission in October 2004 and went commercial in November the same year. It broadcasts in Akan and has a line-up of programmes covering news, football, religion, politics, social issues and music, which caters for listeners of all ages, classes and educational levels.

Kessben Media, according to the Media Foundation for West Africa report (2019), is the most popular media house in the Ashanti region and surrounding areas, with a regional audience share of 15.3% (GeoPoll, 2018). In terms of audience share nationwide, it is also in the top ten, with an audience share of 3.6% (Media Foundation for West Africa report, 2019)

Kessben Media currently runs a radio, online and television broadcasting media network. On the radio, there is Kessben FM while the online platform is [kessbenfm.com](http://kessbenfm.com). It has a presence on TV via Kessben TV and Aseda TV. The introduction of the Television network (Kessben TV) started in the year 2014, while the online platform started in 2017. According to the General Manager of Kessben Media, the introduction of the convergence strategy was part of management's priority since the introduction of the radio platform. It was always part of their media strategy to go into multimedia production. When Television was introduced five years ago, both TV and Radio had their own newsrooms. Newsroom convergence at Kessben Media came about when management decided to merge the two newsrooms in 2018. The

online platform, however, had its newsroom until January 2020 when the general news editor decided to move the journalists in the online newsroom to merge with their colleagues in the merged newsroom for Radio and TV. Kessben Media is a member of the Kessben Group of Companies, which is a sole proprietorship with Stephen Boateng, popularly known as Kwabena Kesse.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

Qualitative researchers characteristically depend on four data collection methods: in-depth interviewing, group discussions, observational methods, and analysing documents and material culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Spencer & Snape, 2003). Nonetheless, other secondary and particular data collection methods complement these four primary methods. The four data collection methods, however, remain the core of qualitative inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Aina (2004) submits that data refers to facts that are raw and unrefined. However, when data is transformed or processed, it becomes information. This study employed observation, focus group discussion and interview as the data collection method. This study adopted multiple data sources because Creswell (2013) postulates that such an approach helps in providing suitable information to aid achieve the goal of the research of this nature. Creswell's assertion affirms Patton's (1990) and Yin's (2009) claims that the use of a multiple-methods approach is a good approach in research because they guarantee data credibility.

Several studies on newsroom convergence have used a mixture of observation, ethnography, interviews and document, to achieve the objectives of their studies. For instance, Carvajal and Aviles (2008) also used interviews and observations to study newsroom convergence in Spain. Gicobi (2018) also, used observation to examine how

newsroom convergence is practised at the Nation Media Group's business desk in Kenya. The study also used interviews to get a deeper understanding and insight from journalists at the business desk. Therefore, this study adopted interviews and observation as primary methods of data collection.

### **3.5.1 Observation**

According to Wimmer and Dominic (2011), observation happens in the natural environment of the activity being observed and it can offer the researcher rich and refined data. For Hennink (2011), this method allows the researcher to situate people's behaviour and actions within their sociocultural context. In this study, observation allowed the researcher to notice things that usually may not be identified by other data collection methods. Field observation has been used in many newsroom convergence studies (Garcia-Avilés & Carvajal, 2008; García-Avilés et al, 2014, Larrondo et al, 2014; van Noort, 2007; Verweij, 2009 and Gu, 2016). Observation, according to Helland (1993), is generally seen as an investigative method, in which the researcher constantly confronts theory and assumptions with empirical findings. Thus, one of the forces of this particular method is arguably the possibility of modifying research questions during a reflexive observation process (Newcomb, 1991).

Wimmer and Dominic (2011) categorise the observation process into two; the degree to which the researcher participates in the activity being studied, and the degree to which the observation is concealed. According to the authors, these categorise bring about four approaches to observation. The first approach is the overt observation. With this approach, the researcher whose role is only to observe discloses his identity to the subjects/objects to be observed. The researcher does not participate in the process being observed. The second approach is overt participation. Under this approach, even though

the people being observed are aware of the researcher as an observant, the researcher also participates in the activity being studied. The third approach is that of covert observation. This happens when the researcher observes the activity without being noticed by the subjects under observation. The last approach is covert participation. With this, the researcher participates in the activity under study without being identified by the subjects as an observer. For this study, the researcher was identified as an overt observer.

### **3.5.2 *In-depth interviews (IDI)***

Another data collection method that was used in this study was the interview. Fetterman (2010) views interviews as one of the most important data-gathering method in qualitative research. An in-depth interview, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2011:139), provides a “detailed background about the reasons respondents give specific answers” so that researchers can gather “elaborate data concerning respondents’ opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences and feelings”. Thus, the method allows a researcher to probe for detailed information that further explains the issue under investigation. As a result, an in-depth interview was conducted to probe for information from respondents on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also postulate that qualitative interview is an event in which the interviewer encourages others to freely articulate their interest and experiences. Using interviews allowed participants to respond freely in their own words to the questions asked and for the researcher to obtain viable information that could not be observed during the participant observation.

The study used this method to collect responses for the research questions which focused on the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media

and the strategies journalists in the newsroom used to adapt to the requirements of a converged newsroom. Most importantly, the interviews allowed the researcher to establish the rationalisation behind the implementation of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media and also to validate what had been observed in terms of the practice of the phenomenon. Interviewing is the most usual technique for studying newsroom convergence (Infotendencias Group, 2012), as it makes it possible to obtain information on questions such as feelings, opinions, intentions or perceptions that it would be difficult to gather through other methods. Interviews were conducted with the seven participants to enable the researcher to gain insight into the ideologies behind the newsroom convergence practice from their perspectives and experiences. In ensuring the anonymity of the interviewees', the researcher codified the identities of the participants. The following are the codes for the interviewees: INF (Informant participant, Kessben Media); R1 (Respondent 1); R2 (Respondent 2); R3 (Respondent 3); R4 (Respondent 4); R5 (Respondent 5); R6 (Respondent 6); R7 (Respondent 7) and the six (6) participants for the focus group discussion were coded as P1 (Participant 1); P2 (Participant 2); P3 (Participant 3); P4 (Participant 4); P5 (Participant 5); and P6 (Participant 6).

### **3.5.3 *Focus group discussion***

Focus group discussion was another data collection method employed in this study. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017) focus group discussion has evolved to the extent that it can stand alone as a data collection method in as much as is a form of interview. Creswell (2013) posits that focus group discussion is the process of gathering data from a group of people through interviews. The group of people are usually brought together by the researcher to explore their ideas, attitudes, and feelings about

an issue under study (Denscombe, 2007). Creswell (2013) further adds that focus group discussion provides better results when participants have commonalities and come from a similar background. Also, it becomes necessary when discussions with the group is likely to provide newer insights. According to Dilshad and Latif (2013), focus group gives room for people in marginalized positions to also partake in the discussion hence providing divergent views. Additionally, Krueger and Casey (2000) states that focus group provides “a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others just as they are in real life” (p.11). As avowed by Patton (2002) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990), focus group provides a thick, detailed and high set of data from participants on their experiences, feelings and ideas in a social context.

In line with these views, the researcher employed focus group discussion because it helped the researcher to seek for different views from participants on the research questions, particularly on research question two (2) and three (3). It also helped in paving way for others to share their views through the butterfly effect on the participants as they gained motivation from others opinion. Furthermore, it gave the researcher the chance to have an in-depth knowledge and insight into their experiences and ideas about the phenomena under study. According to Creswell (2014), focus group discussion is a group interview with a minimum of six participants. In line with this assertion, the focus group discussion employed six participants. Thus, two reporters each from the three platforms (Radio, TV and online). One session for the focus group discussion was employed. This is supported by Anderson’s (1990) assertion that new and important information is gathered in the first two sessions than the subsequent sessions. He attributed this to the fact that the conversation is likely to be exhausted when the researcher gets to the subsequent sessions after the first two.



### **3.6 Data Collection Process/ Procedure**

According to Asiamah (2017), data collection procedure or process is a narration of the various steps, ways and means through which the researcher applied the various data collection instruments to gather data for the research study. The procedures followed to gather data for this study have been discussed on the next page;

#### **3.6.1 Observation**

The study sought to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media. As a result, the newsroom of Kessben Media was observed over some time. Before the observation, the researcher took an introductory letter from the Communication and Media Studies Department at the University of Education, Winneba to negotiate access to the site for this study. The letter was sent to the General Manager of Kessben Media to seek permission to use Kessben Media as the case for this study, as advised by Creswell (2013). After a conversation with the General Manager, he called the main news editor to his office. The editor was briefed with the purpose of the researcher's presence at the office. The editor welcomed the idea and told the researcher to come the next day to decide on the period of observation. The next day, the researcher was introduced to the journalists in the newsroom by the main editor as well as informed them that the researcher would be coming around for some observations. After that, the researcher discussed with the main editor and was agreed that the field observation can start on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, 2020.

Besides, the researcher visited the station a few times and became acquainted with the media personnel in charge to facilitate the exercise. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, 2020, the researcher got to the premise around 9 am. This was because the editor informed the researcher to be around during their editorial meeting so the researcher

can brief the journalists during the meeting before starting the observation officially. During the editorial meeting, the journalists were officially informed about the purpose of the researcher's visit. The field observation consisted of a total of four days (from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020) in the newsroom of Kessben Media. During these periods, the researcher attended editorial meetings and was present at several news desks such as the sports news desk, business desk and current affairs desk. However, having been present in the Kessben newsroom as a researcher and not a journalist, the researcher characterised himself as an overt observer. The researcher's activities in the newsroom was limited to asking questions about things the researcher did not fully understand, and engaging in informal conversations to collect additional data. The researcher recorded the findings of the observation in a field note to aid in the data analysis. Also, as advised by Hennink *et al.* (2011), care was taken not to interfere with activities and interactions during the observation.

### **3.6.2 *In-depth- interviews (IDI)***

Managers and journalists at Kessben Media were interviewed to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at the media organisation. Before the interviews, as advised by Creswell (2013), permission was sought from the management of Kessben Media to allow the researcher to interview some selected respondents and an informant for this study. After several phone calls from the General Managers office, interview dates and time were agreed upon by the researcher and the interviewees.

Subsequently, face-to-face meetings were held with the participants to further brief them on the subject. During the meeting, an interview guide was given to participants to enable them to examine the requirements of the interview and the

questions in the interview before the scheduled date. Also, convenient dates, times and locations were scheduled with each participant for the interviews.

To have a detailed discussion on the topic, a semi-structured interview guide which involved open-ended questions was used. This interview format gave the researcher the chance to intensely follow up on attention-grabbing developments and to let the interviewees elaborate on various issues. As claimed by Braun and Clark (2011), semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allow for greater flexibility and freedom on the part of both interviewers and interviewees in terms of planning, implementing and organising the interview content and question. On the day of the interview, the researcher arrived at Kessben Media which is located at Adum Kumasi, 45 minutes to the agreed start time.

