

**THE IMPACT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ON NEWSPAPER  
PERFORMANCE IN GHANA**

By  
**KNUST**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Business Administration (Strategic Management and Consulting Option) Degree and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person or material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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## ABSTRACT

Over the years, strategic planning has been practiced in many organizations and its impact on performance has shown positive results through researches done by renowned management experts and scholars. Many are the challenges facing the newspaper industry and the fast moving pace of technology has given birth to alternative sources of information, thereby causing decline in the patronage of newspapers. This research therefore sought to investigate into the application of strategic planning and its effects on performance, that is, circulation/ readership in Ghana's newspaper industry. Primary data used for the study was obtained by administering 80 questionnaires to respondents in the Accra Metropolis of the Greater Accra Region in Ghana. 76 employees drawn from a population of 460 responded to the questionnaires and they were sampled using both purposive and simple random methods of sampling. Findings from the research revealed that participation of staff in the implementation process was low due to lack of motivational systems to reward employees who meet performance targets in their respective organizations. Also, the economic instability of the country had affected the quality and prices of newspapers produced because of the high prices of raw materials increasing cost of production. Even though the industry has qualified and skilled staff to take up its business operations, lack of adequate financial resources to help push implementation processes and improve on technology has become a major problem. Some newspapers readers also gave their views on the challenges facing the industry and gave their opinions on the way forward for the industry. Recommendations based on these findings included the placement of reward systems to motivate staff when they meet set targets to enhance their participation in the strategic planning process.

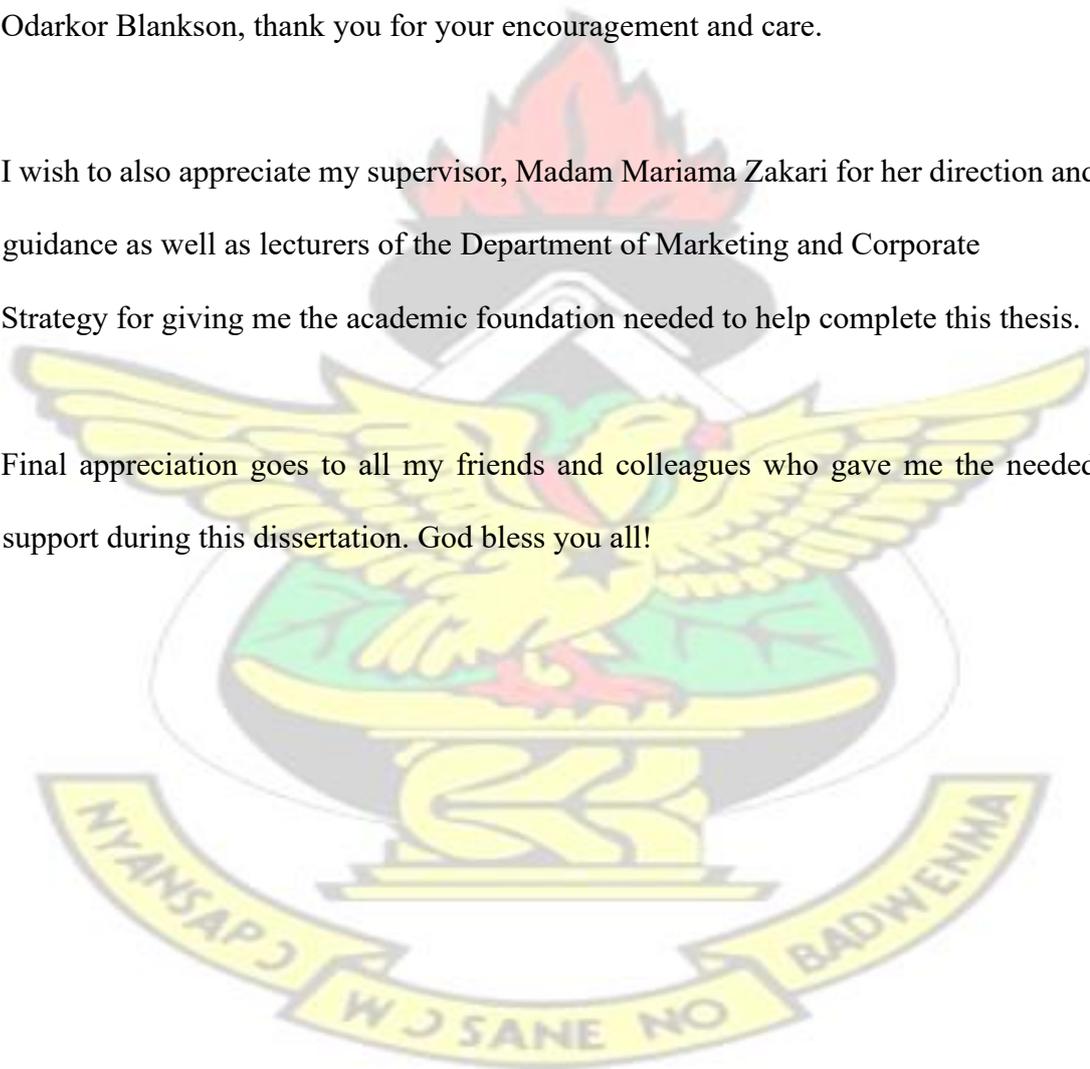
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty God.

Special dedication goes to my late grandfather and uncle, Mr. Benjamin Noi and Mr. Annan Noi respectively.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Newspapers have been source of information for so many centuries. Before the advent of other media such as radio and television, newspapers were in existence and they were the only source of information available to the general public (Olsen, 2012). The competition in this industry has increased and has caused many challenges for newspapers and their survival in their market. The increasing rate in technology has produced many ways for people to get information quickly, with updates every minute, causing a decline in the patronage of newspapers with several struggling to keep up with such competition (Alterman, 2008).

Many businesses have formulated and implemented strategies to help them survive in today's competitive world and strategic management has become an important part of their business processes today. It involves coming up with new and better ways of improving and achieving an organisation's set goals and objectives. Planning is therefore an essential element in the production and development of strategies which helps an organisation work towards its goals to achieve the needed results it seeks to accomplish (Rumelt, 2011).

