

# Media Coverage Of Female Parliamentary Candidates In Ghana: An Analysis Of The Daily Graphic And The Ghanaian Times Newspapers

**Samuel Adadi Akapule**

Communication and Media Studies Department, University  
of Education, Winneba

**Paul Achonga Kabah Kwode**

Lecturer, Tamale Technical University, Media and  
Communication Studies Department

*Abstract: Media coverage of female politicians globally has been observed to portray women with less coverage and less prominence. As such, prominent pages such as front and political pages are mostly dominated by males with females on non-prominent political pages. By means of content analysis, this paper investigated the media coverage of female parliamentary candidates in the 2016 elections in Ghana. The Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times newspapers were analysed to determine the frequency coverage for female parliamentary candidates and the prominence given to candidates. Findings indicate that out of a total of 90 publications spanning July 1, 2016 to December 7, 2016, in both papers, less coverage were given to female parliamentary candidates. The Daily Graphic had 59 stories on female parliamentary candidates while the Ghanaian Times devoted a paltry 31 stories. Of all the 90 stories, the papers featured only two on their front pages thus framing female parliamentary candidates unfavourably to capture electoral fortunes from voters. The study which is underpinned by the agenda setting theory, recommends to Civil Society Organisations and government to institute award schemes for journalists and the media in general to whip up interest in reporting on women issues. It will also give a fair representation to female parliamentary candidates to showcase their messages to electorate as a way of increasing the participation of women in Ghanaian politics.*

**Keywords: Media, Coverage, Frequency, Prominence and Female Parliamentary Candidates.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The media have been noted to be one of the major players in democratic elections. The media play an indispensable role by educating voters on how to exercise their democratic rights, reporting on the development of an election campaign; providing a platform for the political parties and candidates to communicate their message to the electorate and debate each other (Open Society Initiative for West Africa, 2010). The media also provides a platform for the public to communicate their concerns and opinions to political parties and electorates.

The media thus play an important role by selecting issues or personalities that stand to gain prominence in election campaigns coverage. Whatever is reported in the media, presents the voting public with frames with which to make critical election decisions. Issues and personalities have

become phenomena in election campaigns and are constantly competing for media attention (Kleinnijenhuis, 2001).

Research conducted worldwide on gender coverage and elections have showed that press coverage of female candidates differs from their male counterparts in terms of quality and quantity. Goodyear-Grant, (2013) argues that the visibility of women candidates is poor, with some women being prominent in news sometimes because of their unique value, or their connection to some powerful men.

Studies on gendered coverage at both local and global levels dates back in several decades with the most extensive of these studies conducted by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP 2019). Findings from the GMMP (2019) report, indicates that women make up 24% of subjects seen, heard and read about in the media. Only 16% of the stories focused on women specifically while 48% reinforce gender

stereotypes and only 8% of the news stories challenged such stereotypes. This trend of giving little attention to female issues in the media raises a lot of questions given that they (female) constitute a huge percentage of the population in the world.

Politics and media coverage of women continue to attract a lot of debate globally. Anderson, Diabah and Mensah (2011) argue that female politicians are often misrepresented in the media landscape in Ghana. This calls into question the credibility and capability of these women as leaders of their nations. According to Gadzekpo (2011), the manner in which the media trivialise women's issues in Ghana is similar to that of women in politics globally.

The media appears to be mirroring happenings in the socio-cultural practices of the Ghanaian society where politics seems to be a preserve of the masculine. Socialisation and socio-cultural barriers are among the factors that account for the low participation of women in politics and public office. In the Ghanaian society, the limited number of female representation in positions of responsibility in government results from the unequal gender power relations. The public space, hitherto primarily reserved for men was as a result of the gender construction in society. Gender can be understood as a socially constructed relationship between males and females, which is shaped by culture, norms, customs, values and social relations (Flores, 2000).