The interview with the main editor lasted between 30 to 40 minutes. The interview was recorded with the researcher's Itel 1703 tablet and notes were also taken. This was to aid the researcher to transcribe the interview for analysis. After the interview with the main editor, the TV editor helped to organise the other respondents for the remaining interviews. The researcher interviewed the TV editor and the Radio editor before the 4 other reporters. The interview with each of the respondents lasted between 25 and 35 minutes. During the interviews, the researcher again noted down some points in the field note and recorded the entire interviews with the Itel 1703 tablet. All these helped the researcher in transcribing the interviews for analysis. After the interview with the journalists in the newsroom, the researcher tried to interview the General Manager who also happens to be the informant participant for this study. Unfortunately, that interview was rescheduled to the next day because the manager had to attend to an emergency.

The researcher came back the next day and was directed to the General Manager's office. The interview with the general manager lasted for 45 minutes. Important points were noted down in a field note and the interview was recorded with the same device used in the previous interviews. The transcription was done by continuously playing the recordings back and forth to get exactly the responses given by the interviewees during the interview session.

Furthermore, the interviews were conducted in an informal way which allowed participants to speak in the language they understood. The participants of the study were asked questions which unravelled answers about the newsroom convergence practice at Kessben Media. This echoes the views of Lindlof and Taylor (2002). More so, the knowledge, position and wealth of information that participants possess placed them at the heart of the research and put them in the right position to answer the various questions fundamental to meeting the objectives of the study. Interviews with these participants also helped to explain, verify, validate and clarify issues arising out of the observations conducted in the newsroom of Kessben Media.

### **3.6.3 *Focus group discussion***

The study conducted one session of a focus group discussion. After the observation and interviews, the researcher informed the news editor that he wanted to have a focus group discussion with some of the reporters to get more insight and rich data from different perspectives. The editor gave the researcher the go ahead to conduct the focus group discussion. The participants for the focus group discussion were selected based on certain characteristics (such as, reporters who have been working for Kessben Media for at least 3 years) which helped the researcher to answer the research questions. This is because the process of newsroom convergence at Kesben Media

started around that period. The focus group discussion included 2 reporters who were originally employed for each of the platforms. The focus group discussion was conducted at the cafeteria at Kessben Media. The venue was selected by the reporters. The researcher was the moderator for the focus group discussion. This was to ensure that the discussion was well coordinated and questions asked were in line with the objectives of the study. This is in consonance with Krueger's (2002) features of the focus group.

Before the discussion, chairs were arranged in a semi-circular form for the discussion to begin. This style of seating was employed because Escalada and Heong, (2018) avers that a semi-circular seating arrangement expedites interaction among participants as it enables them to freely see and hear each other. The researcher sat in the middle to moderate the discussion, which is in line with Krueger's (2002) argument that a focus group should have a moderator who has adequate knowledge of the phenomena under study and set the guidelines for the discussion.

The focus group discussion lasted between thirty- five (35) to forty-five (45) minutes. This aligns well with Escalada and Heong's (2018) assertion that to minimize boredom, focus group discussions should not be stretched beyond two hours. At the beginning of the discussion, the researcher welcomed the participants, introduced himself and informed them of the purpose of the discussion. The researcher then urged the participants to feel comfortable and be open-minded as they communicate their views. The researcher broke the ice by telling a story about an encounter he had with a journalist some time ago. This was done to create a warm and friendly environment. Once more, the researcher sought permission from the participants to record the discussion using the Itel 1703 tablet. Participants were therefore encouraged to speak louder for the recorder to capture all that would be said.

English language was used throughout the discussion processes. This was because all the 5 participants were comfortable with that particular language. Occasionally, the discussion processes were filled with comments and jokes that stirred up the interest of the participants to respond to issues and to also reduce tension. An unstructured interview questions guided the session. In a simple and coordinated manner, questions were put forward and participants responded accordingly. The questions were set in a simple and clear manner to allow participants to talk freely and spontaneously. It was also to help the researcher to keep the conversation on track. At points, where the discussions drifted from the norm, the researcher politely intervened to bring the discussion back on track.

Nevertheless, any off-track statement that was of relevance to my findings was recorded accordingly. Also, the researcher noted participants' nonverbal cues during the discussions in the field note.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of cataloguing and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them into patterns, themes, concepts and propositions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). For Creswell (2014), data analysis is a data reduction process. That is, the step-by-step process a researcher goes through to reduce large amounts of data to make sense of them. Patton (1999) further proposes three general ways of conducting a data analysis, namely, data organisation, data reduction (through summarization, categorization), and identifying and linking of data through patterns and themes. Frankel and Wallen (2003) also corroborate these claims when they aver that data analysis is that task which involves synthesizing all the information a researcher gathers

in the field and drawing parallel and logical lines in the data according to the researchers set of research questions.

The current study employed thematic data analysis. According to Smith and Firth (2011, p.3), thematic analysis can be described as an “interpretive process, whereby data is systematically searched to identify patterns within the data to provide an illuminating description of the phenomenon.” This means that in using thematic analysis, the researcher identified common patterns, codes or themes that were reoccurring and offered a detailed description of the codes. Also, according to Braun and Clark (2013), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data.

In responding to research question one, which sought to examine how Kessben Media practice newsroom convergence, the researcher assembled and prepared all collected data from the observations and interviews. This was done to allow the researcher to have a clear view, description and appreciation of what had been observed. As argued by Flick (2013), qualitative data analysis aims at describing issues in the field or a phenomenon into greater detail. The researcher, in turn, read through the field notes and interview transcripts to identify descriptive issues. In a detailed manner, the researcher described the identified themes and also ensured that in-depth and direct quotations were used to support the detailed descriptions and discussions of the research questions.

Major thematic areas were deduced from the transcribed data collected from observations, interviews and focus group discussion. The themes were; *single structure, multiple editors, multiskilled journalists, content sharing, profitability, quality assurance, comparative advantage, fragmented audience, sense of responsibility, challenging practice, easy monitoring and skill enhancement*. This supports views

expressed by Creswell (2014) which point out that in analysing data, the researcher needs to sort the information gathered. The effect of this process is to aggregate data into a small number of themes. These themes were inductively generated. According to Braun and Clark (2006), with an inductive type of thematic data analysis, the researcher does not try to fit the data into any form of preconceived analysis or pre-existing coding frame. This current study, therefore, applied this approach. The researcher further interpreted the findings using concepts and theories to draw meanings from responses from the informants. Direct quotations were also used to support the interpretations and discussions.

### **3.8 Ethical Issues**

In research, it is unethical to enter into an organisation or social groups to collect data without permission from the gate-keepers of the organisation (Creswell, 2005). Ethics, according to Jennings (2003), is a branch of philosophy that seeks to address questions of morality. Morality refers to beliefs or standards about concepts like good and bad, right and wrong (Jennings, 2003). When used as the basis for guiding individual and collective behaviour, ethics takes on a normative function, helping individuals consider how they should behave from a moral perspective (Vanclay, Baines & Taylor, 2013).

Halai (2006) observes that comprehensive research is a moral and ethical venture and should be interested in ensuring that participants in any research are protected from any harm. The current study ensured that research participants' autonomy, well-being, safety and dignity were protected. Only participants who agreed to the study were interviewed. Before the researcher started the collection of data, participants for the study were informed about the study, assured of their confidentiality



and were given maximum respect throughout the study. Participants chose freely to engage in the research but were informed to withdraw anytime they felt uncomfortable in the interviewing process. Consent of the participants was sought before all recordings were made. The researcher was objective as possible and did not in any way knowingly misrepresent or attempt to alter the participant's responses. More so, in dealing with confidentiality, all private issues that were discussed were kept highly confidential except those that were relevant to the study and needed to be in the known. On the part of anonymity, the names of the participants were not in any way disclosed. Rather they were represented with alphanumeric codes.

### **3.9 Trustworthiness**

The meaning that validity and reliability carry in qualitative research is different from what they connote in quantitative research (Creswell, 2014). Thus, validity in qualitative research is geared towards determining the accuracy and truthfulness in research findings. Hence, Anney (2014) suggests that researchers should rather consider dependability (in preference to reliability), credibility (in preference to internal validity), transferability (in preference to external validity) and confirmability (in preference to objectivity) as trustworthiness criteria for qualitative investigation as propounded by Lincoln and Guba (2000).

In agreement with Lincoln and Guba (2000), the study adopted observation, interviews and focus group discussion as data collection methods for triangulation purpose which is in line with Riemer's (2008) argument that to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, qualitative researchers must use multiple data source and methods of data collection. Thus, after gathering data from the observation of the converged newsroom at Kessben Media, the researcher augmented the findings

with interviews and a focus group discussion which were conducted with journalists and the general manager at Kessben Media. This was meant to provide further insights into the elements under study. The study was conducted in an objective manner and subjected to peer review. The study gave a thick description of the phenomena under study as purported by Geertz (1973) in Daymon and Holloway (2011). Finally, another way the researcher legitimises the findings of the data collected was the use of the member checking strategy. This is where the researcher returns the manuscripts from an interview and focus groups discussion to the participants to confirm if their accounts in the data collection interactions were accurately captured by the researcher (Lincoln & Guba 1985, cited in Creswell, 2013). The researcher returned the interview transcript that was extracted from the recorded audio to the journalists who participated in the interview to confirm if the data correspond to the responses they gave. They went through it all and confirmed that indeed those were a true representation of their responses.

### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

The chapter focused on the techniques and processes that were employed to collect data for the research. The research adopted a qualitative approach fixed on a case study design to examine the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media, the motivation behind the practice and the strategies adopted by journalists to adapt to the requirements of a converged newsroom. Multiple data collection methods – observation, interviews and focus group discussion - were used to collect the data from the field. In addition, each method used was rationalised. Furthermore, the research was built on confidentiality, anonymity, and reciprocity, informed and voluntary consent. In sum, the chapter explains the research approach, research design, sampling technique

and size, data collection method, data collection process, method of data analysis, ethical issues and trustworthiness.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussion from the analysis of data collected from interviews with managers and journalists, focus group discussions with journalists and observation of newsroom activities on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. The data gathered were simplified into several themes to ensure easy analysis and interpretations. The analysis were aided by existing works and theories.

#### 4.1 RQ1. What Model of Newsroom Convergence does Kessben Media Operate?

Different newsroom convergence models have been implemented in news organisations with different business strategies, newsroom structures, production processes and cross-media delivery (Zhang, 2012). These newsroom convergence models have features that depict how a converged newsroom operates. Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008) identified two models of newsroom convergence implemented in Spain. These models were termed as the integrated and cross-media model of newsroom convergence. Garcia-Aviles, Meier, Kaltenbrunner and Carvajal (2009) advanced these models by adding the co-ordination of isolated platforms model as identified in the study of six news organisations in Spain, Germany and Austria. García-Avilés, Kaltenbrunner and Meier (2014), confirm these models five years later after studying three newsrooms in the same countries. These scholars, however, agree that none of

these models exist in its pure form and as such none of the media companies used in the various studies were absolute in the practice of a particular model.