This study focused on strategic planning in the newspaper industry in Ghana using some selected newspapers (organizations) and assessed how they implemented their plans despite the challenges facing the country. It is very important to understand the implications of having a strategic plan and its contributions to the development and growth of many organisations and industries in today's competitive world. These plans

if formulated and implemented well can help an industry to rise above very high competition in a relatively short time. Looking at the challenges the newspaper industry is facing today, it is important to study their use of strategic planning and its effect on their performance.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Strategic management is a vital element in the success and growth of an organisation. With the rapid increase in technology making information easily accessible to a larger number of people at a given time, many newspapers are finding it difficult to keep up with such competition and are gradually declining in sales leading to a drop in circulation and readership. The global recession in 2008-2009 led to a rapid decrease in profits in the industry with many private newspaper agencies folding up, going bankrupt and some downsizing in order to cut cost and make up for their losses. Rupert Murdoch described revenues from his newspapers as “rivers of gold” but said later that, “sometimes rivers dry up.”

The internet, along with social media, is the source of information that most people now prefer to newspapers. Some publishers lament the fact that there is no hope for the newspaper industry to survive this changing trend most especially in advertising. Newspapers generate about seventy to eighty per cent of their revenues from adverts and the rest from sales (Saba, 2009). Online advertising is rapidly replacing print advertising, which is much more effective in reaching a larger group of people and also less costly. Most newspapers are therefore shifting to web-based means of distributing information in order to keep up with this trend but revenues generated from online editions are far less than what printed editions can provide and it becomes

difficult to maintain the quality of news people deserve because of losses made by many of the newspaper (Shafer, 2006). Radio and television stations have now become more creative in giving out information and most people now rely on them for their sources of information. In Ghana, different dialects are used both in radio and television which make it easier for the semi-literate and illiterates to know and understand the current issues in the country and beyond without purchasing a newspaper. Morning shows are becoming more popular on television and radio with newspaper segments where news from these papers are reviewed and discussed. Warren Buffett of Buffalo News stated that, "If cable and satellite broadcasting, as well as the internet, had come along first, newspapers as we know them probably would never have existed."

The challenges facing the newspaper industry have caused many newspapers to redefine their corporate strategies. The newspaper industry is now using different strategies geared towards a common goal of survival. The New York Times Company focused on its core asset which is the *New York Times* newspaper and sold off most of its assets/ affiliates. Their strategy clearly defined was – “focus on the core asset and shed everything else”. The opposite was done by the Gannett Company which bought other forms of media and therefore does not rely on only its newspaper, *USA Today* for its revenues.

Newspapers in Ghana can adopt some of these strategies by developing strategic plans that are effectively executed and every step of the strategic planning process is deemed important to the survival and growth of the newspaper industry.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study sought to achieve the following:

1. To determine whether the selected newspapers have effective strategic plans
2. To examine how these plans are implemented by these newspapers.
3. To assess the impact of the implementation performance in the selected newspapers in the industry.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How effective are the strategic plans of the selected newspapers?
2. How are these strategic plans implemented by these newspapers?
3. Has the implementation had any impact on their performance?

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

With the rapid growth of technology in the world and many web-based alternatives for information dissemination, most newspapers find themselves in a world where survival is the only way out. Many Ghanaian newspapers are struggling to keep up with competition from other media and the internet. It is therefore important for the newspaper industry to rethink on some of their strategies and find better ways to make it in the market. Implementing their strategic plans properly will go a long way to help curb the challenges they are facing and see some of their competition not as a threat but rather, another means of doing what they already do but in a new and better way. Some local newspapers have already taken this initiative and this has helped them to get them information to large number of readers. An example is

Graphic Group Company Limited (GCGL) which has websites for its newspapers as an alternate means of giving information. This has enabled them to adapt to the rapid changing trend of the industry and also open up to international consumers. Strategic planning will have a positive impact on the industry if strategies and implemented well, monitored and evaluated. It was therefore important to assess and examine the strategic plans of these newspapers and its impact on performance.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study focused on 10 newspapers in the Accra Metropolis in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The implementation of strategic plans in the various newspapers (organizations) was studied as well as factors that influenced their performance (circulation and readership) in the industry.

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

Primary data was obtained by administering questionnaires to respondents from the selected newspapers. Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this research to measure responses from participants sampled from the area of study using purposive and convenient sampling techniques. These aided in finding answers to the effectiveness of strategic plans, how they are implemented and their impact on performance by the various newspapers.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This area of study was limited to the Accra Metropolis of the Greater Accra Region in Ghana because of time constraint and lack of resources. Some newspapers were also hesitant to give out information which caused delays in obtaining the necessary data

for the research. Also, access to strategic plans of some newspapers proved difficult so the researcher had to rely on responses from employees regarding strategic plans in their organizations. However, these limitations did not hinder the researcher in obtaining relevant information needed for the study which would go a long way to help other newspapers realise the implications strategic planning on performance in the newspaper industry.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

There were five main chapters captured in this research. Chapter One gave an introduction to the study consisting of the background, problem statement, justification, scope, research methodology, limitation and organisation of the study. Literature related to the research was reviewed in Chapter Two with Chapter Three looking into the methodology. Data analysis and findings were also discussed in the Fourth Chapter. Finally, summary on findings, conclusion and recommendations are made in the Fifth Chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to look at some key concepts involved in the strategic planning process, strategic management and strategy. Another evolving concept, strategic thinking, is briefly explained in this chapter and other areas related to the topic under study. The link between these concepts is discussed with existing literature to show how they could impact performance.

#### 2.2 Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is an important tool which directs an organization's strategy into fruition. Young (2001) defines strategic planning as the development of a long-term plan which gives direction towards a clearly defined destination in relation to the mission, goals and objectives of an organization. The strategic planning process assesses an organization's current position recognizing opportunities and challenges in the environment, and determining where exactly it wants to go and how to get there.

Another definition of strategic planning is using allocated resources to match organizational goals to achieve competitive advantage and to develop and direct the organization over a period of time (Bryson et al, 2009). Key decisions are made and action steps are taken in respond to the changing environment, meeting targets and guiding the organization's strategy to what it wants to be. Mintzberg et al (1996) mention using strategy as a direction or guide in an organization stating that in order

for a strategy to be successful, it needs suitable resources and control systems put in place to manage the strategy in its implementation.

Strategic planning has been practiced since the early 1960's and many management experts and scholars have given their views and observations based on extensive research on this topic. Some have criticized this process but others have argued that strategic planning can be of utmost benefit to an organization. Steiner (1979) based on his research believes that strategic planning acts as a stimulant which drives an organization and motivates managers to see the future and adopt suitable ways to take hold of opportunities and stand up against challenges they might face. It also provides an outline for decision making which helps shape an organization and evaluate its strategic choice. The organization becomes more focused and directs its efforts in attaining established goals.

