



Print Media Reportage on Public Fashion Art Education in Ghana

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Abstract

This study investigated the print media reportage on public fashion art education in Ghana and it was conducted on print media, (newspaper): the daily graphic newspaper. The year under review of this paper is 2018. The study highlighted the tone and frame used by writers to define fashion art to understand the information put across in the newspaper. The study adopted the qualitative research method which employed the descriptive and analytical design using instruments such as content, text and context analysis. The study was centred mainly on the Ghanaian Daily Graphic newspaper. The findings of the study on daily graphic revealed that less attention has been given to fashion and creative arts in the Ghanaian print media domain, as compared to other disciplines and publications such as sports, politics and business news. It is therefore important for fashion stakeholder to understand how the media works, the frames that the media uses to communicate, the sources which influence how stories are framed, and the amount of space allotted to fashion topics so that fashion organization will able to develop plans that allow for maximum coverage. The findings are generalized to print media though there may be limitations due to only one print media the daily graphic newspaper used as a case study.

Keywords: Art, Fashion, Frame, Media, Print, Reportage, Tone

1. Introduction

Fashion commentators, journalist, historians and critics over the years have been reporting trending issues of fashion theories, cycle, trends and educational issues globally. The print media (newspapers) reports of fashion issue have become a trending issue in Ghana, the electronic media such as television, radio and Internet are showing documentaries about fashion trends and fashion shows whiles the other aspect of the media which is the print media such as newspapers and magazines reportage also have contributed a lot in fashion education in the public discourse.

The term print media is a combination of two words, print which means; Production of (books, newspapers, etc.), especially in large quantities, by a mechanical process involving the transfer of text or designs to paper, the word media means; any medium of mass communication such as television, radio, newspapers, internet etc. Print media is defined as the industry associated with the printing and distribution of news through newspapers and magazines. The print media reporting trending issues of fashion education but as compared to the other reportage such as politics, sports, social vices and crimes have been given much more attention than fashion reportage, this has drawn attention to the newspaper's review about fashion art and how frequent they do report fashion in their front page caption and the kind of information they put in there, whether it is important or educative.

The oldest and most influential newspapers in Ghana are the Daily guide, Daily graphics, the Insight, the Crusader, the Daily Post, Ghanaian times and many more are currently working on the trending issues in Ghana. A critical observation made has proven that they have done more harm than good to reportage in terms of fashion education. The public tends to rely heavily on convenience samples made from media houses on the interpretation of fashion education issues. There is a greater demand and need for accurate, relevant, rapid and impartial public fashion art information and a growing reliance on mass media as the main source of information.

According to Cohen (1963), the media may not be successful in telling their readers what to think but are stunningly successful in telling their readers what to think about.

It has been noticed that the public tend to rely heavily on a 'convenience sample' of the media's interpretation of an issue. The media have the power to direct our attention to certain issues; this is the agenda settings theory. Perry (2018) assertion on print media, states that print media is one of the oldest and basic forms of communication and it includes newspapers, weeklies, magazines, monthlies, banners and graphics, posters and other forms of printed materials. The contribution of print media in providing information and transfer of knowledge is remarkable. Even after the advent of electronic media, the print media has not lost its charm and analysis. Thus, print media is defined as; the medium that disseminates or distributes printed information to the mass through its mediums of newspapers, magazines, and brochures etc.

Achala and Sinha (2010) stated that the main purpose of newspapers is to spread information. The print 'newspapers', which usually consists of reports of events and also include 'features', which are articles on a particular topic, and 'editorials', which express opinions about various subjects. Magazines are another branch of the print media uses in fashion art education, generally intended for audiences in a very wide geographical area and are, therefore, less likely to be interested in local stories. Many magazines do, however, carry useful information about fashion, (Achala& Sinha, 2010).

Magazines are generally published on a regular schedule and contain a variety of content. They are generally financed by advertising, by a purchase price, by prepaid subscriptions, or a combination of the three. The concept of framing offers a way to describe the power of communication text and refers to the manner journalists establish interpretative schemes in communication with their stakeholders within which those stories acquire meaning. Entman, (2003, p. 339) defined the problem as, "diagnose causes, that makes moral judgments and suggest remedies". Therefore, analyzing news frames in Ghanaian fashion stories provide a means by which we can determine within a given period how journalists have diagnosed, evaluated and prescribed solutions to the problems of public fashion.