Gender construction is, therefore, a process of nurturing and influencing individuals with the social norms, rules and values, and the allocation of gendered responsibilities or roles in society (Britwum, 2009). The social construction of gender roles and status (gender construction), patriarchal systems and structures have disadvantaged women and perpetuate gender inequality in society. These concepts in the social structures describe how gender inequality is enforced, probably because of the associations of the cultural systems (beliefs and practices). There are clear links between the socio-cultural practices and gender construction where the connection relates to the historical legacy of patriarchal forces and agents (e.g. family, marriage, cultural practices, religion, social norms and values). Subsequently, culture and cultural systems, patriarchy and patriarchal agents are presented to surmise how they contribute to the disadvantaged position of women in Ghana particularly on the stereotypical portrayal of women.

According to the 2020 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, political empowerment of women is poor globally. The report continues that it will take 95 years to close the gender gap in political representation, with women in 2019 holding 25.2 percent of parliamentary (lower) house seats and 21.2 percent of ministerial positions (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020).

In Ghana research conducted by some Scholars show that the scenario is not different from other countries. Bawa and Sanyare (2013) indicate that for the Gold-Coast Legislative Assembly, Mabel Dove Danquah was elected as the first Ghanaian legislator in 1954, but during independence in 1957, no female was elected. They indicate that in the 1st Parliament of the First Republic, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah made a special provision under the Representation of the People's Act No: 8 of 1960 in the National Assembly, where 10 women were elected by special ballot, the 2nd Parliament in 1965 had 19

women out of which nine were elected to join the 10 reserved seats.

Nkansah (2009) considers this to be very positive and progressive since Ghana was one of the first countries to introduce a quota system for women in politics and public office. Even so, 1969 saw a reversal of women representation in parliament. Thirteen of the nine candidates, only one woman were elected to Parliament but this increased to two women in 1970 after a by-election. The third Republican Parliament in 1979 witnessed a slight increment. Out of 19 women candidates, five women were elected.

Ghana returned to constitutional rule in 1992 after 11 years of military rule, under the 4th Republic. In the 1st Parliament of this era, 16 out of 23 women candidates secured seats in Parliament. The 1996 Parliament also saw 18 out of 57 women elected and in 2000, 19 out of 95 women made it to Parliament. The 2004 Parliament witnessed an increase of women elected. Out of 104 women candidates, 25 made it to Parliament but, this gain was reversed in 2008 when 20 out of 103 women won their parliamentary seats (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013).

For the 2016 parliamentary elections (7<sup>th</sup> Parliament) where this study is focus out of the overall 1,158 candidates who contested for the election, female parliamentary candidates stood at 136 (Ghana Election 2016). Out of the 136 female parliamentary candidates, 40 were from the NDC and 29 from the NPP; the remaining 67 were either from smaller parties or independent candidates. By the close of December 7, 2016, 36 of the 69 NPP and NDC women candidates won their seats. Of the 36 women who won, 12 are from the NDC and 24 from the NPP.

However, in the last (sixth) parliament, 16 female candidates were elected as NDC MPs and 14 as NPP MPs. Apart from females underrepresented in Ghana's legislature, the figure lacks regional representation compelling some gender activists to complain that women's representation in the Legislature was still low and fell short of the minimum UN recommended threshold of 30 per cent requirement (Beijing Conference of 1995).

Many studies have been conducted in the area of the coverage of women in the media. For example, Gadzekpo (2011) assessed the occupational status of women in the Ghanaian media landscape and examined whether or not transformations in the media landscape really exist from re-democratisation have facilitated women's rights in the decision-making process. Oyesomi and Oyero (2012) ascertained how the Nigerian newspapers reported politicians in the 2011 general election in Nigeria.

Lindner (2004) examine the portrayal of women in advertisements in the general interest magazine and women fashion magazine over the last 50 years. Anderson, Diabah and Mensah (2011) investigated the validity of such claims and instances of bias and negative representations of female candidates. They compared the Africa and the international media reports on Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her major rival, George Manneh Oppong Weah who contested with Ellen Johnson during the presidential election of Liberia in 2006 and lost.