A well implemented strategic plan shapes, positions and transforms an organization. Having competitive advantage and good market positioning are the main reasons why some organizations involve themselves in strategic planning. This can only be achieved when the strategic choice is well supported by suitable resources using unique competencies which give an edge over competitors and sustainable competitive advantage. Some organizations experience efficiency and effective collaboration during the strategic planning process (Stoner et al, 1987). There is more control on activities and it improves coordination and corporation amongst units enhancing monitoring systems and performance. Managers are encouraged to look at the organization as separate units but rather as a whole so as to reap the full benefits of the planning process.

Strategy planning has come a long way and continues to be an important facet of strategic management which involves time, great effort and commitment on the part of top management and the organization as a whole. Some key concepts under strategic planning include strategy, strategic management and strategic thinking. These concepts are inter-linked and the end resulting in the strategic plan.

### **2.3 Strategy**

A successful strategic plan depends on the strategy an organization wishes to adopt in order to gain competitive advantage through the proper utilization of resources. A good strategy looks at the long-term vision, the business environment and resources of the organization and how to fit and build upon its competences and weaknesses.

Nikols (2011) simply defines a strategy as “a general plan of action for achieving one’s goals and objectives”. It is therefore essential to have a plan to guide this action in order to achieve an organization’s future prospects and expectations. Strategy is an important component of strategic planning. There are different strategies which are adopted for different situations that an organization is facing at a particular time. Strategic planning helps to guide these strategies into fruition in line with the mission, goals and objectives of an organization and to achieve competitive advantage.

### **2.4 Strategic Plan**

A strategic plan is an important guideline or a tool which can determine the successful positioning of an organization if it is thoroughly followed and implemented in line with the mission and vision of the organization with the aid of appropriate resource and capabilities. It acts as a road map which directs an organization to its expected destination, that is, where it wants to be in the future. A strategic plan must be simply

written and clearly detailed on the current situation the organization finds itself in. Time should be taken to develop a strategic plan since rushing it might cause some problems and important factors might be overlooked. For a plan to work effectively it should be reviewed every three to five years and appropriate changes made were possible (Olsen et al 2009). According to Mitthethal (2002), “a successful plan is, by definition, a usable plan—one that informs the organization’s activities as well as its long-range view, and one that yields meaningful improvements in effectiveness, capacity and relevance”.

A simple strategic plan contains the following vital elements:

- the environmental scan (SWOT analysis);
- organizational values, vision and mission;
- goals, planned accomplishments and strategies;
- monitoring and review;

Some of the key elements which are very important and must be looked at when developing a strategic plan are the organization’s mission, vision, core values, goals, objectives and SWOT. These elements must fit together because they direct managers to know their organization’s strategic position helping them develop an appropriate strategy in line with the above elements and then implementing this strategy successfully using the suitable resources required. An effective strategic plan is always supports and is in line with the organization’s mission, vision, goals and objectives (Olsen, 2009)

Before coming up with a strategic plan, an organization must know its current position (where are we now?), its future focus (where do we want to go?) and the means to get

there (how do we get there?). These elements play an important role in helping managers address the three areas mentioned above and draw out a clear plan for the organization to follow.

- Current Position – Mission, Values, SWOT analysis
- Future Focus – Vision
- Means to get there – , Goals, Objectives

#### **2.4.1 Mission**

Every organization has a purpose and reason for its existence. A mission statement defines an organization's purpose, its focus and direction. It helps an organization to focus on its customers, market and resources and serves as a foundation for future decision-making.

#### **2.4.2 Core Values**

The core beliefs and culture of an organization guide and influence its activities, conduct and behaviours of its employees. These principles are hard to change and define what an organization stands for. Values are important as they form part of the organization's strategic foundation which helps managers to prioritize when making decisions.

#### **2.4.3 SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)**

This is an environmental scan to assess the strategic position of the organization.

Analysis of both the internal and external environment helps an organization to use its internal strength to exploit external opportunities, improve upon its weaknesses and militate against external threats. Some analytical tools which could be used for environmental analysis are PESTLE (Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural,

Technological, Legal, Environmental), Porter's Five Forces, Resource Based View (RBV) analysis and many more.

#### **2.4.4 Vision**

An organization's vision defines its focal point and long-term direction. It serves as a motivation to drive the organization into what and where it aspires to be. When the vision is clear, effective plans are developed and this becomes the driving force of the organization.

#### **2.4.5 Objectives**

This is the connection between the organization's mission and vision, that is, where the organization wants to go (vision) from where it is right now (mission). Objectives are generally long-term activities and help to sustain the distinct advantage of the organization.

#### **2.4.6 Goals**

The mission, vision and objectives of the organization are transformed into specific performance targets which help an organization to build on its unique advantage. Goals clearly state who is going to be responsible for what in the organization and in achieving this, they have to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time Specific).

#### **2.4.7 Strategic Plan as a Tool**

Strategic plan as a tool helps to achieve the mission of an organization through a well-structured guideline in order to improve upon productivity and have a great impact. An effective strategic plan spells out detailed and precise goals to be achieved, action

steps to be taken and suitable resources that would be needed in order to accomplish them. (Mitthetal, 2002). Other planning processes may be used as a strategic plan such as an operating plan or even a business plan. Every plan is geared towards a focused function of an organization to achieve a desired result in line with the organization's mission, objectives and goals but it is important to know the different roles they play in an organization such as an operating plan and business plan.

An operating plan is derived from a strategic plan which spells out the tasks and activities set out in achieving the goals of an organization. It is a short-term plan which gives the individual roles of each employee, board members and organization as a whole including targets with time-frames. In contrast, strategic planning is done by top management whilst operational plan is handled at the lower management level. A business plan on the other hand informs about an organization's products/ services, its competitive environment as well as income which will be generated from investing in its products or services. It gives extensive details about the organization, products/ services, investments and assumed income generation.

(Mitthetal, 2002).

A company's strategy which it wishes to adopt is an important aspect of the strategic planning process. Strategic management plays an important role in the development of a strategy, its implementation as well as the thought processes (thinking) involved in the planning process.

## **2.5 Strategic Management**

Strategic management has, over the years, been practiced in many institutions in to help improve on organizational performance and above all gain competitive advantage in the industry that the organization finds itself in. In trying to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization, there are some decisions, plans and actions taken which help to formulate strategies and implement the best one to the advantage of the organization (Pierce et al, 2000). Both external and internal environments are also considered since they change over time especially the external environment. Seeking to adjust and fit an organization into a never ending changing environment makes strategic management a continual process in gaining the best advantage possible (Lewis, 1997).