In the case of the implementation of newsroom convergence in Ghana, this research question sought to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media. From the analysis of data gathered, the following themes were identified to answer the research question: *single structure, multiple editors, multiskilled journalists and content sharing*. Using the models of multimedia newsroom convergence (Garcia-Aviles, 2008), these themes are examined to explain the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media.

#### **4.1.1 *Single structure***

Analysis of data gathered established that Kessben Media used a single structure as its newsroom. Single structure indicates that the organisation operates three different media platforms - Radio, Television and Online news portal – in a common space. All the three platforms operate in a single structure to deliver news to the audience. The key indicator was the fact that all journalists work in one common space: one newsroom to produce news for the multiple platforms at Kessben Media. To put this into perspective, the researcher's analysis of data from the interviews revealed that before Kessben Media began to use the single newsroom structure, all the three media platforms had their newsrooms. The online newsroom was located on the third floor of the Aseda house building while both Radio and Television newsrooms were located on the second floor of the building but in different spaces. This was what R1 said in an interview with the researcher:

...we had three newsrooms, one for each platform. We first started with radio broadcast so the Radio newsroom was the first to be established. We then added another newsroom for TV when we started broadcasting via TV.

The online newsroom was recently added because we were not operating a website for the media house until 2018... (R1-IDI).

Again, the data analysis further showed that the merger of the three newsrooms started with the merger of the TV and radio newsrooms. Respondents attributed this to the fact that it was easier to converge the two newsrooms because of proximity. For example, R1 posits that:

...It was first decided ...to collapse the TV and Radio newsroom to form one newsroom. All journalists and equipment in the TV newsroom were moved to the Radio newsroom. The Radio newsroom was more spacious than the TV newsroom. It was done that way because the two newsrooms were all on the second floor and also were next to each other. So, moving equipment and desks were not that difficult for us... (R1 -IDI).

The researcher in his quest to ascertain the reasons for the merger was told that the main reason for the merger of the two newsrooms was to enhance the cooperation and collaboration among journalists. For instance, R 2 narrated that:

...It was difficult for us to work together as a team because of the different newsrooms we were using. Because of that, I advised management to combine us in one newsroom so that we can work together in producing good content for TV and Radio. Management reasoned with me so the merger was done... (R2- IDI).

Further probe revealed that Kessben Media encountered difficulties in bringing journalists from the online newsroom to the converged newsroom. The major reason given by participants was inadequate space in the converged newsroom to accommodate journalists in the online newsroom. This is how R 2 responded in the interview:

...We could not add journalists who were working for the website because the newsroom we were using was not big enough to accommodate more than 15 journalists plus equipment. So for like a year, the online journalists

had their newsroom while TV and Radio journalists were using one newsroom... (R2- IDI)

However, management addressed the issue of inadequate space by making a bigger room available on the second floor of the building for a total merger of all journalists in one newsroom. This according to the interviewees made it possible for journalists working for the online news portal to join their colleagues from TV and Radio in one newsroom. For instance, R 2 states that:

...We had constant meetings with management to find a way around the inability of online journalists to join us because of space. Management in 2019 got us a bigger newsroom which could accommodate all of us. I must say when that happened it was a joy for me. We had been working towards that for a while now and now seeing all of us in one newsroom is a dream come true... (R2 - IDI)

The researcher's observation confirmed that in the current newsroom, enough space had been created for all journalists to comfortably operate from the single newsroom space. It was also observed that there was direct eye contact between journalists without any architectural separations. Additionally, journalists move freely from one desk to others because there were no separating screens in the newsroom to separate journalists and their desks from each other.

In a bid to establish the rationale for the decision not to separate editors and other desks from each other, the interview data revealed that the newsroom initially had screens separating desks from each other. However, upon the instructions of the editors, they were removed to ensure transparency and freedom of movement in the newsroom. R 1 articulated that:

...when we first went to the newsroom, we realised that in renovating the room to accommodate us the management made the contractors fix screens to separate editors and other desks. We told management that it will not help

us to monitor what goes on in the newsroom and also journalists will not be able to move freely in the newsroom to work as teams on stories... (R1 - IDI)

The researcher further observed that as a result of the freedom of movement and transparency in the newsroom, teamwork was strengthened and each individual was helped to overcome the natural resistance to participate in a common project. With regards to the comparison of separated newsrooms to the converged newsroom, the participants noted that previously working in separate newsroom made it difficult for proper collaboration among journalists. They added further that this was because moving from one newsroom to the other was stressful especially for journalists working for the online news portal since the newsrooms were then located on different floors. Participants re-echoed that working in a single newsroom was helping them to work better as a team to produce content for the three platforms. For example, R 3 indicated that:

...I think sharing the same newsroom with my colleagues has helped us a lot in terms of working with other journalists on specific assignments for publications. At first, I had to go to the next floor if I have to work on an assignment with a reporter for online. Going up and down always makes the work difficult. Now I can easily walk to another desk to discuss a particular story we are working on... (R3 -IDI).

This finding is in tandem with the integrated model of multimedia newsroom convergence developed by Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008). The authors posit that in terms of how a newsroom is organised under newsroom convergence, the integrated model employs a single newsroom whiles the cross-media model employs multiple newsrooms. Based on data from the observation at Kessben newsroom and the interviews, Kessben Media employs the single newsroom approach in practising newsroom convergence - which is a characteristic of the integrated model.



Again, Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008) aver that in a single newsroom structure under the integrated model, there are no architectural separations in the newsroom given room for direct eye contact. This supports the assertion by Larrondo, Domingo, Erdal, Masip and Bulk (2014) that the use of a single newsroom enhances the connection among journalists working together to produce content for multiple platforms. Data from the interview with the informant participant corroborated the views expressed by respondents on how beneficial the coming together of journalists to work from the same newsroom has been. Thus, he stated that:

...since we added TV and Online to the Radio, we realised from our editors that it will be appropriate to bring all the journalists in one single newsroom to encourage cooperation and make it easy for the editors to coordinate the process. We have had that challenge for two years now because we were not getting a bigger room that would accommodate all of them but now, we have been able to achieve that... (INF1-IDI)

This appears to be consistent with the findings of Larrondo *et al.* (2016). They found out that the broadcasting organisations studied in the UK (*BBC Scotland*), Spain (*CCMA* and *EITB*), Norway (*NRK*) and Belgium (*VRT*) had made efforts to do away with one common barrier to the practice of convergence: physical distance between radio, television and online teams. Thus, the organisation promoted proximity and face-to-face contact amongst journalists for the three platforms due to the converged newsroom. The essence of this change was to facilitate internal production processes based on coordination: newsgathering and information-sharing, and news production across media.

#### 4.1.2 *Multiple editors*

It was also discovered from the gathered data that Kessben Media made use of multiple editors. Multiple editors point to a newsroom that uses more than one gatekeeper in the refinement of news stories provided by reporters before it gets published. Editors determine which news story gets to see the light of day. They are also in charge of the management of the newsroom (Garcia- Aviles & Carvajal, 2008). The key indicator for this was the identification of more than one editor in the newsroom. The researcher observed that Kessben Media had an editor for TV, another for Radio and another editor who was described as the main editor. This main editor in the newsroom oversees multimedia coordination of stories. Data from the interview revealed that before the use of a converged newsroom, Kessben Media was operating the three separate newsrooms for the three media platforms with only two editors. The two editors were for TV and Radio. The online platform had no editor. In this light, R 2 articulated:

...we initially had two editors when we were operating in the separate newsrooms. I was in charge of Radio and another person was in charge of the TV. As for online, management was yet to get an editor for them because it was new. So, whenever they want to post a story on the website, they will sometimes come and show it to me or my colleague editor. Sometimes too, they show it to the General Manager because his office is closer to their newsroom... (R2- IDI).

However as part of the changes that came with converging the newsrooms, "management had a meeting with the two editors and it was decided that an additional editor will be added" (R1- IDI). Therefore, the TV editor was promoted to become the main editor and the new editor was appointed as the TV editor. R1 declared that:

...I became the main editor because I was the most experienced in the newsroom and also has knowledge in writing stories for all the three

platforms. My job now is, therefore, to provide a supervisory role for all the three platforms... (R1-IDI).

The researcher also observed that in the converged newsroom, even though all the journalists were working together to produce contents for the three platforms, each editor was still responsible for editing stories that are meant for the platforms they are in charge of. It was also established through observation that the main editor edited contents for online publications, he had the final say in deciding on which stories should be given prominence on the various platforms and which platform should break the news first. The main editor at Kessben Media also had to be briefed on stories by other editors before they get to publish on the platforms.

Furthermore, analysis of gathered data revealed that the use of the multiple editors enhanced the gatekeeping process on news stories. Thus, it was seen as a practice that handy in Kessben Media's attempt to ensure the quality of news content. So, the informant participant disclosed that:

...as you can see, we have three editors but one is the main editor for all the three platforms. The other two are responsible for Radio and TV. We decided to maintain the multiple editors because the editors who are in charge of Radio and TV have in-depth knowledge when it comes to news production and distribution for those platforms. The main editor is part of the pioneers of this media house. He has a vast experience in multimedia news production and newsroom management as well. These multiple editors would ensure that any news item published is of high quality and contains all the necessary information... (INF-IDI)

In terms of how news flows in the newsroom as a result of the presence of the multiple editors, the researcher's observation of the process of news flow at Kessben Media is presented in a figure below:

## **Figure 2: News Flow at Kessben Media's Converged Newsroom**

**(Source: From researcher's field notes)**

Findings from the observation data, as seen in Figure 2, revealed that due to multiple editors in the converged newsroom at Kessben Media, news flow through at least two steps. News stories from reporters had to go through the specific sub-editor in charge of the platform the story was going to be published on before it got to the main editor. Specifically, Radio and TV news stories went through two gatekeepers before publication, as indicated in Figure 2. The main editor also acted as the editor for the online platform. For instance, it was observed that in the newsroom the reporter for Radio put together the story and showed it to the Radio editor to edit. After editing the story, the Radio editor then sent it to the main editor for his inputs. If there were clarifications to be made, the Radio editor would call the reporter for that purpose.

**Figure 2: TV Editor in a Discussion with a Reporter on a Story in the Converged Newsroom at Kessben Media**



The main editor always approved the final draft before the story was broadcasted on Radio. The same processes played out when a story is going to be broadcasted on TV and the online news portal. More so, there was constant communication between the main editor and the other two sub-editors who also had frequent interactions between reporters and colleague editors.