Bawa and Sanyare (2013) described empirical findings on issues affecting women effective participation in politics and

the public sector of Ghana. They used field study. That is extensive field studies conducted in Ghana between 2010 to 2011, Primary data was gathered through interviews.

Based on the above mentioned findings from the various studies, there is minimal studies in the use of the Ghanaian newspapers, specifically *the Daily Graphic* and *the Ghanaian Times* to study into the representation of women in politics and public life.

Again gap exists in the coverage of female parliamentary candidates using *the Daily Graphic* and *the Ghanaian Times* newspapers. Aside, most of the studies used either the framing theory, discourse analysis or the *glass ceiling theory leaving a gap in the use of the framing theory and the liberal feminist theory which would be very critical in analysing female representations in the newspapers and media studies in general.*

In the light of these gaps, this study seeks to investigate media's coverage of the 2016 female parliamentary candidates. It aims at contributing to debates for gender parity in all stakes of lives and to understand whether the media which is part of the society helps to perpetuate this phenomenon or helps to address it. Among the objectives guiding this study is; to examine the frequency of media coverage of female parliamentary candidates in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* in the 2016 parliamentary election. It is also, to investigate the importance the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* newspapers attached to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates in the 2016 parliamentary elections.

This current study is very critical because the Parliamentary and Presidential elections of Ghana is due for this year 2020 and as mandated by the Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution, Article 163 demands all state-owned media to afford fair opportunities and facilities for presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature shows that the Africa continent has its fair share of varying challenges of media treatment of female candidates in elections reportage just as it is in abroad.

Akor (2014) in analyzing why media coverage of women politicians were poor in Nigeria during the 2011 general elections avers that the media is the ears and eyes of the public, which help to mould and shape perceptions. Voters therefore rely on the media to make informed decisions especially during elections. Notwithstanding, this levels of coverage given to women politicians in the media are poor and consist of stereotypes which contribute to the poor portraying of women during election periods. Akor (2014) observed that this fuels the reluctance of political parties to have women as candidates thereby feeding into a vicious circle of their low political representation across most sectors. Her report concludes that the media are a very effective channel for achieving increased women's political participation and affirmative action and so women right groups should work together with women politicians to encourage their increase in political representation in the future elections.

In a study to explore how print media framed 22 women parliamentarians in their coverage of Kenya's general elections in 2011, Thuo (2012) examined the amount of media coverage and level of prominence given to stories on women politicians; and secondly, tried to identify the dominant gender frames used in newspaper content.

The study, which employed qualitative approach focused on the daily publications of the Nation Media Group and Tile Standard Group over a six months' period from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30th June 2011. The researcher who did a content analysis of all the newspaper articles that mentioned any of the 22 women aspirants and interviewed 10 editors and writers working for the two media groups used framing analysis. The findings were that the print media coverage of women in politics was low, with their stories placed in the inside pages and hardly on the headlines thus making them invisible. The researcher concluded that hidden influences such as cultural backgrounds of the media professionals, principles of what makes news and commercial interest contributed to the low coverage of women.

In a similar study of newspaper, coverage of 22 women parliamentarians in the 2011 General elections in Nigeria, Oyesomi and Oyero (2012) aver that the media dictate what the people think about and not what the people think, thus the agenda of the media becomes the agenda of the people.

The authors employed the agenda setting theory and analysed 288 editions of two leading Nigerian newspaper publications, the Guardian and the Punch from December 2010 to August 2011 during the run-up to the Nigerian 2011 elections. Findings revealed that out of 464 issues in both newspapers analyzed, only 64 stories represented issues of women. In addition, fewer stories that were covered about women were not given in-depth coverage or prominence because most of the stories appeared in the inner pages while the front 27 pages captured only 10 percent of all such stories.