Over the years several models have been developed to explain the strategic management process. These explain the strategic management process based on their different backgrounds and experiences which help to establish the mission of an organization by identifying concepts and elements to develop a strategy in line with its objectives and goals. Even though these models are presented differently, they all end up in bringing out the key elements that form the basic steps in strategic management: environmental analysis (internal and external), establishing, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation and control.

### ***2.5.1 Strategy Formulation***

The first two steps in the strategic management process are embedded in the formulation of a strategy for an organization. Strategies must be put in place in line with the organization's objectives to determine the suitable course of action to achieve them. Strategy formulation involves environmental analysis (both internal and

external), coming up with alternatives from which an appropriate strategy is chosen using the mission, objectives and goals of the organization in line with the organization's vision. Hofer and Schendel (2005) include resources and value analysis. Resource analysis basically looks at whether an organization has the required resources to support the strategy it wants to adapt and this can create value to the organization if the required resource is able to help the organization exploit its opportunities and mitigate against threats.

### ***2.5.2 Strategy Implementation***

This stage of the strategic management process can be termed as “strategy in action”. A plan is empty without implementation which basically guides the chosen strategy into fruition. This stage fuses the organization's structure with its strategy by first establishing the annual objectives, developing policies and budget fixing to support the structure. Employee involvement is critical at this stage. Motivational systems should be set up to prepare and encourage employees to support management from this stage and would also require the needed resources to drive the strategy. The implementation process is the most critical part of the strategic planning process. A strategic plan is destined to fail when participation of individuals is low even when the strategic choice is the best. At this stage, action steps are put in place with shared responsibilities to meet targets set by the organization. For a successful implementation, every individual, group or unit involved in this process must fully accept and understand the strategic plan focusing on achieving the goals of the organization.

### ***2.5.3 Strategy Evaluation and Control***

For every strategy to be successful, it should be evaluated and controlled well. Control systems must be put in place to make sure that the strategy is being implemented well and producing the necessary results expected. The implementation process should be monitored, evaluated and any anomalies corrected. This is very important since both the external and internal environment keep changing and this can lead to strategy modification since they will help in measuring performance and guide the strategy to achieve the organization's set goals and objectives.

### **2.6 Strategic Planning Process**

There are many models and approaches that exist for the strategic planning process. Not every approach fits an organization's specific need or strategy but since the process never ends, it is best to know what to use at a given point in time depending on changes in the environment. Bryson (2004) gives a ten step outline of the strategic planning process by connecting an organizational strategy to its vision, mission and goals known as the "strategy change cycle": initiate and agree on a strategic planning process; identify organizational mandates; clarify organizational mission and values; assess the external and internal environments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; identify the strategic issues facing the organization; formulate strategies to manage issues; review and adopt the strategies or strategic plan; establish an effective organizational vision; develop an effective implementation process; reassess the strategies and the strategic planning process.

Bryson (2004) warns against organizations adopting strategic planning processes exactly as they are presented but rather be designed to fit the particular situation and changes for effectiveness.

### ***2.6.1 Strategic Thinking***

Before a strategic plan is developed, managers ask themselves questions and in trying to answer these questions go through a thinking process to come up with a strategy and a plan that falls in line with the organization's mission, goals and objectives. Once this is developed, the strategic plan is managed and the main aim is to execute it to the best of capability of an organization.

The objective of strategic thinking is to help managers think and manage strategically but not to plan because of planning sake. Strategic thinking is usually done by the top management of an organization individually or collectively. More value is created when different individuals come together to brainstorm about their organization's focus and direction because of diverse views and ways of handling critical and complex issues. Nikols (2011) describes strategic thinking as an umbrella encompassing strategic management involving strategy formulation, strategic planning and strategy deployment (implementation) and calls them

“nested” concepts.

The link between strategic planning and strategic thinking has not been clearly defined. Some authors think there is a distinct relationship between the two. Others believe they are interrelated. Graetz (2002) views both as “distinct, but interrelated and complementary thought processes”. He further states that strategic thinking is “to seek innovation and imagine new and very different futures that may lead the company to redefine its core strategies and even its industry” whilst strategic planning helps “to

realize and to support strategies developed through the strategic thinking process and to integrate these back into the business”. Even though Liedtka (1998) thinks otherwise, strategic thinking and strategic planning play a very important role in strategic management and in developing a strategy to gain competitive advantage.

The underlying factor is for managers seeking to answer the following questions which eventually form the elements of their strategic plan and important to the guidance of a strategy into existence: where are we now? - considers internal and external environmental factors (SWOT); where are we going? - considers the targeted markets and customer needs; how do we get there? – considers the goals and objectives of the organization; what do we need to get there? – considers the organization’s resources/ capabilities; how do we know we are there? – considers control systems and evaluation

### ***2.6.2 Criticisms of the Strategic Planning Process***

Even though the concept of strategic planning has been accepted over the years, some critics have questioned its effectiveness and execution. They believe that the strategic planning process does not work and even if it does, it is not effectively done. Others state that the strategic planning process is entirely separate from the strategy’s implementation with rigid procedures applied in a prescribed systematic manner. Its completion requires resourced abilities, control and large amount of data to make it effective.

Many scholarly critics base their critique on the results from a number of quantitative studies where performance (financial) was not influenced by strategic planning. Even

though some results proved positive, many were inconsistent with no link between the planning process and implementation. When the organization does not get the necessary information or resources they need, there is little that is achieved with little learning and no support from within the organization. Critics blame this on the prescribed procedures and conclude that the strategic planning process becomes an unsuccessful attempt in achieving competitive advantage (Boyne et al. 2004).

Other management scholars believe these statements are dependent on the critics' different academic backgrounds and experiences coupled with their definition of strategic planning, methodology used and the situation the organization was in at the time the studies was conducted. Attention was also not given to the reason for the process, its management and people involved in the procedure (Bryson et al, 2009). Mittenhal (2002) points out that even though the strategic planning process can be exasperating and seem quite meaningless at times, it is important to make clear and distinct goals with explicit action steps taken. He states that "rather than expose some fatal flaw in strategic planning, they reflect a basic misconception about the purpose and value of strategic planning and what it takes for a plan and the process to succeed".

Even though the strategic planning process has been critiqued for many years, it can be of great importance and have a positive impact if properly planned and carefully implemented with the necessary resources and capabilities needed to push the plan.