The broken line between reporters and the main editor in Figure 2 indicates an unofficial line of interaction between the main editor and reporters. Reporters could to the main editor for information on certain stories and the main editor also interacted with reporters in the same manner. However, with regards to the gatekeeping purposes, reporters were to send stories to their respective sub-editors other two editors before it was forwarded to the main editor.

These findings are not consistent with the attributes of single structure newsroom as established by Garcia-Aviles & Carvajal, (2008) and Garcia-Aviles,

Kaltenbrunner *et al.* (2014) but rather conforms to the cross-media model. Their findings indicated that news organisations that operated in a single structure newsroom for multimedia news production employed one single editor, who was in charge of coordinating all news stories before they were distributed on the multiple platforms. All the news stories from reporters were supposed to be edited by a single editor before publication in any of the multiple platforms. For instance, in the study of newsroom convergence in media organisations at Spain, Austria and Germany, Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2014) found that they were using a single newsroom structure and only one editor was employed. This finding aligns with Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal's (2008) integrated model. The cross-media model, on the other hand, uses separate newsrooms also uses separate editors Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008).

The case of Kessben Media, however, partially conforms to the assumptions in both models. The use of a single newsroom by Kessben Media is a feature under the integrated model while its use of multiple editors is a feature under the cross-media model of multimedia newsroom convergence. Therefore, this study proposes a hybrid model of newsroom convergence to describe newsroom convergence at Kessben Media.

#### **4.1.3 *Multiskilled journalists***

The concept of multiskilling of journalists is the ability of journalists to perform journalistic tasks across multiple platforms (Domingo *et al.*, 2007). Multiskilled journalists create news content for multiple media platforms while adhering to the techniques required for each platform (Garcia-Aviles *et al.*, 2009). Scholars have indicated that there has been an increase in multiskilled journalists in newsrooms across the world as a result of developments in technology (Born, 2004; Cottle, 1999; Garcia – Aviles & Carvajal, 2008). Others have viewed it as a drive for greater productivity

(Dueze, 2007; Quinn, 2005; Ursell, 2003). According to Domingo et al. (2007), multiskilling manifests in three forms. These are media multiskilling (that is journalists producing content for multiple media); issue multiskilling (journalists reporting on news related to different subject areas) and technical multiskilling (journalists responsible for performing most of the technical production tasks).

Data from the newsroom observations revealed that Kessben Media practised all the three forms of multiskilling in their newsroom but media multiskilling was dominant. Thus, journalists were producing news content for online, TV and Radio. Thus, journalists who were hitherto employed purposely for news production for Radio were seen working on news stories for TV and online news portal as well.

**Figure 3: Journalist Producing Content for Multiple Platforms at Kessben Media**



In furtherance, interview data indicated that journalists in Kesben Media's converged newsroom were multiskilled because for the success of multimedia news

production, journalists were expected to multi-task and before they could multi-task, they had to be multiskilled. Multiskilling has, therefore, become a necessity in a converged newsroom for multimedia news production. In this regard, a respondent exclaimed:

We are now expected to be in a position to produce content for any of the three platforms. When you come here, there is no distinction between an online reporter, TV reporter and radio reporter. We are all reporters for all. If you go to cover a story, you are expected to record and edit audio for radio, take and edit videos for TV and you also have to know how to write the news story. Because of this, you cannot afford not to be competent in all these. You do not want to be irrelevant in the newsroom. But mostly you are required to be multiskilled when it comes to newsgathering on the field... (R5- IDI).

This finding is in line with Wallace's (2013) assertion that multiskilling for journalists is more likely in newsgathering than news production and distribution. Furthermore, this finding also confirms the findings of Saltzis and Dickinson (2008) which states that the practice of multiskilling may have become expedient because of the practice of newsroom convergence. This has brought about a change in the trend towards news reporting in more than one medium in formerly single-media organisations. This has resulted in newsrooms and journalists moving from the era of single-media to multimedia reporting.

Likewise, interview data revealed that Kessben Media provided three-day training on multiskilling for journalists who were migrated into the newsroom convergence practice. Thus, journalists who were not conversant with the work demands for TV were taken through how to use their smartphones in the absence of a cameraman to take quality pictures and videos, edit pictures and videos and how to write for TV and online. The informant imparts that:



We give our reporters on the job training on multimedia production even though when employing we get people who are good in multimedia production. But we do not get enough [of multiskilled journalists] because before we get to know of them, they would have already been taken by our competitors in Accra. You know most of these training institutions are based in Accra. We have to, therefore, train the recruits because they are not good in multimedia newsgathering and production. This is because multiskilling is a requirement for our journalists in the newsroom... (INF1- IDI)

Similarly, it was also discovered from the data that training did not end after the orientation but journalists were encouraged to learn further from their colleagues and other learning platforms to make them more competent for multimedia newsgathering and production. A respondent declared that:

We were told after the training to try and learn from other colleagues who were more experienced in multimedia production. You know that three days of training alone will not be enough to become an expert in new skills. So, we have been learning on the job as well and that is helping most of us... (R8-IDI)

This aligns with Garcia Aviles *et al.* (2009, 2014), Larrondo *et al.* (2016) and Wallace (2013) argument that in an integrated newsroom, journalists are required to be multiskilled. However, this finding is inconsistent with Garcia Aviles *et al.*'s (2014) and Gicobi's (2018) findings that news organisations used in their studies did not provide enough training needed by their journalists to improve on the practice of newsroom convergence. More so, Garcia Aviles *et al.* (2009) affirms that in practising single structure newsroom convergence (which indicates the practice of the integrated model of newsroom convergence), media organisations are expected to at least provide partial training on multiskilling for its journalists.

The study also found out that even though journalists were required to be multiskilled to multi-task in the newsroom, there had not been any additional

motivation in terms of an increase in remunerations for journalists. One respondent noted that:

We do not receive any additional pay or salary from management. The old contract we signed before the introduction of this new practice still stands. We are not complaining because I think what motivates me is the increase in my professional skills. We all know that journalists are not paid well so you cannot complain... (R6-IDI).

This is also in line with Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2009) findings in *Die Welt/Morgenpost-group* in Germany that even though the workload had increased in the newsroom and journalists were practising multiskilling due to the convergence and the demands that came with it, employment contracts for journalists were still the same. Thus, the differences that existed in employees' contracts, based on the platforms they worked for before the convergence, had not changed. For instance, online editors' salaries were still lower than their print counterparts. However, the point of departure in the findings from the current study was the fact that at Kessben Media, there was no unrest in the newsroom because of salaries. This may be due to differences in the contract of employment and prevailing systems at the geographical locations.

Multiskilling, as played out in the data gathered from Kessben Media is in line with the integrated model by Garcia- Aviles and Carvajal (2008). Unlike the cross-media model, the integrated model espouses that multiskilling is a precondition for journalists in the newsroom. This is prescribed in the newsgathering, production and distribution process.

#### **4.1.4 Content sharing**

Content sharing denotes the sharing of ideas and information on news stories amongst journalist in the newsroom (Dailey, Demo & Spillman, 2005). According to

Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2014), journalists meet frequently to exchange ideas and provide feedback to each other on how best to cover a story in the converged newsroom. The key indicator for this was journalists coming together to share information and ideas on news stories on individual levels or during editorial meetings. Data from observations established that at Kessben Media, there is a daily editorial meeting at 9:30 am on Mondays to Fridays. During this meeting, potential news stories were discussed and journalists were allowed to share information on these stories to enable the particular reporter assigned to the story to have more knowledge on that particular story. Based on the available information shared, reporters were guided on how to gather all the other necessary information on that story.

**Figure 4: Editorial Meeting in the Converged Newsroom at Kessben Media**



Aside from the editorial meetings, the researcher further observed that journalists walked to each other in the newsroom to ask for additional information from

someone who might have contacts or insight on a story. Sometimes, multiple reporters were also assigned to a particular story; most of the time this happened to the big stories of the day which were given prominence.

**Figure 5: Reporters Sharing Ideas on a Story in the Converged Newsroom at Kessben Media**



The researcher's findings through the newsroom observations were further corroborated in an interaction with a respondent. The respondent drew the researcher's attention to an occurrence during the editorial meeting to illustrate how they share content. The respondent said:

You see that during the editorial meeting, there was a hint of a story at the Kumasi Municipal Assembly and we wanted some of our reporters to do a follow-up on it. During the discussion, other reporters with contacts at the place gave out certain information that became helpful in the discussion. Such things always happen during our editorial meetings. All the journalists

are encouraged to give out any information that will help in gathering more facts on a particular story... (R1-IDI).

Analysing this finding through the lens of the models of multimedia newsroom convergence by Garcia- Aviles and Carvajal (2008), it can be said that content sharing is a feature under both the integrated and cross-media model of newsroom convergence. However, the way and manner it played out at Kessben Media fit more into the integrated model. The integrated model posits that there is a high level of collaboration amongst journalists in producing stories for the platforms. This collaboration involves content sharing through information sharing on a particular story. This finding is also consistent with Garcia- Aviles *et al.* (2009) who posit that the integrated type of newsroom convergence model has an inherent feature of collaboration by journalists through content sharing to produce news for platforms. Larrondo *et al.* (2016) also found in his study of the challenges and opportunities the practice of newsroom convergence in some selected public service media houses in Europe. His study found that there was an improvement in the flow of information in the newsrooms through the sharing of content via the informal sharing ideas, contacts and expertise.

This was also affirmed in the interviews with participants at Kessben Media. One respondent revealed that:

Despite the fact that I am the editor for TV and another person is in charge of Radio if I have any difficulty with any story and I think she can help I show it to her for her to share any information she has on the story. Our reporters too do the same. You watch what the two reporters are doing now, they are discussing a running story and through that they exchange information... (R2-IDI).

Another participant added:

Sometimes too somebody will go out for a story but before we decide on which medium to broadcast on, we look out for the quality of the visuals

and the content if we want to broadcast on TV. Some contents are not good for TV, so we decide that this story will be good but let's use it for radio because radio people will not need the visuals. In such situation, we give the content to the Radio editor... (R3- IDI).