In a study of how the media set an agenda during elections, Shaw (2007) investigated the run-off of the 2005 Liberian presidential elections between Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Mr. George Weah and how they were framed. She did content analyses of newspaper stories from *The Analyst* and the *Daily Observer* and conducted in-depth interviews of their editors. Her sample was purposefully selected to find evidence of the agenda-setting and framing theories as employed by the media in the run-off of the elections scheduled on November 8, 2005.

The study revealed that Mr. Weah had openly issued threats to the media in Liberia. As a result, some media practitioners deliberately set an agenda to sway un-decided voters to vote in favour of Mrs. Johnson Sirleaf by framing issues such as qualifications vs. popularity and thus, pushed Mr. Weah out of the contest for the presidency. The author concluded that by emphasising the strength of Johnson Sirleaf, the newspapers framed her positively and Weah negatively.

Furthermore, Dzeble (2006) examined the role played by the media in projecting female politicians in Ghana, especially female parliamentary candidates in the 2004 elections. The study sought to examine the amount of coverage given to women politicians and to find out media policies and practices that influence selection of news subjects and stories for publication. The author did a quantitative content analysis in

*the Daily Graphic* and the *Daily Guide* newspapers and conducted an in-depth interview with three groups of respondents, journalists and editors of the two newspapers, female parliamentarians and officials of female advocacy groups. The study employed the Althusserian and Gramscian theories of ideology and hegemony; the concept of the public sphere; theories of representation and framing.

The findings revealed that the media gave disproportionately more coverage to male politicians in the country than their female counterparts. The results also showed that the privately owned media gave slightly more coverage to female politicians than the state-owned media. The study concluded that, the media gave some level of unfair coverage and representation to female politicians and gave more voice to the male political actors. This, according to the author created pictures in the minds of the electorate that marginalized female politicians.

### AGENDA–SETTING THEORY

The beginning of agenda setting theory can be traced as far as 1922, when Walter Lippmann expresses his concern on the vital role that mass media can do in influencing the setting of certain image on the public's mind (Lippmann, 1922: 9-16). In portraying the influence of mass media, Lippmann gives an example of individuals who supposed to be enemies while their countries are at war. Instead of becoming enemies, without having access to information about the war through media, those individuals are able to live harmoniously in a secluded Island. Lippmann indicates on how mass media can set a particular agenda, which can influence the opinions of the public

McCombs and Shaw (1972) wrote one of the most significant researches, which contributes to this theory. They observe the capacity of mass media in influencing the voters' opinion on the presidential campaign of 1968. From the above explanation, it could be established that the agenda –setting theory impinges on two basic assumptions: The first assumption is that the media filters and shapes what we see rather than just reflecting stories to the audience. One could also consider the second assumption as the more frequent and prominent the media gives to an issue, the more likely the public will consider that issue to be important. Determining the worth of a political candidate, in terms of the amount of coverage a candidate should receive, encapsulates the overall feelings women politicians have expressed concerning how the media portrays them

Additionally, McCombs et al. (1991) emphasized that “candidates who received the most coverage were likely to become the most well-known, and those characteristics of candidates that were most heavily emphasized on the news media were more likely to be cited in voters' description of the candidates” (p. 81).

More precisely, Kahn and Gordon's (1997) research attest to the role of the media in a political situation, indicating that the “press does cover women candidates less favorably than male candidates” and that “news media spend less time talking about issues and more time talking about the viability of women candidates” (p. 73). The agenda set by the media does not seem to favor women political candidates generally.

There is psychological and scientific merit to the agenda-setting theory. The more a story is publicized in the mass media, the more it is processed and stored in the individuals' mind. The implication of the Agenda Setting theory to this study is that the more the media consider female parliamentary candidates in its coverage in election periods, the more the voter population can make better and informed decisions about the candidates to vote for.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The approach to this study is a qualitative in nature. Baxter and Jack (2008) defined qualitative case study as a methodology that provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their context. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), when the approach is applied correctly, it becomes a valuable method for researchers to develop theory, evaluate programmes and develop interventions that may be necessary in a given situation. Qualitative case studies afford researchers opportunity to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources. It allows the researcher to explore individuals or organizations from simple to complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programmes and supports the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena.