Framing involves organizing and structuring information so that it is socially shared and provides meaning to reality, i.e. issue or event (Allison, 1984). This involves deliberate identification of an aspect of perceived reality, and giving interpretation and evaluation of that reality'. (Navarro, Panopio, Malayang& Noel, 2011, p. 2).

Dzrmedo (2009) pointed out that when the issue of fashion arises in the minds of people, immediate attention is drawn to the style of clothing, footwear, make-up, jewellery and headdress that are in vogue. Though fashion is expressed in other fields of life, its use for body grooming and adornment in various forms is paramount. Fashion as seen in body adornment has even been expressed in diverse ways by different writers. In explaining what constitutes fashion, Hazel (1968, p.75) recognized fashion as 'a particular kind of dress that prevails at any time'. Hazel again expressed his view that fashion is also seen in other fields of an endeavour like architecture and interior design.

An important expression of every culture is partly revealed in the clothing and other aspects of the fashion of its citizens which form part of its arts. The culture of the people and its art are therefore inseparable. In a similar instance, Harold and Pomeroy, (1992, p.6) describe fashion as "...social processes in which some people begin by adopting the image of people unlike themselves'. Those in the same sector of society tend to emulate the distinctive appearance, with publicity in the media playing its part, as mentioned ...until the differentiation disappears and the process begins all over again in the search for a new appearance." Fashion, therefore, comes and goes; it is a style most popular at a given time and implies three components such as style, change and acceptance (Frings, 1999).

These three components (styles - involve the look in apparel; changes - the rate at which fashion 'moves'. What is considered fashionable today might be worthless tomorrow, and acceptance; consumers must buy and wear a style to make him or her fashionable to trigger fashion evolution or fashion cycle which is usually in five stages.

In this case, a fashion designer introduces a new design onto the scene as the first stage, then the design rises in popularity of acceptance by consumers as the second stage, in the third stage, the design gets to the peak of popularity where it is well known and becomes a common design, then its decline in popularity as the fourth stage and finally fades out or be rejected from the market. All the three components and five stages of evolution in fashion designs, equally apply to designing concepts of Ghanaian designers in modern time. It implies that designs will emerge and disappear with time but not every design, especially from Europe should be accepted by the masses, especially those that undermine the importance of etiquette and values in Ghana.

Nawal's comments in Ago Magazine (2002, p.83), posits the fact that "fashion is dynamic, in that it is not restricted in any way whatsoever". It is usually the expression and reflection of the creative mind. She created the impression that in the fashion world everything is allowed, everything comes, everything goes and everything is sustained and strengthened. Nawal has a broad scope of what fashion is supposed to be, that is an art that expresses the free will of an individual and his community through an out-fit, but not necessarily isolating the cultural value which plays a vital role in the social entity of everything that must be sustained and strengthened. Therefore, fashion transcends mere changes in style over a short period to acceptable norms and mode of clothing and body adornment as long as it is not static, not only in terms of style but also in terms of designs and fabrics used and is completely admired and accepted by the community to which the individual belongs.

The larger members of a society abhor a particular style of body adornment, then it seizes to become a fashion within that area. Therefore, it is just appropriate and fashionable for the print media in Ghana to facilitate the fashion trends in line with cultural norms and ethics of Ghanaians.

Fashion writers agree on the fact that fashion is visible in other fields of life such as architecture, interior design, performing art and also in the social and intellectual world. The study considered the reportage aspects of fashion art education in the public domain and discourse by the print media in Ghana and how reliable and valid the content is with regards to what they put in the fashion column of their daily newspapers.

Fashion is as much about stories, words and images as it is about products, garments and accessories, Global fashion media, M.B.A,(2019, para.1).

Dzamedo, (2009) posits that fashion is known by many as just the construction of garments and its accessories used in adorning the body has become a global cultural and social phenomenon. The recent changes in digital communication tools and social media have led to words and images becoming even more pivotal to it, yet they have also made this system increasingly complex and hard to control (Global fashion media 2019). Advertising, photography, magazines and events are the main part of the shift in public fashion art education.

2 Methodology

The study was based on a qualitative research approach which adopted the descriptive and analytical design. The main object for this study was the English Ghanaian newspapers (The Daily Graphic newspaper 2018) which is one of the oldest circulated national English newspaper in Ghana and its unique reportage in terms of creating art and also as a case study. The first and last four months of 2018 Daily graphic English newspaper publications which consisted 120 newspapers for the first four-month and 122 newspapers for the last four months which sum up to 242 newspapers for the eight months were sampled to represent 66.12% of the accessible sample. The selection of the first and last four month publications was based on the size and larger number of articles to be analyzed. Cohen and Manion (1980) asserted that for quality research, 30% of the population for the study is a fair representation for an acceptable accuracy of results.