Some of the reporters indicated in the focus group discussion that the high degree of content sharing in the newsroom was because they were all in one workspace. P3 stated that:

At first, the different newsrooms made it difficult for us to share ideas after editorial meetings. But now, my desk is closer to another reporter and our editors. I easily consult others on stories. For instance, this morning I was tasked to follow-up on a story at Central market. I went to him (one reporter) to get contact to arrange for a meeting. He also gave me some information that aided my report when I got to the place. This was easy to get than before... (P3, FGD)

#### **4.2 RQ2: What are the Motivations for the Practice of Newsroom Convergence at Kessben Media?**

Scholars like Fagerjord and Storsul (2007), Singer and Quandt (2009) and Tameling and Broesma (2013) have argued that the practice of newsroom convergence can be a threat to quality journalism. However, there has been a recent increase in the practice of newsroom convergence and this has called for the question of motivation for this practice. There have been several views in research studies when it comes to the reasons for the implementation of newsroom convergence. For instance, Saridou, Spyridou and Veglis (2017) argue that convergence is used as a cost-effective strategy to foster low-cost and increase news production. Additionally, Garcia Aviles and Carvajal (2008) are of the view that media organisations are practising newsroom convergence as a management strategy to cut cost and also ensure quality at the same

time. Lorrando *et al.* (2016) aver that journalists in all the cases they have studied, perceived convergence in newsrooms as unavoidable and progressive. With all these views in mind, this study sought to advance the arguments by analysing the reasons for the implementation of newsroom convergence within the Ghanaian context with Kessben Media as the case study. This is further fuelled by the fact that Kessben Media happens to be the only media house outside the capital of Ghana, Accra, to be practising newsroom convergence. After a rigorous analysis of the data, various themes were identified as the motivations for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. The themes were *profitability, quality assurance, competitive advantage and fragmented audience*, these themes were explained using the media convergence theory.

#### **4.2.1 Profitability**

The theme of profitability means an increase in revenue for the media organisation as a result of the practice of newsroom convergence. Hoynes (2013) classify the mass media as the mass media for profit. They argue that in a capitalist system, mass media organisations must focus on one underlying goal: the creation of products that will bring about fiscal benefits. This has become the foundation for most decisions in a media house. The indicators for this theme were cost-cutting strategies employed by Kessben Media and an increase in advertising revenues.

The data gathered through interviews revealed that Kessben Media, as a profit-making entity, is mostly moved by strategies that augment the overall strategy of making a profit as a business entity. The practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben is seen as a business strategy which enhances the general goal of the organisation. The researcher's interactions with the informant participant for this study revealed two

major areas that have contributed to the profit-making strategy of Kessben Media through the practice of newsroom convergence. The first one was the cutting down of cost through the reduction in the number of journalists in the newsroom. Therefore, the informant participant notes that “we have reduced the number of journalists in the newsroom from more 17 journalists to less than 13 journalists. This is helping us to reduce the cost we incur through the payment of salaries...” (INF1-IDI).

In furtherance, the researcher discovered that profitability was possible because of the practice of multiskilling and multi-tasking of journalists in the newsroom. He avows that:

We have trained our journalists to report for all the three platforms. This means we don't need more journalists in the newsroom now. So, it became clear that if we enforce multiskilling, we can reduce the number and at the same time get more content for the three platforms... (INF-IDI).

The informant elaborated further by adding that before the practice of the newsroom convergence, the reduction in the number of journalists was a difficult thing to do. He articulated:

Before the convergence, our journalists were specialised in reporting for a particular platform. Let's say TV or any of the other platform. This means one journalist did not have the skills to report for all the three platforms. So, it was clear that we needed more journalists to make it work for each platform. Radio had 6 journalists, TV had 8 and online had 4... (INF1, IDI).

R 1, who is an editor threw more light on this by describing how journalists were working in the previous practice. He noted that:

We were sending more reporters to report on a single story because each reporter was specialised in reporting for either Radio, TV or Online. That is, you will see a reporter solely interviewing news source with his or her recorder and after that write the story, edit the sound bite and give it to the Radio editor. Another reporter from the same Kessben Media will take



pictures and video to write another story, edit the footages and make it available for TV... (R1, IDI)

Another way that newsroom convergence is helping Kessben Media to maximise profit according to data gathered was the leverage to increase advertising revenue through the use of the three platforms. It was revealed in the interview data that the effective and efficient production of news content for the three different platforms had increased the audience who consume media products from Kessben Media. The increase in numbers had resulted in more advertisers for the media house. This increased the revenue generation at Kessben Media. Therefore, the informant participant stated:

You know, we are killing two birds with one stone. On one hand, we have reduced cost of production through a reduction in staffing in the newsroom; the small number in the newsroom can produce content for the three platforms. On the other hand, we are now mentioned when it comes to numbers because we reach out to a lot of people. Advertisers are also interested in numbers. Our profit margins are increasing through the increase in advertising revenue... (INF, IDI).

These findings on profitability align with the findings of Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2009). Their study revealed that at *Die Welt/Morgenpost-group* in Germany, the newsroom convergence process led to an increase in profit and job cuts among the editorial staff. It was identified that almost 100 workers in 2002 and 57 in 2006 were laid off as a result of the practice of newsroom convergence, even though newsroom convergence led to the expansion of the online section. Their study also noted that *Die Welt* had never made a profit since its introduction in 1946 but after the convergence, it recorded its first profit in 2007.

Besides, the findings of the current study also agree with that of Saridou *et al.* (2017). The practice of newsroom convergence in the Greek media was a cost reduction strategy because of its cost-effectiveness. This was attributed to the reason that it made use of low cost to produce more news content. Furthermore, Quinn (2005), avers that making multiskilling a general practice in the newsroom and the restructuring of the newsroom have been usually perceived as cost-cutting measures.

Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008) and Hoynes (2013) add that media owners see newsroom convergence as the means to overcome the decrease in audience consumption of traditional media products and a reduction in advertising revenues. Picard (1989), as cited in Hoynes (2013), also avers that the media sell news content to audiences and in turn sell the audiences to advertisers. This means that if a media organisation can attract more audiences for media products, it has a direct effect on advertising revenues. This is so because the media organisation uses the numbers, with regards to the audience, as a leverage to increase prices for advertisement and also get more advertisers on board because the advertiser is interested in reaching out to the numbers.

This can also be explained with the theory of media convergence by Jenkins (2006) which posits that the implementation of media convergence is a strategic decision by media managers as a result of a cultural shift in audience consumption of media products. That is, media organisations are finding ways to constantly produce news content across multiple platforms like TV, Radio, Online and Newspapers. This is to broaden their income base through a wider reach to reinforce audience trust in the media organisation.

#### 4.2.2 *Quality assurance*

Another theme that emerged from the gathered data is quality assurance. Zhang (2008) defines quality as an evaluation of how informative, important, interesting, and well-written a news story is. The theme of quality assurance is explained as the increase in the quality of news products produced by media organisations. Quality here manifests in two ways, first quality assurance in news stories and secondly the improved quality in the professional skills of journalists (Wallace, 2013). The indicators for this theme were multiple gatekeeping of stories and journalist's multiskilling.

In analysing the data, it was established in the interview with the informant that the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media was influenced by the fact that it ensured quality. This is seen through the news items that are broadcasted on the various platforms and the feedback from audience and readers. He espouses that "we see an improvement in the quality of news items on TV, Radio and the online news portal. This is because the story will go through the hands of multiple editors before it gets published or broadcasted..." (INF, IDI).

Data from the observation ascertained the veracity of this claim. The researcher observed that each news story for TV or Radio went through rigorous proofreading by two editors. That is, through the sub-editor of the platform and the main editor. The researcher was told in an interview with R 2, that this was not the case before the implementation of newsroom convergence. She indicates that "before the current practice, stories for Radio went through only the Radio editor and in the same way, stories for TV went through only the TV editor without any further scrutiny" (R2, IDI).

R2 further adds that the previous practice was not ensuring quality but the current practice assures them of quality by ensuring that stories that go on-air or online are of a certain quality standard. She postulated that:

We ensure that the news stories that are produced from the newsroom are of top quality. We as editors ensure this by encouraging our reporters to write good stories. Sometimes I can spend more than 30 minutes on one story with a reporter. This is because I don't want the reporter to repeat certain mistakes the next time. I sometimes even make calls to confirm some of the information provided by a reporter. After I am done with all the corrections, it has to go to the main editor before it is given to the newsreader to present it in Twi on air. That is if it is for TV or Radio. Most of the time we modify it and publish it on the website... (R2, IDI).

Wallace (2013) affirms this by espousing that newsroom with systems that ensure the checking of stories enhances the quality of story outputs. He adds that at the BBC in 2009, TV programme commissioners were urged to be prepared to reject programme items not considered to be of quality for broadcasting. Data from the informant interview further revealed that another way quality had been assured was the skills enhancement of journalists. Journalists can now gather news, produce and distribute to multiple platforms. This according to the informant had brought about creativity in terms of news gathering and production. For instance, he discloses that:

Now our journalists are seen as highly skilled everywhere they go. It is not easy to be multiskilled as a journalist. You become a hot cake because you can work for any multimedia company. You read news stories from them and you see some creativity in their writings and even the quality in pictures and voices... (INF1, IDI).

R 2 corroborated this by noting that

Sometimes you even see an indirect competition in the newsroom because some of the stories are done individually and they all want their stories to be read. But the competition is just subtle. The on the job training we give to our journalists and the practical exposure to constantly working for multiple platforms improves their quality always which in turn brings about

quality content for distribution. This motivates us more as a media house...  
(R2, IDI).

According to Wallace (2013), editors in the newsroom of the BBC claimed that multiskilling had led to an improvement in the quality of content produced. This assertion aligns with the findings identified from data collected from Kessben Media. Wallace (2013) further found out that there was more creativity in the newsroom and also the quality of journalists had improved through multiskilling in the newsroom. For instance, he identified that more reporters were able to report with cameras, including those who were primarily skilled in Radio reporting. Other scholars Huang *et al.* (2004) and Meier (2007), also believe that that multiskilling in the newsroom facilitates greater control over the whole production process, resulting in improved efficiency and quality in the newsroom. Similarly, for Ketterer, Weir, Smethers, and Back (2004), media convergence may create quality journalism because it makes use of resources such as the abilities of more journalists of multiple media platforms partners to provide more in-depth coverage of major news events.

However, the findings of the current study is not consistent with the assertion by Cottle and Ashton (1999) that journalists believe multitasking in the newsroom will impact negatively on the quality of news. This was explained further by Garcia Aviles, Alberto, Leon, Sanders and Harrison (2004) that this practice brings about armchair reporting and a decline in the specialisation of journalists.

Nevertheless, the findings of the current study also play into the media convergence theory by Jenkins (2006) as the theory posits that media convergence has redefined the media environment through the combination of distinct mediums as a result of new technologies. The newsroom convergence process at Kessben Media has brought together journalists from multiple platforms like TV, Radio and online in one

newsroom to produce content for these platforms. This has brought about a redefinition of the media environment in the newsroom in terms of newsgathering, production and distribution. Thus, journalists now work together as multimedia journalists and no more specialised journalists for a particular platform but all platforms. And as a result, journalists are now multiskilled and can multi-task when it comes to gathering and producing news.