This approach is valuable because of its flexibility and rigour, (Yin, 2003 as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). Creswell (2012) summarises the characteristics of qualitative research approach and amongst them is; that qualitative study must be conducted in a natural setting. By this, it means the research approach collects data in a natural setting and mostly on the field where the participants are studied in their natural environment. Individuals are not sent to the laboratory to be studied nor do individuals complete an instrument. Researchers interact with their subjects face to face over a period of time. In this case, the researchers of this study employed content analysis to engage the newspapers under study. It was thoroughly executed enabling in-depth data for the analysis and subsequent interpretations.

Creswell (2012) states that the researcher is the key instrument to qualitative study. To this end, the researchers collected data through examining and observing documents. In this case, this study examines the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times Newspapers* coverage of female Parliamentary candidates by making inferences of paragraphs and headlines on female parliamentary candidates' stories published from July 1, 2016 to December, 2016.

The researchers selected newspaper articles that covered female parliamentary candidates from the two state-owned Ghanaian newspapers, *the Daily Graphic* and *the Ghanaian Times* for analysis. The stories were also selected based on the news items pertaining to the female parliamentary candidates mentioned in the newspapers. Each edition of the two newspapers published within the study period was reviewed for stories that fit the study criteria.

News items published within July 1, 2016 to December 14, 2016 about the female parliamentary candidates fall within the period considered for the study and these news items were coded for the analysis.

In total, that is, *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times Newspapers*, 282 series of newspapers were published within the period between July 1, and December 14, 2016. Each of the dailies, published 141 newspapers each. Out of the newspapers reviewed, a total of 261 parliamentary candidates' news items (stories), were gotten thus, *Daily Graphic* 171 and *Ghanaian Times*, 90. Out of the total number of 261 stories published on parliamentary candidates within the period under review, a total of 90 news items or stories were on female parliamentary candidates, thus, 59 news items for *Daily Graphic* and 31 news items for *Ghanaian Times*

In particular, the frequency of media coverage of the female parliamentary candidates in the newspapers, story types, placement of stories, tone, mode of descriptions of the female parliamentary candidates in the newspapers were investigated to see how they were portrayed.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of this study were analysed based on the research questions which flowed from the objectives of the study. This study investigated the subject of frequency of media coverage of female parliamentary candidates in the Ghanaian Media and the prominence the Ghanaian Media attached to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates in elections, from the perspective of the two state-owned media houses, *the Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers. The findings that emerged from the data and have dully been discussed thematically to make sense of the large volume of data collected.

RQ1. How did the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers cover female parliamentary candidates in terms of frequency in the 2016 parliamentary election?

Coverage of Female Parliamentary Candidates *Daily Graphic*

From the table 1 below, the *Daily Graphic* newspaper provided 59 frequencies to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates from the entire six months period of the study, beginning from July 1 to December 2016.

Month	Frequency (Female)	Percentage (%)
July	9	15
August	12	20
September	10	17
October	6	10
November	14	24
December	8	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2019

Table 1: Female Parliamentary Candidates Stories Published by *Daily Graphic*

Month	Frequency (Female)	Percentage (%)
July	8	25
August	2	6
September	7	23
October	4	13
November	7	23
December	3	10

Total	31	100
-------	----	-----

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2019

Table 2: Frequencies of Female Parliamentary Candidates Stories Published by *Ghanaian Times*

From Table 2, the study found that *the Ghanaian Times newspaper*, from July1, to December 14, 2016, provided 31 media frequencies to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates'.