Purposive sampling method was used for the selection of fashion-related articles as an accessible population in such that the facts gathered were a true representation of the total population under study. Text analysis was the main data collection instrument used for collecting data from the news article published by the Daily graphic English newspaper. The study found out that text analysis was more effective and appropriate because of the content and the texts used.

Data were collected from the field mainly through direct observation, reading, skimming and scanning of contents and online database search in newspaper libraries. The data collection procedure employed was gathering the primary data directly, content and text data analysis from the field was discussed and analyzed thematically. All these were done towards reaching conclusions to give a fair idea of the problem on the ground concerning the reportage of print media on public fashion art education in Ghana. Articles were collected in three modes to assure completeness of entries: online database search in newspaper libraries using the

following keywords; fashion, creative art, and art education; manual search of actual articles and microfilm file search at academic libraries. A coding template was used to summarize the following information: title of the article, newspaper, date of publication, page published, article type (news, feature, opinion), tone (positive, neutral, negative), and source of information. Through textual analysis, the full text of each article was coded by prominent framing category and keywords.

3 Discussion of Findings

3.1 Media frames.

Journalists use story frames that determine the importance of a topic or issue. Frames can highlight certain points of view, define perceived aspects of significance, and explain how issues should be understood. Articles published in 2018 were categorized according to the frame used. Among the frames, the most prominent frame was personality and dressing style (Table 3). Fashion event milestones were compared in terms of peak coverage with major political events. This analysis enabled a more holistic approach into understanding the prominence and saliency of fashion news vis a vis other important news during the same period.

Table 1. A framing Typology for Fashion

FRAME	CONTEXT
Dressing style	An outlook of people in a costume
Hairstyle	How the hair is been decorated
Modesty	Identification with values that determines what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable
Personality	Physical outlook, appearance, good grooming or not
Ideal figure	Who's lead the fashion trend or movement
Other	Context not included in the frame above

Source; fieldwork

The print media in Ghana, although described as a 'freelance in Africa', it is still regulated to some extent by the government. This incongruent setting merges with high media interest in both politics and entertainment (hence, news reportage morphing into entertainment). Fourteen per cent (14%) was fashion-related issues and tabloids representing 88.9 articles for all frames above, the categories of the article published were politics, sports, entertainment, health, agriculture, and fashion art which summed up to some 635 articles with percentages.

Politics 250 articles represented 39.4%, sports 102 articles represented 16.1%, entertainment 93 articles represented 14.6%, health 75 articles represented 11.8%, fashion art 88.9 articles represented 14% and agriculture 26.1 articles represented 4.1%. According to yearly reports of the newspaper, publications indicated that fashion-related issues and frames received less reportage as compared to politics in the print media reportage. Table 2 below shows the summary of the categories of articles been published yearly by the daily graphics newspaper.

Table 2. Number of Articles Published

CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF ARTICLES	PERCENTAGE (100%)
Politics	250	39.4%
Sports	102	16.1%
Entertainment	93	14.6%
Health	75	11.8%
Fashion	88.9	14%
Agriculture	26.1	4.1%
TOTAL	635	100%

Source; fieldwork

3.2 Defining fashion messages

It was presumed that choice of terms influenced how the audience responded to fashion stories. Journalists preferred to use the word dress style and almost 35% of the journalist at that time followed fashion words. Fourteen per cent (14%) of all articles used the words fashion/art but did not define the words anywhere in the text. Writers assumed that the word fashion was common and widely known terminology and that there was no need for elaboration or definition. Only 5 of 635 articles provided a technical explanation of the term (where fashion was defined as "...any latest and most admired style in clothes and cosmetics and behaviour.". Textual imagery was used by environmental groups and opinion writers to popularize the art to a non-technical audience.

Table 3. Frames Used in Articles of Daily Graphic Newspapers, 2018.

FRAME	NUMBER OF ARTICLES			TOTAL
	January – April	May-August	Sept. - Dec.	
Dressing style	11	2	6	19
Hairstyle	5	5	2	12
Modesty	2	5	10	17
Personality	3	12	9	24
Ideal figure	4	3	2	9
Other	5	2	0.9	7.9
TOTAL	30	29	29.9	88.9

Source; fieldwork

The personality frame which recorded the highest and most prominent frame featured some prominent men and women in the Ghanaian society and how they have contributed to the growth of fashion industry, indicating the celebrities, journalist, television newscasters and government appointees (ministers and heads of institutions). The next contributing factor considered by most writers on fashion art education was dressing style which recoded the second prominent media frame for defining fashion. However, there was an eventual shift in the use of frames. Dressing style and modesty rose as the leading frames from which the writers discussed the fashion art, possibly as they relied on experts in the government agency and environmental groups for their sources of information from the table below.