## 2.7 Strategic Planning and Performance

The main aim of strategic planning is to improve on an organization's performance by formulating a strategy which aligns with the mission, goals and objectives in order to gain competitive advantage. Many management scholars have criticized the strategic planning process based on their research findings that the process does not relate to the performance of an organization (Mintzberg, 1994). On the contrary, Ansoff (1971) and others, based on findings from past studies, came up with a positive relationship between the strategic planning process and financial performance using the financial indicators, that is, ROI(Return on Investments), ROCE (Return on Capital Employed), Revenue, Net Income, and other ratio analysis done.

Value created from strategic planning is of utmost importance to an organization but Thompson et al (2003) think that there is no value in the planning process itself but value is created only when people put in much energy and support the process intensely. According to Hopkins et al (1997), organizational performance is higher when more emphasis is placed on each of the three areas, formulation, implementation, evaluation/ control, of the planning process. He said that these contribute immensely to a larger extent on the financial performance of the organization.

Key participation and support is a vital element in a successful strategic planning process. Hopkins and Hopkins (1997) came up with some factors that influence the strategic planning process on performance. These include:

- Managerial Factors

- Environmental Factors
- Organizational Factors

### ***2.7.1 Managerial Factors***

In an organization, the major determinants on performance in line with the strategic planning process under this area are said to be strategic planning expertise and planning-performance relationships indicating that even though lot of time and effort may be dedicated to the planning process, whether management can effectively carry out the process is ignored or overlooked. This greatly affects the outcome of the process and the organization does not enjoy the benefits thereof. Managerial capabilities therefore are important because they form part of the core competence of every organization. Managers having the needed knowledge and expertise in developing and implementing a strategic plan are vital to the success and growth of every organization with a positive impact on its performance.

### ***2.7.2 Environmental Factors***

Experts believe that there is a direct link between strategic planning and environmental conditions which has greatly influenced strategies adopted by some organizations. These environmental factors are (un)controllable and give rise to changes that disturb the progress and stability of any organization. Managers should be able to spot these changes which will help when formulating their strategy since strategic planning process is seen as an important tool that helps organizations to cope with changes and competition in the environment. Research has shown some managers blaming their poor performances on environmental changes and conditions. Environmental analyze is therefore an important part of the planning process and that is why some analytical tools have been developed to help managers in the planning process. Some of these

tools include SWOT analysis, PESTLE analysis, Porter's five forces analysis, sunshine tool, growth-share matrix and scenario planning.

### ***2.7.3 Organizational Factors***

An organization's structure and size can be a major influence on performance and thus the strategic planning process through market power and economies of scale. The intensity with which strategic planning is pursued in some organizations has to do with some of these factors including their culture, values and unique advantage which determines their strategy and has a direct effect on their performance.

## **2.8 Circulation versus Readership**

Newspaper circulation and readership measures the performance of newspapers based on their target groups, customer base and subscriptions from advertisers. This is achieved through market and customer surveys which help newspapers, advertisers and consumers to be clear about the difference in circulation and readership.

### ***2.8.1 Circulation***

Most newspapers use circulation as basis for their success but studies has shown that the successful performance of a newspaper does not depend solely on circulation but most importantly on readership. Circulation is basically the number of newspapers distributed on an average day. Some with websites add subscriptions to their distribution to get their circulation figures. Average day is used for circulation because some newspapers are distributed weekly, bi-weekly and sometimes monthly. Comparing these newspapers to the dailies could be said to be unfair but all have their advantages with some opportunities that cannot be overlooked.

Prospective advertisers particularly interested in the customers of a newspaper and that is why circulation figures are inflated by some newspapers to attract them since money from advertisement are much more than those from their sales. In order to paint a true picture to the public, some companies audit their newspapers to certify and serve as prove that their circulation figures are genuine.

**Table 2.1: Circulation Figures of some Daily Newspapers in Ghana**

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Circulation (Copies)</b>
Daily Graphic	100,000
Ghanaian Times	80,000
Chronicle	45,000
Daily Guide	22,000
Daily Democrat	5,000
Daily Dispatch	5,000
New Crusading Guide	5,000
Daily Post	5,000
Daily Searchlight	1,500

*Source: Kuehnhenrich, D. (2011)*

Most advertisers are unclear about the difference between circulation and readership. This makes it quite easy for some publications to take advantage of the situation so it important for advertisers to know the number of people who read newspapers on an average day.

### **2.8.2 Readership**

Readership gives a clear picture on the extent at which newspapers reach their audience. As the media industry, especially television, measures the number of people watching the screen, and not the number of television sets in each household, newspapers should do same by measuring, promoting their content and its range of reach but not overlooking circulation and the sale of the newspapers. For advertisers,

getting the message to the customer is crucial. The consumers and not necessarily the number of papers being sold is what the advertiser seeks to achieve by getting value for money. Readership should be built so that newspapers would have a greater understanding of the needs of the reader at a particular time and how they react to what they read from these papers.