Name of Publisher	Frequency (Female)	Percentage (%)
Daily Graphic	59	66
Ghanaian Times	31	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2019

Table 3: Total Frequency of Media Space for Female Parliamentary Candidates

From the Table 3, the *Daily Graphic newspaper* gave media frequencies of 59 to female parliamentary candidates' campaign stories within the period considered for the study (from July-December 14, 2016). *The Ghanaian Times newspaper* on the other hand gave media frequencies of 31 news items to female parliamentary candidates' campaign stories.

The findings from the analysis showed that in terms of media frequencies, the two national newspapers understudy, did not fare well as the two put together allotted only 90 times of media frequencies to female parliamentary candidates across the country under the period of the study. This, therefore, buttressed the findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project (2019) study which indicates that women make up 24% of subjects seen, heard and read about in the media.

The inclination of the two newspapers of not giving more coverage to female parliamentary candidates during the period of the study confirms the agenda-setting theory which states that the more the media project or hype an issue, the more importance society attach to such an issue. It is therefore paramount to state that the more frequently the media give to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates, the more importance the electorate will attach to female parliamentary candidates issues and vote for them. Unfortunately, the two newspapers under this study failed to meet this criteria in the coverage of female parliamentary candidates during the 2016 election.

However, *the Daily Graphic* newspaper gave more time of media space to female parliamentary candidates under the period of the study than that of the *Ghanaian Times*. This is because whilst the *Daily Graphic* gave media space of 59 frequencies to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates, the *Ghanaian Times* allotted media frequencies of only 31 to female parliamentary candidates. The *Daily Graphic* apart from its political page, established Constituency Watch page as one of its pages for promoting the coverage of aspiring politicians during the 2016 general elections and that might have accounted for its more frequency coverage of female parliamentary candidates than the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. Another factor that may also account for the paper giving more coverage of the female parliamentary candidates than the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper could also be attributed to its gender page, which was used to promote female

parliamentary candidates during the period. The *Daily Graphic* also is voluminous and has 80-pages whilst that of the *Ghanaian Times* is less voluminous and had only 32 – pages. The research concludes that this might have accounted for the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper providing less frequencies for the coverage of female parliamentary stories.

RQ2. How did the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times Newspapers attach importance to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates in the last 2016 parliamentary election?

The table below, shows the level of prominence the two media houses understudy gave to female parliamentary candidates during the 2016 elections. From the table, it is clear that the two media houses gave little prominence to female parliamentary candidates as only one story of female parliamentary candidates was placed on the front page by each of the newspapers within the six month-period of the study. From the table, it could also be seen that none of the two media outlets understudy placed any news items in either the centre or back pages of the newspapers published in the period of the study as these pages are also considered prominent. The research also showed that 26 feature articles of female parliamentary candidates were published by both media outlets, thus 24 for *Daily Graphic* and two for the *Ghanaian Times*.

Pages	Daily Graphic	Ghanaian Times	Total
Front	1	1	2
Back	0	0	0
Centre	0	0	0
Feature Article	24	2	26
Photographs	47	6	53

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2019

Table 4: Importance of Newspapers attachment to the coverage of female from July1, 2016 to December 14, 2016

The findings revealed that a total number of 53 pictures accompanying stories composed for female parliamentary candidates were published in both newspapers outlets. The *Daily Graphic* carried the largest with 47 and the *Ghanaian Times*, 6. The study showed that both newspapers did not give prominence to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates. This is because the two newspapers each published only one female parliamentary candidate story in their front pages.

The study also established that the publication of the two stories on the front pages of those newspapers may be due to their controversies in nature as they published same story. Even that it was only the headlines that were published on the front pages of the two newspapers but the main story was buried inside the newspapers. For instance, that of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper with the headline “Zenator Rawlings cleared to contest Korle Klottey seat” published on the front page of the July 19, edition of the paper, the main story was buried on the bottom of page 16 of the paper.