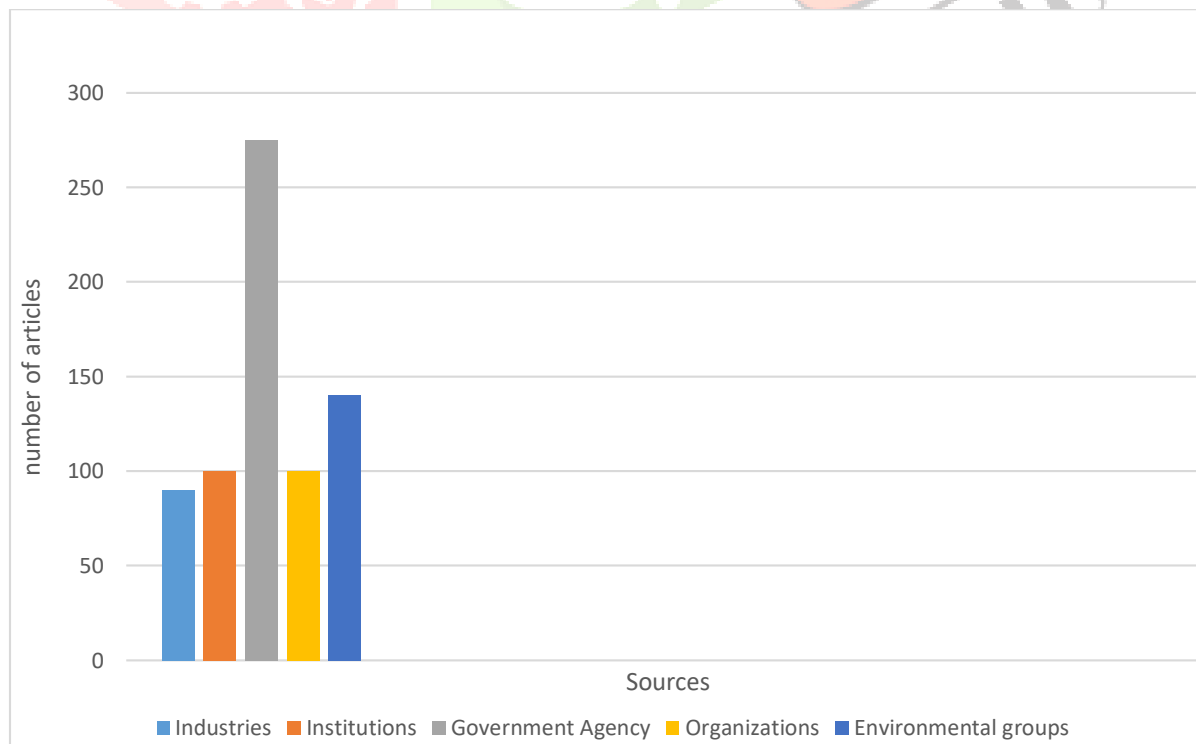


Figure 1. Sources: fashion articles of Daily graphic newspapers, 2018.

3.3 Sources of articles

Most news articles are source generated or angled, based on the perspective of individuals or the organization of perceived credibility. It is thus important to identify the 'voices' behind the information that serves as a basis for how stories are framed. The media relied on multiple sources of information for articles they published. These were outlined in the order of frequency of use, government, which accounted for 37%, environmental groups (22%), organization (16%), universities/ institutions (14%) and industry/companies (11%). Figure 1 shows the sources cited by articles of the Daily Graphic newspaper.

In contrast to the heavy representation of single sources in art writing, the Ghanaian media strived for balance by citing multiple sources. The government cited articles tend to be positive and neutral, whilst negative cited articles pointed environmental groups. Daily graphics relied more on government sources for their articles (and hence a trend to have more positive to neutral news).