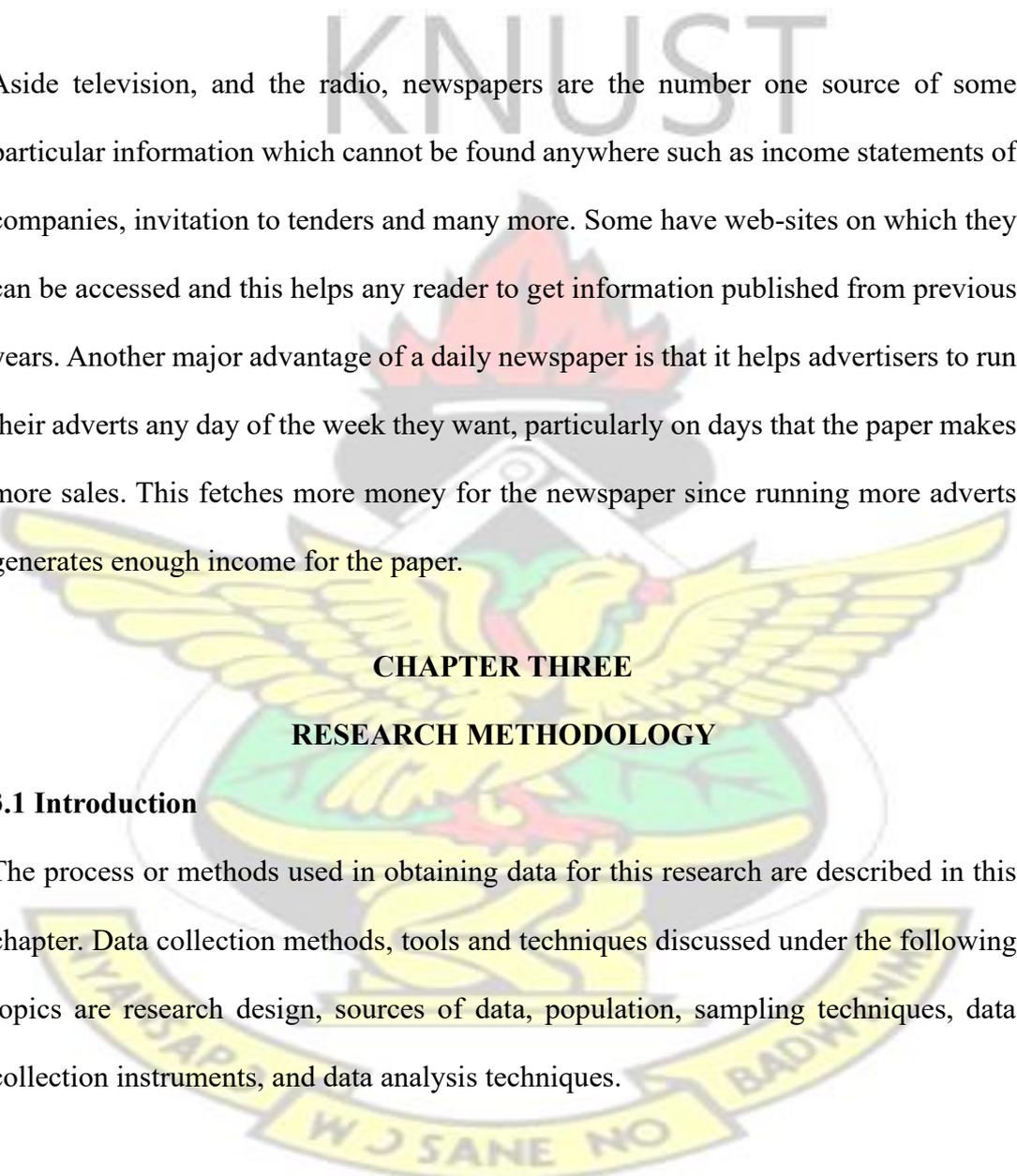
It is expected that readership figures should be much higher than circulation figures. Readership is estimated to be the total circulation multiplied by the number of people who read each copy. The average number of people assumed to read a copy of a newspaper both at home or an office is thought to be about 2.5 readers also known as the “pass along” rate (McInnis, 2006). For instance, in estimating the total readership for the Daily Graphic,  $100,000 \times 2.5$  would be 250,000. Readership also includes electronic or other forms of disseminating information that can be identified with a newspaper.

The effectiveness of a newspaper is measured by using certain statistics from the market and readership surveys. These surveys help prospective advertisers to know the specific characteristics of their readers and newspapers to prepare a “media kit” for prospective advertisers creating a more customer-oriented approach by offering promotional pages to serve interested advertisers. Media kits most often contain information about the demographics of a newspaper’s readers. This information helps advertisers to boost their own businesses as well as the sale of newspapers they subscribe to.

Newspapers are published daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly and sometimes semi-annually or annually. Daily newspapers, also referred to as “dailies” are

published every day and have higher circulation figures than the others. In Ghana, there are more than ten daily newspapers but the most popular ones are the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times. These are state-owned papers published six days a week with the exception of Sundays.

Aside television, and the radio, newspapers are the number one source of some particular information which cannot be found anywhere such as income statements of companies, invitation to tenders and many more. Some have web-sites on which they can be accessed and this helps any reader to get information published from previous years. Another major advantage of a daily newspaper is that it helps advertisers to run their adverts any day of the week they want, particularly on days that the paper makes more sales. This fetches more money for the newspaper since running more adverts generates enough income for the paper.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The process or methods used in obtaining data for this research are described in this chapter. Data collection methods, tools and techniques discussed under the following topics are research design, sources of data, population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This research was descriptive in nature employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. To measure data collected from the closed-ended questions in the questionnaires, quantitative methods were used while the interviews and openended

questions from the questionnaires were measured using qualitative methods. A descriptive research includes surveys which gives the current state of affairs of a particular situation with the researcher having no or little control over the variables. This type of research is appropriate because of the subject matter under discussion, that is, the strategic planning process and its effect on performance in the newspaper industry.

### **3.3 Sources of Data**

This research required the use of primary data to get the necessary information about the study matter. This data was obtained in its raw state and then later transformed into the information needed to address the problem stated in this research.

#### ***3.3.1 Primary Data***

Primary data was collected using questionnaires administered to employees from the selected newspapers and readers from the area of study. This approach was important to get direct first-hand information about the subject matter for the purpose for which the data was required.

### **3.4 Population**

The population was about 460 staff from the selected newspapers and some readers from the area of study. However, the size of the population was too big and it was expensive and time-consuming to use such a large number. A sample was therefore selected from the population which sizeable enough to give the necessary information needed for the research. A research population describes a large group of individuals with common characteristics and traits in a particular area, be it in an organization, city or country whilst sample is a sub-group selected from a population deemed to be

representative enough from which statistical data or information is obtained for the study (Saunders et al, 2007).

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

There are different sampling techniques used to obtain a sample for a particular study or research. A sample size of 80 employees was deemed representative from the population constituting management and staff of the selected newspapers. Both probability and non-probability sampling was chosen because of the nature of this research; simple random sampling and purposive sampling respectively. Purposive sampling selects appropriate respondents directly linked to the subject matter and this method was employed for top and middle management of the various selected newspapers since they are involved in the strategic planning process and its implementation. They were also considered to have knowledge about the subject matter and play important roles in strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation and control (strategic management process). Other employees were selected using the simple random sampling method. They all had an equal chance of been selected as respondents because of their involvement in implementing strategic plans of their newspapers. Overall, 76 employees from the selected newspapers participated in the study.

100 readers of various newspapers were also selected using simple random sampling so that there could be a fair representation of respondents from the area of study which would help measure the thoughts of the reader and how they also help in the implementation process of the various newspapers.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

Data was collected from the sample by using questionnaires which had both close and open ended questions.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaire**

Questionnaires administered to respondents contained both close and open ended questions. Sir Francis Galton invented the questionnaire as a data collection instrument for the purpose of obtaining information from people known as respondents (Wiki, 2012). Respondents were asked series of questions based on strategic planning, its implementation and impact on performance. Also included were other personal data and opinions based on the above questions. The closed-ended questions helped respondents to understand what was required of them and made data analysis simple while the open-ended questions were asked to clarify some particular answers from respondent. The purpose of the research was explained to all respondents to make understanding and answering of the questionnaire easy for the respondent and the researcher.