That of the *Daily Graphic* repeated same scenario like the *Ghanaian Times* also with the headline “Zenator looks for Parliamentary ambition” on the front page of the paper whilst the main story was also buried on page 16 of the paper. Besides, the two newspapers did not give prominence to the female parliamentary candidates by failing to publish female

parliamentary candidates’ stories in the centre and back pages which serve as the avenues for portraying the prominence of political candidates. In fact, none of the papers published a single female parliamentary candidate story in their centre and back pages.

According to Dzeble (2006), the front page, middle page, and the back page are the most prominent pages in newspapers. Female parliamentary candidates’ coverage was missing in the two newspapers selected for the study. The prominence a newspaper attaches to a story may be determined by the front, centre and back pages on which the story is placed. It is, therefore, assumed that stories that are placed on the front pages of newspapers are considered more important, and followed by the centre-spread and back pages. This confirms Thuo’s work that the print media coverage of women parliamentary candidates was low, with their stories placed in the inside pages and hardly on the headlines or prominent pages thus, making them invisible (Thuo, 2012).

Where the two newspapers seemed to have performed better was the devoting of much of their spaces for the publications of feature articles for female parliamentary candidates to market themselves for votes. In all, the two papers published 26 feature articles with the *Daily Graphic* publishing the highest number of 24 due to its voluminous nature coupled with its constituency watch and gender pages. The *Ghanaian Times* published two of such feature articles. The writing of feature articles on parliamentary candidates is able to market political candidates very well and put them on a limelight to be voted for power than the usual straight stories. This is because in the feature articles, issues about the political candidates are well contextualized and more detailed than the normal straight news stories. The candidates’ prominence is more highlighted in feature stories.

Another area, the newspapers did perform satisfactorily was that they accompanied many of their stories with pictures. In all 53 female parliamentary candidates’ pictures were used by the two newspapers in their publications. The *Daily Graphic* carried the largest with 47 pictures and the *Ghanaian Times*, 6 pictures. This enhances the chances of the female parliamentary candidates in winning the election as their images accompanied the stories exposed them vividly to the electorates. As established by the findings of the study, the two newspapers exhibited dominant gender frames in providing coverage for female parliamentary candidates.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A number of issues emerged from the findings. It was revealed that the newspapers did not give much coverage to female parliamentary candidates. Out of the total number of 261 news stories on parliamentary candidates within the period under review, a total of 90 news items or stories were on female parliamentary candidates, thus, 59 news items for *Daily Graphic* and 31 news items for *Ghanaian Times*. The papers seemed to fare well in terms of producing enough feature articles to market the female candidates in their campaigns. The newspapers also employed good pictures of the female parliamentary candidates to project them well.

It was revealed that the two newspapers did not give much prominence to the coverage of female parliamentary candidates as each of the paper featured only one female parliamentary candidate in its front page. Again the newspapers featured only the headline of their front pages but buried the main stories in the papers. This finding is consistent with the argument of Goodyear-Grant (2013), who posits that the visibility of women candidates in newspapers is poor.

Comparatively, the study also found that the *Daily Graphic* has more pages of 80 while that of the *Ghanaian Times* has 32 pages. The findings also indicates that the *Daily Graphic* apart from its political page also creates Constituency Watch page in addition to its gender page. The study also found that the *Ghanaian Times* apart from its political page does not have the rest of the pages like *the Daily Graphic*. The study therefore concludes this might have accounted for the *Daily Graphic* newspaper providing more coverage to female parliamentary candidates than that of *the Ghanaian Times* newspaper. The study also discovered that the principle of the Agenda Setting Theory which indicates that the more frequent and prominent the media highlight on issues the more society perceived such issues very important. This was not seen with the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers as they gave less coverage and less prominence in the coverage of female parliamentary candidates in the entire period of the study.

There is the urgent need for media houses especially the print media to change their editorial policies to give room for more coverage of female politicians during political campaign periods.