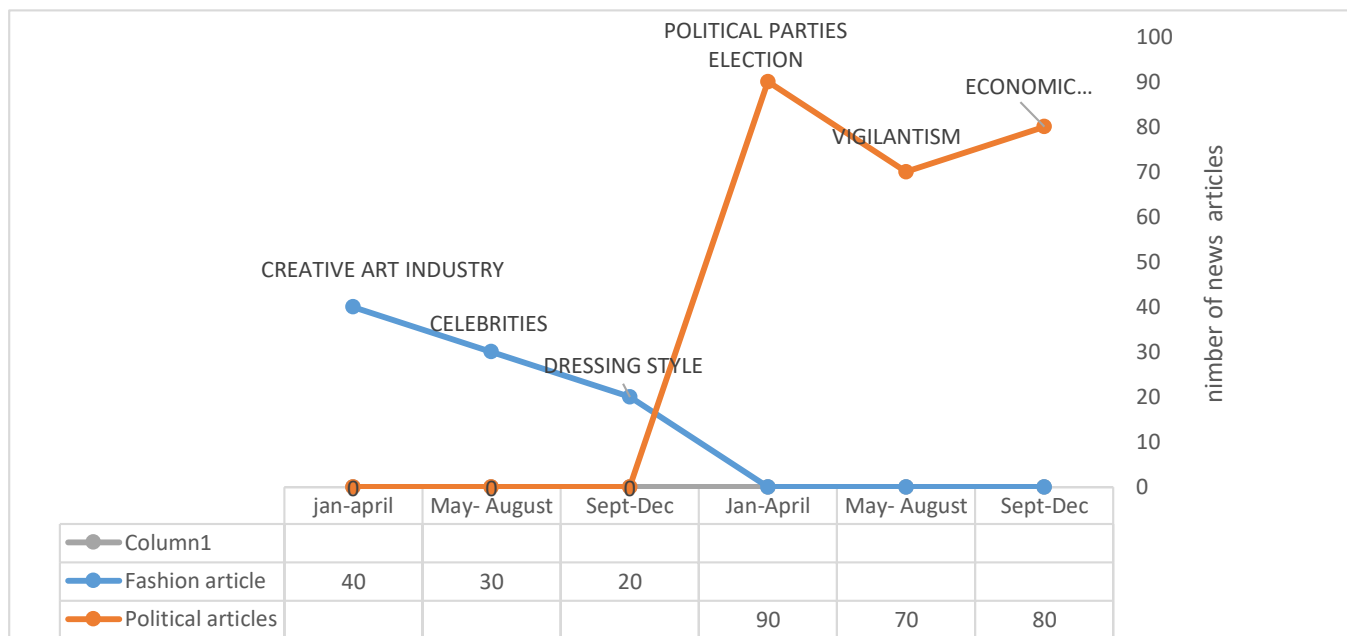


Figure 2. Comparison of several articles generated by key political and fashion events. Source; fieldwork

3.4 Articles by a tone

Majority of the articles published by the daily graphic newspaper were positive indicating (41.3%) and neutral indicating (38.2%) in tone. Only about 19.8% were negative. It was interesting to note that health and agriculture had the greatest number of positive articles (48% and 43%, respectively) while politics had more negative articles (44%). From figure 2 above the number of news event used by politics had a balanced equilibrium while fashion news event keeps on falling in terms of the news article.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

Fashion art reportage has been of low publication in the print media sector of communication as compared to the other aspects of news articles been published by the newspapers in Ghana. The results from the findings generally show that although there was a reportage on fashion-related issues, there were no specific columns for fashion issues in the newspaper.

From the findings reviewed by the researchers indicated that fashion journalist or writers existed in Ghana, and they did not perform their duties as fashion writers. Also, the print media houses did not seek the importance of fashion art in Ghana and its contribution to national development. From the analysis of the frame, category and sources of news articles writers used in the daily graphic publication, the researchers showed that Ghanaian newspaper frame shared an understanding of fashion issues through personality but not in design, again, costumes (dress style), hairstyle and outlook of a person or a particular group.

Media coverage in Ghana has been dominated by stories of politics and entertainment, although news on fashion was not high in the print media as compared to political events, coverage's that was sustained and had occasional peaks that helped to bring attention to generate interest on topics headlined.

It is therefore recommended that since the general public pays more attention to what is trending, fashion designers, journalist, writers and fashion critics should work effectively to use the print Media to communicate fashion issues to expose the textiles and fashion outcomes into the limelight. Again, fashion stakeholder needs to understand how media works, the frames that media uses to communicate issues, the sources which influence how stories are framed, and the amount of space allotted to fashion topics so that fashion organization will able to develop plans that allow for maximum coverage. Finally, fashion design can be used on front-pages to exaggerate headlines captions in the Print Media to advertise their product in pictorial or imagery form.

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