#### **4.2.3 *Competitive advantage***

Porter (1985) first defined competitive advantage as they search for a favourable competitive position in an industry, which is a profitable and sustainable position against the forces that determine industry competition. Gary Dessler (1999) as cited in Zhang (2008) points out that all companies try to achieve competitive advantage for each business they are in. Gunnigle and Moore (1994) as cited in Zhang (2008) redefined competitive advantage more specifically as “any factor(s) which allow(s) an organisation to differentiate its product or service from those of its competitors to increase market share” (p. 65).

However, in the context of this study, the theme of competitive advantage has to do with being ahead of your competitors to remain relevant and important in the media industry. The indicators were uniqueness of Kessben Media and how they are widely valued. The data through interviews revealed that Kessben Media practised newsroom convergence because they believe it gave them a competitive advantage in the Ashanti Region. This is because within the region they operate in, they are the only multimedia company. This has given them an increased market share. It was realised through the conversation with the informant that since the introduction of multimedia broadcasting by Kessben Media, their market share had increased. Thus, their presence in the TV

industry, Radio and Online has made them easily accessible by the audience within and outside the Ashanti Region. For example, he said:

You know we are the only media house doing multimedia production within this Region. And that has made us stand tall among our peers in the region. If you check the report from Media Foundation for West Africa in 2018, our market share has increased to 3.6%. We will continue to go up because of the quality we are getting from the newsroom.... (INF1, IDI).

He further added that it has made the media organisation unique and has also increased its value.

You know the news is a major programme for media houses. If you become an authority in that your mentions go up. We believe that adopting a strategy that will help us produce the needed content for these platforms is as relevant as making these platforms available. That is why we are committed to this convergence. It is contributing to the aim to position ourselves well in the market... (INF1, IDI).

Zhang (2008) corroborates this by indicating that organisations seek to be unique in the industry along some dimensions that are widely valued by consumers. This, he adds, is achieved through accessibility, reliability and quality of products produced by media organisations. This is ascribed to by Kessben Media in ensuring their competitive advantage in the market. Chyi and Sylvie (2001) also adds that once the print and broadcast media go online, it will increase their audiences and market because the Internet technology allows them to seek a worldwide market.

Furthermore, the informant indicated in the interview that Kessben Media saw the convergence practice as a survival strategy. Thus, the quest to be prominent and survive in the media industry had made Kessben Media change the way of producing news for these multimedia platforms. He postulated that:

All media houses are working toward becoming part of the top ten media houses in Ghana and we are no exception to this. Media houses who are into

multimedia are always among the top ten in terms of readership, listenership or viewership. This accorded these media houses the competitive advantage to be prominent... (INF1, IDI).

The informant also cited Multimedia Group and Despite Media Group as media houses who are seen as the best in Ghana because of the presence of Radio, Television and online and the credibility, they have built over time.

Additionally, he said:

In our case, it has satisfied the experience of our readers, users and viewers in getting news and information disseminated by us. From the business sense, it is very valuable because it has created a new string of revenues. In the sense of journalism, it has created ways to tell stories in a much more comprehensive way... (INF, IDI).

The analysed data from the INF also stressed that the ability for reporters of all platforms to go out for comprehensive coverage when news break should be a kind of competitive advantage. They have a differentiating advantage that other media companies do not have. Convergence also helps Kessben Media leverage multiple platforms in the market. INF stressed that:

All the changes you see - that is merging of our newsrooms, reducing the number in the newsroom, making sure that our journalists are trained for this change to produce quality news and making them available on these platforms - gives a competitive advantage over our peers and play into the agenda to become prominent. Now because we are the only media outlet in the Ashanti Region that produces news for multiple platforms through a converged newsroom, our presence in both the traditional and new media platforms is felt. Apart from the stations who are affiliated to the other big media houses in Accra and source their news from there, we have the most listenership when it comes to Radio news in the Ashanti Region. We always rank high when it comes to media rankings... (INF1, IDI).



Zhang (2008) in his study also found out that convergence is a necessity or even an inevitability for media organisations because of the economic constraints that require news organisations to make the most efficient use of their resources. For Zhang, convergence is an important survival strategy for local media, even though, it might not be the best strategy for every media organisation in a market. Zhang (2008) also noted that convergence will make media companies more efficient and more entrepreneurial and that convergence will create good journalism and profits which will lead to competitive advantages.

#### **4.2.4 Audience fragmentation**

Furthermore, the study identified audience fragmentation as a theme in answering the question of the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. The researcher found out from the data that managers of Kessben Media were motivated to go into multimedia news production which has resulted into the practice of newsroom convergence because they want to reach out to the pockets of audiences who prefer to consume media products on any different platforms. The informant participant declared that:

We believe that even though our TV and Radio broadcast in a local language (Twi) which is a hegemonic language in Ghana, other audiences are mostly assessing news online. Therefore, we have to reach out to them too. We will make the understanding voluminous through the web by arranging the same news item in English and publish on the web so that the same news content will be available to the audience online... (INF1, IDI).

The informant adds that there is a change in the taste of some of the audience. Hence, it is important to meet their current taste. He articulated:

Now, most of the senior high school students and tertiary students are all consumers of online information. They hardly listen to Radio or even watch Television. How then do we reach out to these people? We aim to have a wider coverage that why we decided to add the online news production so we can reach them through our website and social media... (INF1, IDI).

The media convergence theory, by Jenkins (2006) posits that there has been a cultural change in audience consumption of news content. This has been enhanced by new media technologies. This has moved most of the traditional media products online. Consumers can easily sit at the comfort of their home and have access to news through a portable mobile phone. This, according to the theory, has also changed the way media producers disseminate news to consumers. According to Jenkins' theory, the cultural change in the taste of consumer means if the traditional news producers want to reach out to them, they have to chase these new breeds of news consumers on the internet. This explains the theme of audience fragmentation as a reason for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media.

Again, the findings for research question two corroborate Murphy's (2002) assertion that the practice of media convergence is expected to bring about the creation of quality journalism, and the generation of profit and cost reduction which leads to media's competitive advantage. However, the finding of a study conducted by Zhang (2008) is not consistent with the findings of the current study. Zhang (2008) found out that respondents were not certain on the idea that media convergence can generate enough profits or can lower a media company's production cost.

Furthermore, Doyle (2002) provides a construct for the relationship between quality journalism, profitability and competitive advantage. That is, media organisations with multiple products for multiple platforms end up getting quality news content which will drive more audience and in turn bring more advertisers to give the

organisation a competitive advantage. For instance, Kessben Media produces at least three types of products including news content and advertisement. These products are distributed via Radio, TV and Online. These three kinds of products are generated from the converged newsroom by journalists who work for the three platforms to serve a bigger audience. The marginal cost for repackaging or redistributing the products produced from the newsroom for the multiple media platforms is expected to be lower than the original average costs. Therefore, both economics of scale and scope which are characteristics of the concept of media economics are seen at Kessben Media because convergence has made it possible for them to spread newsgathering costs and other news production costs over multiple distribution platforms with multiple revenue sources and multiple audiences through Radio, television, and the Internet.

#### **4.3 RQ3: What are the Perspectives of Journalists on the Practice of Newsroom Convergence at Kessben Media?**

Perspectives of journalists have to do with the views or thoughts of the key actors in the newsroom convergence process at Kessben Media. The process involves the work of journalists in the newsroom, hence it is appropriate to establish how these journalists think about the practice of newsroom. It has been established by Jenkins (2006) and supported by Garcia-Aviles (2008) that the implementation of any convergence process is a management strategy. Such management strategy has a direct effect on journalists in the newsroom. Research question 3, therefore, seeks to explore the point of views of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. The study inductively came up with themes from the data gathered from the field through a focus group discussion with journalists in the newsroom. The themes derived from the responses for this question are: *it is a challenging practice, it comes with a sense of*

*responsibility, it enables easy monitoring and skill enhancement.* These themes were analysed with the aid of the cultural perspective of the media convergence theory.

#### **4.3.1 Challenging practice**

A common perspective from the journalists at Kessben Media on the practice of newsroom convergence is the fact that it is a challenging practice. This conclusion was drawn based on the identification of indicators like stress and increased workload on journalists from gathered data. Through the focus group discussion, participants indicated that the demands of working in a converged newsroom have made the work very challenging because of an increase in the workload on journalists. For example, a participant illustrated this by saying that:

I do a lot of work nowadays. It is not easy for one person to go to a news source to gather news and produce for all the three platforms. News is expected to be current and immediate: you cannot afford to delay your stories. Sometimes I feel in my body that I am so stressed and tired. Imagine one person writing three different versions of a story and editing voices, pictures and videos at the same time to compliment these stories for each platform... (P5, FGD).

The researcher discovered from the FDG data that the workload on journalists had increased because of the reduction in the total number of journalists in the newsroom. Therefore, another participant disclosed that:

Some of my colleagues left and others were sacked. Management told us that it was a strategic decision. We are not many in the newsroom and the work here is more than before. Just like Jesus said, the work is more but the labourers are few. So, each journalist has to work more and that sometimes becomes a challenge because the body sometimes becomes tired... (P3, FGD).

Another participant in the discussion postulated that there was more flexibility in the work demands before the convergence practice. Thus, she noted that:

At first, some of us could easily ask for permission to be absent from work but now it is difficult because one absenteeism will affect the number of stories we produce in a day. Previously, in a day it was ok to produce just a story especially when it was only Radio. But now the pressure is on us to get more stories for each platform... (P6, FGD)

The researcher also observed that because of the requirement for journalists to write more stories for all platforms. Some of the journalists skip lunch to meet story deadlines. Additionally, a participant narrated that the increased workload as a result of the multimedia news production and the reduction in the number of journalists in the newsroom makes him always get to the house late and tired. He stated that:

It is not easy for us even though we love the job but as human as we are, the body gets tired because of the workload in the newsroom. Now one reporter does the job of three reporters. You are gathering news and producing it for three platforms. When you go for an event, you have to be your cameraman, and record voices as well. If you are unable to get footages you have to chase a friend who captured it to get it before you bring the package to the newsroom. When you come, you also have to edit and write a story. By the time you get home, you will be so tired and you have to also wake up early again to come to work... (P5, FGD).

Moreover, one participant also adds her perspective on the stress experienced at work every day. She noted that:

This stress is because we multi-task as journalists since we have been trained to have multi-skills. I am not saying the new skills we have acquired are bad but I will say it is both a blessing and a curse. We are expected to gather news by getting both sounds and visual from the source to write the story for it to be broadcasted on either TV, Radio or Online. So basically, one person does 3 peoples' job. That is no joke... (P4, FGD).