A five- point Likert scale was used to measure the level of agreement or disagreement to certain factors in sections two and three of questionnaires administered to employees from the various newspapers. Likert items where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Techniques**

In analysing the data collected for the research, information received from the various respondents was edited and run through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program to obtain the necessary results required for the study. This gave a fair idea on the subject matter presented by distribution tables displaying the means, correlations, coefficients and other statistical models.

### **3.8 Area of Study**

The newspapers selected for this research were located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. This region is the smallest of Ghana's ten regions and is located at the southern end of the country bordered by the Eastern Region (on the north), the Lake Volta (on the east), the Gulf of Guinea (on the south), and the Central Region (on the west). With a population of about 4 million people, the Greater Accra Region is estimated to be 3,245 square kilometers and the second most populated region making up 15.4 percent of the total population of Ghana.

The Greater Accra Region is divided into ten districts with sixteen municipalities namely, Accra Metropolitan, Tema Metropolitan, Adenta Municipal, Ga East Municipal, Ga West Municipal, Ga South Municipal, Ga Central Municipal, Ashiaman Municipal, Ledzokuku-Krowor, Dangme East, Dangme West, La Dade Kotopon, La-Nkwantanang Madina, Kpone Katamanso, Ningo Prampram and Ada West.

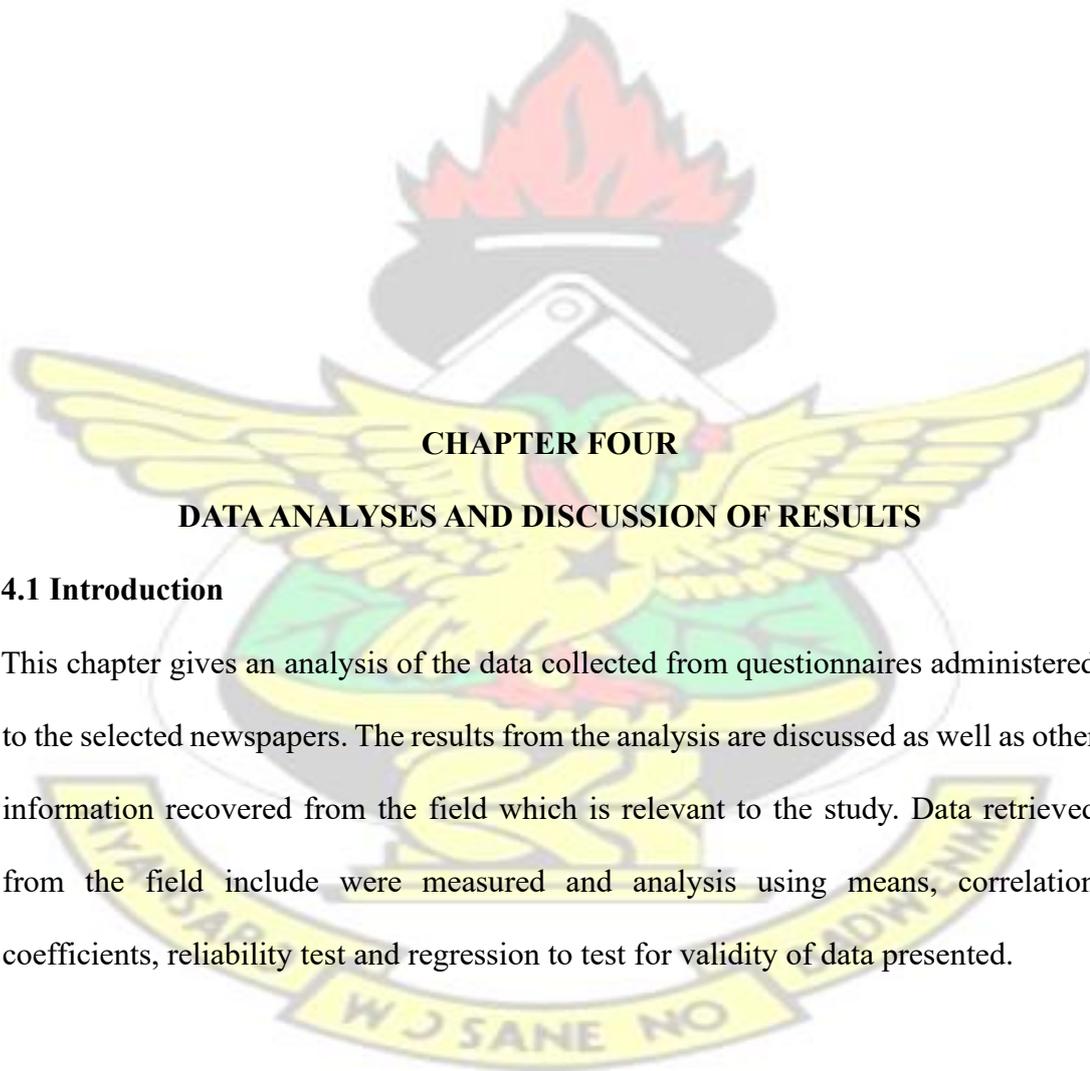
### ***3.8.1 Accra Metropolitan District***

The Accra Metropolitan District also known as Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) is the most populated district among the 16 municipalities found in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Accra is said to be the largest city in Ghana and serves as the capital for both the country as well as the Accra Metropolis.

Many newspapers can be found in this district some of which are the Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, Spectator, New Crusading Guide, Mirror and many others which have successful circulation rates in the country and are recognized internationally. Due to the upsurge in technology and social media, most of these newspapers have shifted from the “normal way” of circulating news to their consumers, that is, in hard copies but have now developed their own websites which enables them to have access to a wide range of readers and also give advertisers the same benefits of reaching lots of consumers not only in Ghana but across the world.

The Accra Metropolis hosts the leading newspapers in Ghana with the first two being state-owned newspapers, the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times. Their circulation and readership rates are estimated to be over 100,000 per day in this district. These newspapers have been the “number one” and “number two” respectively for decades and their success are attributed to so many factors including having government support and funding when needed which some of the private newspapers lament about. Others attribute their success to quality, branding and reputation which some of the private newspapers lack in both news and print. The performance of these newspapers is relevant to the study and will assess performance in relation to circulation and readership and its link to strategic planning.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives an analysis of the data collected from questionnaires administered to the selected newspapers. The results from the analysis are discussed as well as other information recovered from the field which is relevant to the study. Data retrieved from the field include were measured and analysis using means, correlation coefficients, reliability test and regression to test for validity of data presented.

#### **4.2 Demographic Data of Employees**

Respondents answered questions concerning their personal data as illustrated below. This was significant to the survey since it gave information on the sex composition of respondents and the staff quality from the various newspapers.