Civil Society, government and gender based organisations should institute award schemes for media houses or journalists who cover more activities aimed at increasing the participation of women in politics. Government can initiate affirmative action policies towards whipping up women interest in politics and public services thus making them easily available to the media.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Akor, O. (2014). Why Media Coverage of Women in Politics Is Poor. A Report On Election Coverage from Gender Perspective.
- [2] Bawa, S. & Sanyare, F. (2013). Women's Participation and Representation in Politics: Perspectives from Ghana. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 36:4, 282-291, DOI: 10.1080/01900692.2012.757620.
- [3] Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design Implementation for Novice Researchers. *The Quarterly Report*, 13(4), 544-559
- [4] Britwum, A. O. (2009). The Gendered Dynamics of Production Relations in Ghanaian Coastal Fishing. *Feminist Africa*, 12(2), 70-85
- [5] Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, And Evaluating Quantitative Research* (4th Ed.) Upper Saddle River NJ: Pearson Education.
- [6] Dzeble, B. (2006). "The Role of the Media in Projecting female Parliamentary Candidates in the 2004 elections in Ghana". Dept. of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra. (Unpublished Thesis).
- [7] Flores, G. (2000). Culture and the Patient-Physician Relationship: Achieving Cultural competency in health care. *Journal of Pediatrics* 136:14-23.
- [8] Gadzekpo, A. (2011). "Battling Old Ghosts in Gender and African Media Research". *African Communication Research*, Vol. 4. No 3. 399-410.
- [9] GMMP (2019). Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2015. London: World Association for Christian Communication
- [10] Goodyear-Grant, E. (2013). *Gendered News: Media Coverage and Electoral Politics in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1719 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2863 (Online) Vol.3, No.2, 2013-39.
- [11] Kleinnijenhuis, J., Maurer, M., Kepplinger, H. M., & Oegema, D. (2001). Issues and personalities in German and Dutch television news: patterns and effects. *European Journal of Communication*, 16(3), 337-359.
- [12] Lindner K. (2004). Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002. *Sex Roles*, 51 (7-8), pp. 409-421.) Springer Verlag
- [13] Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press
- [14] Nkansah, M. (2009). *Advocating for Increment in the Number of Women in Public Office in Ghana: from Independence to 2008*, Nkrumah Gender and Development Programme. Department of Education and Health Promotion, Faculty of Psychology, University of Bergen, Norway.
- [15] Open Society Initiative for West Africa, (2010). *Because Accountability Counts – A Journalist Guide for Covering Post Elections in Ghana*. Accra: International Institute for ICT Journalism.
- [16] Oyesomi, K. & Oyero, O. (2012). Newspaper Coverage of Women's Participation in the 2011 General Elections in Nigeria-The Nigerian Journal of Communications- The Journal of the African Council for Communication Education, (ACCE), Nigeria Chapter, Vol. 10 Number 1, 2012.
- [17] Shaw (2007). The Media's Agenda-Setting Role in Liberia's 2005 Presidential Runoff Election. *Equid Novi; African Journalism Studies*, 28:1-2,50-80. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0256007.9653359>
- [18] Weaver, D. (1987). *Media Agenda-Setting and Elections: Political Communication Research: Approaches, Studies, Assessments* (Pp. 211-224, Vol. II). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- [19] World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2020).
- [20] Yin, R., K., (2009). *Case Study Research, Design and Methods: Sage Publications*. Thousand Oaks (4th Ed.).
- [21] Thuo, J. W. (2012). *Media Framing of Women in Politics: An Analysis of Print Media Coverage of Women Members of Parliament in Kenya*. Available at: <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/8420>
- [22] Anderson, J.A., Diabah, G., Mensah, P.A. (2011) *Powerful women in powerless language: Media*

misrepresentation of African women in politics (the case of Liberia). *Journal of Pragmatics* 43 (2011) 2509–2518.

IJIRAS