This finding is corroborated by Philip *et al.* (2009) who aver that newsroom convergence has brought about changes in the routine of news gathering and news production in the newsroom. This finding also affirms the findings of Wallace (2013) in his study in the BBC newsroom. His study found out that journalists at the BBC indicated that trying to work for Radio, TV and online at the same time gave them more stress. This was attributed to the limited time available for journalists to multi-task by working on several stories within a limited timeframe for broadcast or publication. This is also corroborated by Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2014) and Xiong and Zhang (2018). Furthermore, Gicobi (2018) in his study on newsroom convergence at Nations Media Group in Kenya also found out that multi-media content production was associated with more demands and more workload for journalists. Thus, the demands of reporters on their primary platform has not been made lighter as new demands for convergence content have grown. According to Singer (2006), producing content for multiple media platforms is time-consuming and results in time pressure that can cause considerable stress. This finding indicates a pessimistic view from journalists at Kessben Media. Yin and Lui (2014) also made the same observation in their study of journalists at Shenzhen Newspaper in China. It was revealed that journalists showed a negative attitude towards the practice of convergence.

#### **4.3.2 *Easy monitoring***

Again, easy monitoring was another perspective of journalists at Kessben Media on the practice of newsroom convergence. Easy monitoring means that it is not difficult to follow and evaluate the work of the journalists in the newsroom. The indicators for this were the ability for editors to easily observe the happenings in the newsroom and having direct contact to reporters in the newsroom. The newsroom observations

revealed that due to the use of single space for news production by all journalists at Kessben Media, editors could observe the attitudes and behaviours of other journalists in the newsroom when doing their work. That is, there is no architectural separation in the newsroom between editors and reporters, they all share the same workspace, hence, can see each other in the newsroom. It was further observed that an editor could easily walk to a reporter and vice versa. To get more insight, R1 in an interview said that “this has brought about transparency in the newsroom”. R 1 narrated further to paint a picture on what was happening in their previous newsrooms that made it difficult to achieve easy monitoring. She avowed:

This current transparency in the newsroom was not possible before we all came to share one newsroom. This is because, in the previous practice, transparency was limited to the happenings in each newsroom. For instance, in the Radio newsroom, only Radio journalists see what goes on in that particular newsroom. The same thing applies to the newsrooms for Online and TV... (R1, IDI).

The interview data additionally established that the transparency in the newsroom helped the editors to assess the reporters better than before. Thus, R 2 indicated that:

Now because we are all together in one newsroom, our job has become a bit easier in the sense that it helps to know how our reporters go about working together. The issue of who shows more leadership, who is having bad human relations skills and other things which we might not have noticed previously is now seen. We are also able to monitor punctuality in the newsroom. Because they know that we are watching them, it helps them to also put up their best behaviour. You know most people want to be in the good books of their bosses. We are also able to coordinate better, assess stories easily and collaborate better with the reporters to write good stories... (R2, IDI).

It was also noted from the interviews that the reduction in the number of journalists in the newsroom has enhanced monitoring and evaluation of journalists in

the newsroom. For instance, R 2 postulates that “reporters are now unable to hide behind their colleagues who are seen to be better to write stories. Each journalist is expected to produce news stories from their beats and a journalist who is unable to do so is easily called out” (R2, IDI)

The researcher in confirming what was revealed in the interviews observed that the current situation in the newsroom, however, placed a huge responsibility on journalists to produce stories for the three platforms. The number of stories each platform could publish or broadcast depended on how productive each journalist was in the newsroom. In an interview with the informant in this study, the informant corroborated the observations of the researcher and comments made by respondents when with regards to monitoring in the newsroom. He added:

We laid-off journalists and others too left on their own because perhaps they did not meet the standards. This means the journalists left in the newsroom are of a certain standard. So, they have to live up to such standards... (INF1)

Garcia-Aviles *et al.* (2014) corroborates this finding when they also found out in their study that newsroom convergence brought more transparency in the newsroom. This was because editorial staff could interact easily and frequently within an open space, to meet the challenges of a fast, cross-media world. They also added that open space, open conferences and open stories helped every journalist to have access to other journalists’ research material.

#### **4.3.3 Skills enhancement**

The theme of skill enhancement indicates the improvement in the professional skills of journalists. Multiskilling and multi-tasking of journalists in the newsroom are indicators of skills enhancement. Data from the study showed that the skills of



journalists in the newsroom of Kessben Media have improved as a result of the demands of newsroom convergence. Journalists noted in the focus group discussion that the training given to them in the process of implementing the newsroom convergence has enhanced their professional skills. In this light, a respondent declares that:

we were given training on some aspects of news gathering and production. For instance, those of us who were employed purposively to come and write for the website were taken through how to record and edit voices for Radio and also how to write for both Radio and TV. We got to realise that writing news stories for the website are a little different from writing for broadcast. But what has made me a better journalist is the fact that I can now record voices, edit them and also edit videos for news stories on Radio and TV... (P1, FGD).

Another participant in the focus group discussion added that the additional responsibility of writing for the website had helped him to improve upon his news writing skills. This is how he narrated his improvement:

I couldn't write standard stories for publication when I came. This is because I am a TV person and when it comes to TV news, you don't write a lot because the videos will tell the story. The presenter will speak a little and allow the videos to do the rest. But with the website, I have to write more and it also has its style. After the training workshop and constant supervision from the online editor, now my stories get published and I can say that I write well. Which is an addition to the skills I had... (P3, FGD).

In furtherance, another participant in the focus group also shared that because of the requirement to become multiskilled in the converged newsroom, she is now able to use the camera to take footages. She said:

I came here as a Radio reporter. When I came, management was yet to establish the website and the Television station. It was only Radio. So, I was good at reporting for Radio only. But we told from the start that there were

plans to establish the website and the TV. Since the introduction of the two, management has been providing training for those of us who were specialised in reporting for only Radio. Now I can use the camera to take video and pictures to write stories both TV and the website... (P2, FGD)

One participant made another case in the discussion that apart from the organised training, he has also become a better journalist through on the job training. The participant demonstrated this by saying:

I have learnt a lot from my editors and other colleagues who are good in other aspects. For instance, I could not pick up most of the skills during the training but after the training when I get stories which have footages to be edited, I will go to a colleague to take me through the editing process. After some time, I was able to do it on my own. Now when I go to the field, I have my recorder and a small camera which I use for pictures and videos. I can get audio voices edit and write a story and file for the Radio news and at the same time, I can edit pictures and videos and write a story for Television news. I do this almost daily. This has helped me to improve as a reporter... (P1, FGD).

Another participant also averted:

We easily learn from each other because I have access to anybody in the newsroom. Initially, if I want help from someone in the online newsroom, I have to call the person or climb upstairs to go and see the person, it was stressful. But now we interact easily, we help each other, we share ideas on stories, there is teamwork at play and that enhances learning... (P5, FGD).

Data from the focus group discussion also affirmed the act of learning from each other through editorial meetings. A participant in the discussion revealed that she picked up a skill to help her write better as a result of the joint editorial meetings they have been having since the newsroom convergence. She avowed that:

our main editor once said during an editorial meeting that the best stories are gotten from what was observed not what was said. This came up when we were planning to go and cover a programme at the Kumasi

Metropolitan Assembly (KMA). He was telling us not to focus only on what the Mayor was going to say. I have been running with this advice since that day and now when I go for such events, I can get more stories outside speeches given. It has improved my story writing. At first, we were not having a common editorial meeting... (P4, FGD).

Data from observations in the newsroom also corroborated some of the assertions made during the focus group discussion. The researcher observed that the use of a single newsroom has enhanced more collaborations, with the provision of mutual support. This has helped them to learn from each other and as such have improved as journalists.

#### **4.3.4 *Sense of responsibility***

The theme of a sense of responsibility underlines the journalists being responsible for newsgathering and production of stories. The indicators of this theme were journalists having autonomy over a report and working on multiple elements of the story. The data gathered through the focus group discussion established that due to the demands of the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media, a journalist was expected to be in charge of the entire process involved in writing a news story for any of the platforms. For instance, one participant articulated:

Because we have now been equipped through training to report for any of the platforms when I go out to get a story, I am supposed to gather all the elements I will need to write the story and when I come to the newsroom, I am also supposed to edit my voices, images or video and integrate it into the story before I give it to the editor... (P2, FGD).

In furtherance, respondent 4 in the focus group discussion narrated that this was not the case before the practice of newsroom convergence. She said:

When we were not in one newsroom, we were not expected to do all that. For example, initially, I was employed to report for the only TV and because of that, I was not expected to produce any story for either Radio or the website. When I get my story, I just write it for TV and give the footages to the video editor to work on it based on the story I write. So, it was more of shared responsibility between the video editor and myself... (P4, FGD).

Another participant in the focus group discussion also added:

Since I started working for Kessben Media I feel more like a journalist now. This is because the demands now are different and you can't afford to relax. I am responsible for every story I bring. I have to make sure that if the story is going to be used for all the three mediums, I produce for all. If something goes wrong, the editor knows which reporter to call. That gives me a sense of responsibility when I come to work. I know that I will be in charge of something so when I get it, I have to do it well... (P1, FGD).

In confirmation of the assertions made by participants in the focus group discussion, the researcher observed that as a result of the improvement in the skills of journalists, they took the responsibility of a particular story in reporting for the multiple platforms. A reporter in the newsroom is aware that he or she is in charge of gathering multiple elements such as audio and visuals for the production of a story. It was further observed that now every reporter knew that he or she was responsible for making stories suitable for Radio, TV and online. This has given journalists in the newsroom autonomy over stories, as a result, a journalist is held responsible for any mishap.

Wallace (2013) affirms this in his study when he indicated that journalists at the BBC liked the idea of being responsible for more elements of a report and were enthusiastic about how advantageous it was for them to have such autonomy over a story. The themes of sense of responsibility, easy monitoring and skills enhancement indicate an optimistic view by journalists on the implementation of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. This agrees with a study by Wu and Zhang (2015). The

study revealed journalists' optimistic views towards convergence. Journalists indicated that convergence had brought about efficiency and transparency in news production. Also, according to Garcia-Aviles *et al.*, (2014) journalists in the three media organisations studied in Austria, Spain and Germany saw newsroom convergence as a good thing and unavoidable.

This clearly shows that journalists at Kessben Media have both negative and positive perspectives on the practice of newsroom convergence. Wallace (2013) avers that studies that have used the cultural-oriented perspective of the media convergence theory found out that the degree of media convergence, and size of the organisation can influence how they perceive convergence journalism.

One major characteristic of the media convergence theory by Jenkins (2006) emphasises media convergence as a culture. In the sense that it has revolutionised the connection that binds technology, industry, market, product type and audience. In other words, the culture of media convergence has brought about changes in the media environment. The practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media came with an alteration in the journalistic practices in the newsroom. For instance, journalists were expected to be multiskilled and to be in a position to multitask. Based on the findings, the change in the way of life of a journalist in a converged newsroom for multimedia production of news has affected the work in the newsroom.

Journalists' perspectives on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media as challenging (as a result of the stress and pressure that comes with multiskilling and multi-tasking) can be explained using the culture-oriented perspective espoused in the media convergence theory. The conventional arrangement that comes with convergence influences the thoughts and beliefs of actors in the process (Jenkins, 2006). Also for editors at Kessben Media, this new culture is helping them to easily monitor

the happenings in the newsroom as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of reporters. Besides, easy monitoring by editors in the newsroom and the enhancement of the professional skills of journalists at Kessben Media (due to the practice of newsroom convergence) are as a result of the changes in the environment by the culture of media convergence.

#### **4.4 Summary of Chapter**

This chapter encapsulates the findings and analysis of the research questions for the study. The data gathered on the three research questions were critically explained, described and analysed through the lenses of the models of multimedia newsroom convergence and media convergence theory. The first research question which sought to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media revealed four main themes; *Single Structure, Multiple Editors, Multiskilled Journalists and Content Sharing*. With regards to research questions two (2) and three (3), a total of eight (8) themes were analysed and discussed. That is, research question two had four themes; *Profitability, Quality Assurance, Competitive Advantage and Fragmented Audience*. Research question three (3) also had four themes; *Challenging Practice, Easy Monitoring, Skills Enhancement and Sense of responsibility*.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study and specifically pays attention to drawing conclusions based on the major findings of the study. The chapter, also, provides recommendations for both academia and industry based on the observations and research findings that came out of the gathered data. Furthermore, the limitations of the study as well as areas for further research are outlined in this chapter.

#### 5.1 Summary

There have been ongoing changes in the operations of media organisations in the world. Some of these changes, scholars have attributed to the evolution of media convergence. It has also been established that one aspect of media convergence, which is newsroom convergence, is being implemented by media organisations. However, the model of newsroom convergence practised differ from country to country. The background of this study is that Ghana is no exception to this newsroom convergence practice, even though it is not a dominant practice.

As a result of the above, this research was undertaken to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised in Ghana with the spotlight on Kessben Media. It also probed to identify the motivation for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media. Again, the research analysed the perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media.

For the research to realise its objectives, three major research questions were asked;

1. What model of newsroom convergence is practised at Kessben Media?

2. What are the motivations for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media?
3. What are the perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence in Kessben Media?

Also, there was an extensive review of literature which served as the foundations upon which the findings of this research were critically analysed. The reviewed literature was organised under concepts such as media convergence, the motivation for the practice of media convergence, stakeholders' perspectives on media convergence, models of newsroom convergence and newsroom convergence in Africa. These reviews did not only help the researcher to be familiar with what has been explored in literature in the area of study but also enabled the researcher to identify the lacunae in the research area. This knowledge aided the researcher to construct the focus of this research to make it relevant to literature. The research furthermore, identified models and theories such as the models of multimedia newsroom convergence and the media convergence theory to assist the researcher to explain the data gathered. These models and theory enabled the researcher to make sense of the gathered data.

The research approach and design for this study were qualitative (Creswell, 2014) and case study (Yin, 2009) respectively. These gave the researcher chance to study the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media and also allowed the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the meaning they ascribed to the phenomena in their natural setting. Kessben Media, as well as the participants of the study, were selected using the purposive sampling technique (Bernard, 2002). The methods used in collecting data were observation, interviews and focus group discussion.

Employing semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and focus group discussions, the researcher engaged 13 participants (8 for the semi-structured interview



and 5 for one focus group discussions) to find out their perspectives on the phenomena being studied. Finally, to describe the data in a thick rich manner, thematic analysis was employed (Braun & Clark, 2006).

From the thematic analysis of data from observation, interviews and focus group discussion, the researcher came up with 12 themes to answer the three research questions. The themes that answered the first research questions were *single structure, multiple editors, multiskilling and multi-tasking, and content sharing*. With regards to the research question two, *profitability, competitive advantage, fragmented audience and quality assurance* were themes identified in answering the research question. Finally, themes like *challenging, sense of responsibility, easy monitoring and skill enhancement* answered the research question three.

## **5.2 Main Findings and Conclusions**

After analysing the gathered data, the key findings from the data led to several conclusions. As noted above, the research sought to answer three research questions.

1. In answering research question one which was to examine the model of newsroom convergence practised at Kessben Media, it emerged that Kessben Media are practising a hybrid of the multimedia newsroom convergence models identified by Garcia-Aviles and Carvajal (2008). The study realised that the model practised at Kessben Media has the characteristics of both the integrated model and the cross-media models of newsroom convergence. Out of the four themes identified three of the themes (single structure, content sharing and multiskilled journalists) fall under the integrated model of multimedia newsroom convergence. On the other hand, the theme of multiple editors falls under the cross-media model of multimedia newsroom convergence.

2. The second research question which sought out to identify the motivations for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media established that the practice of newsroom convergence has the full support from management. Management's commitment to the practice is based on how profitable the practice is in terms of cutting down cost and maximising profit. The data also revealed that the quality of news content that the various platforms churn out is very important to management. This has made the management to embrace the practice of newsroom convergence because it enhances the quality of news produced for these platforms. More so, the data showed that for the media organisation to reach out to the fragmented audience, it is important to produce content for multiple platforms. This makes the media appeal to most of the audience either through traditional media or the internet. Furthermore, the data revealed that managers of Kessben Media are motivated to ensure the practice of newsroom convergence because they want Kessben Media to have a competitive advantage in the media market, which will make them remain relevant and prominent.
3. The findings of the third research question revealed that journalists at Kessben Media have mixed feelings towards the practice of newsroom convergence. The data showed that they perceive the practice in both a positive and negative light. The positive aspect of the findings was the fact that they saw the practice as something that gives them a sense of responsibility. Also, the data showed that editors have found it easier to monitor the happenings in the newsroom. Another positive thing was that newsroom convergence has brought about the enhancement of journalistic skills. Newsroom convergence, according to the data, has made the work of journalists more challenging as it adds stress and

gives pressure. These findings provide empirical evidence of the practice of newsroom convergence in Ghana, which has been lacking in the literature.

### **5.3 Study Limitations**

The first limitation of this study is the fact that it focused on a single case study. As a result, the findings of this research cannot readily be extrapolated to other media organisations that practice newsroom convergence. Any attempt to extrapolate the findings would be to ignore the large variation between media organisations in terms of philosophy, strategy and models.

Another limitation has to do with the time allotted for this research. The time within which this research was conducted did not allow the researcher to increase the number of observations or even employ ethnography as a method of data collection at Kessben Media. However, these limitations did not take away the credibility of the study, as it has implications for further studies.

### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

The study suggests that future researchers can follow-up on this work by doing a multiple case study to draw the similarities and differences in the way this phenomenon is practised in Ghana.

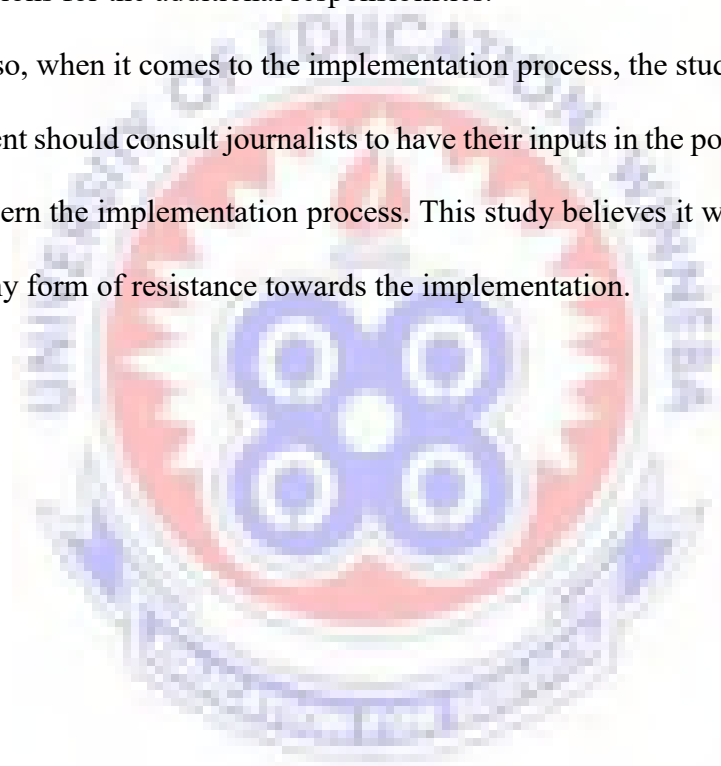
Also, future researchers can look at how journalists negotiate their identities in a converged newsroom. Since newsroom convergence brings together journalists who work for different platforms to work in the same newsroom to produce content for multiple platforms. Furthermore, other researchers can also look at media convergence in general and how it plays out within the Ghanaian context

## **5.5 Recommendations for Industry**

The study recommends that media houses seeking to implement any form of convergence should have a policy document that would aid in the implementation process. This would help the media organisation to periodically evaluate the progress or otherwise of the process.

The study also recommends that media organisations that require multiskilling and multi-tasking from their journalists should at least provide some sort of monetary compensations for the additional responsibilities.

Also, when it comes to the implementation process, the study recommends that management should consult journalists to have their inputs in the policy framework that would govern the implementation process. This study believes it would go a long way to solve any form of resistance towards the implementation.



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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Rainbow Sackey, an M.Phil. student from University of Education, Winneba. I would like to interview you about how your organisation's practice of newsroom convergence. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your responses will only be shared in my academic institution and produced as part of my M.Phil. thesis. Please remember you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you can end the interview at any time.

1. Kindly, introduce yourself and your portfolio.

#### **RQ1. What model of newsroom convergence does Kessben Media practice?**

2. How long have you been working at Kessben Media?
3. When did the newsroom convergence process start?
4. How did the newsroom convergence process start?
5. How many newsrooms were you using?
6. How many newsrooms are you using now?
7. What goes on in the converged newsroom?
8. How is the converged newsroom managed?
9. Describe your typical daily routine in the newsroom?
10. Did management provide any training during the transition? If yes,
11. What type of training did management provide?
12. Describe how the old practice was before the convergence



13. How different is working in the converged newsroom from the previous practice?
14. What do management require from journalists in this new practice?

**RQ2. What are the motivations for the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media?**

15. When did management decide to start newsroom convergence?
16. Why did management decide to start this practice?
17. How did management implement this process?
18. Were the processes documented?
19. Is management satisfied with the outcome so far?
20. What are some of the challenges you are facing with this process?

**RQ3. What are the perspectives of journalists on the practice of newsroom convergence at Kessben Media?**

21. What are your general views on the practice of newsroom convergence by your media organisation?
22. How has the practice helped you?
23. Do you see any negatives with this practice?
24. Has some of your colleagues left because of this new practice?
25. What were their reasons?

26. In your personal view, do you think newsroom convergence practice is a good thing or a bad thing? Give reasons for your answer