**Table 4.1: Demographics of Employees**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	48	63%
Female	28	37%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Age Group</b> Years	<b>Highest Educ. Level</b>					<b>B</b> <b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>D</b>	<b>M/PHD</b>	<b>S/H</b>	<b>V/T</b>		
20 – 29	17	5	1	2	0	<b>25</b>
30 – 39	16	6	3	0	1	<b>26</b>
40 – 49	8	3	4	2	1	<b>18</b>
50 – 59	1	3	0	3	0	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>76</b>

\* B = Bachelor degree, D = Diploma, M = Masters, S/H = Sec/High school, V/T = Voc/Tech school

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

From the table, majority of employees who participated in the survey were male (n= 48; 63%) and (n= 28; 37%) were female. It was important to have responses from both males and females from the organizations so as to have a balanced view of both parties in the analysis.

The educational background of employees ranged from the secondary/high school level to the Master's/PHD levels and these were dispersed within their various age groups. This was to give a fair idea of the calibre of staff found within the selected newspaper organizations. From the survey, Bachelor degree holders were (n= 42; 11%) with (n= 17; 41%) from ages 20 – 29, (n= 17; 22%) hold diploma with (n= 6; 35%) from ages 30 – 39. Those with Masters/PHD were (n= 8; 11%) with majority (n= 4; 50%) from ages 40 – 49, Secondary/ High school certificates were (n= 7; 9%) and (n= 2; 3%) also had Vocational/Technical school certificates. This indicates that

more than half of the employees had first degrees or higher which shows potential for the industry in the quality of employees in their various organizations.

### 4.3 Statistics Measurement Analysis

The relationships between variables were measured and analysed using reliability test, mean and standard deviations, bivariate correlations and regression to test the internal consistence, level of significance and impact on performance.

#### 4.3.1 Reliability Test

A reliability test was used to measure internal consistency among the respective items in sections b and c in the questionnaire. Reliability measures variables in a questionnaire by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the overall assessment given (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). High alpha coefficient values of .903 and .813 were realised indicating good internal consistency among the variables employed for the study.

**Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics**

	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Strategic Plan	7	.903
Implementation	6	.813

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

#### 4.3.2 Mean and Standard Deviation

The mean was used to measure the effectiveness of the mission, vision, goals, objectives, strategies in the various organizations of the selected newspapers. Intraclass correlation coefficient was also used to measure the correlation between the components.

**Table 4.3: Mean Item Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mission	3.94	1.019
Vision	3.68	1.085
Strategy	3.25	1.242
Core Values	3.62	1.144
Goals	3.75	1.071
Performance Target Time	3.22	1.129
Objectives	3.19	1.194

	Intraclass Correlation <sup>a</sup>	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.570 <sup>b</sup>	.476	.667	10.279	71	426	.000
Average Measures	.903	.864	.934	10.279	71	426	.000

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

The results from the table show that mission and goals were heavily scored, vision and core values were moderately scored while strategy, target time and objectives were neutrally scored. The high mean scores ranging from 3.62 to 3.94 indicates that these variables were considered to be clear and understood by the employees for what they stand for. From the table, it can be observed that the mission statements (mean=3.94) of the selected newspapers are clearly defined and employees know the purpose for the existence of their organizations. Variables with low mean scores ranging from 3.19 to 3.25 shows neutrality among employees in scoring these items indicating that the objectives, performance target times and strategies should be worked on by the various newspapers to have an effective strategic plan.

The intraclass correlation was used to measure the consistency of agreement in the responses given by participants. The lower and upper bound values under average measures depict that the average or sum of the scores from respondents are highly

reliable. An interval of 0.864 to 0.935 with 95% confidence level shows the process being successful despite the differences in levels of scoring. Values under the single measures value are low because they show reliability if only one respondent was used but overall assessment indicates that all values are positive with a significant value of ( $p < 0.05$ ), therefore, are highly correlated.

#### 4.3.3 Bivariate Correlations

Correlation analysis was done using Bivariate Correlations coefficient to test the relationship between components under implementation. This was suitable for this study since this model determines the link between two or more ordinal variables. The independent variables used were acceptance of new policies/ changes (ANP), effect of new policies in organizational structure/culture (ENS), available motivational systems (AMS), availability of resources (AoR) and effective planning unit (EPU) tested against the dependent variable, performance (performance target being met in a specified time) of the organization. Spearman's rho statistics was used to measure the relationships in rank-order with two-tailed significance test.

**Table 4.4: Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficients**

Components	Spearman's rho coefficient	Sig.
Availability of motivational systems	0.577	0.000
Availability of resources	0.484	0.000
Effective planning unit	0.479	0.000
Acceptance of new policies/changes	0.417	0.000
Effect of new policies on org. structure	0.229	0.053

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

The table shows positive correlation coefficients running through the components in relation to performance with p-values less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) except for ENS. This

indicates that acceptance of new policies which affect organizational structure (and culture) can be said to have no significant relationship with performance in the selected newspapers used for the study. On the other hand, AMS, AoR, EPU and ANP have coefficient ranging from 0.417 to 0.577 with significance levels of ( $p < 0.005$ ), it can be considered that there is significant relationship between these components and performance.

#### 4.3.4 Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis was also conducted to measure the level of significance between the independent and dependent variables. Each independent variable was measured against the dependent variable to find the linear relationship between them and how they impact on performance.

The predictors (constant) used were acceptance of new policies/ changes (ANP), effect of new policies in organizational structure/culture (ENS), availability of motivational systems (AMS), availability of resources (AoR) and effective planning unit (EPU). The dependent variable was performance target being met at a specified time (PTM) and this was used to measure performance of the selected newspapers.

**Table 4.5: Regression Coefficients**

Independent Variables	B	Beta	T	Sig.	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Availability of motivational systems	0.541	0.562	5.726	0.000	0.306
Availability of resources	0.570	0.493	4.769	0.000	0.232
Effect planning unit	0.568	0.487	4.663	0.000	0.226
Acceptance of new policies/changes	0.454	0.431	4.024	0.000	0.174
Effect of new policies on org. structure	0.285	0.259	2.243	0.028	0.054

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

The table shows the statistics of running each independent variable against performance separately. All the variables listed in the table are significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ) and the adjusted  $R^2$  shows the variations of the independent variables in the dependent variable. B explains the coefficients of the independent variables. The table shows a positive relationship between the independent variables and performance so as the dependent variable increases, the dependent variable also increases and vice versa. Beta measures the contribution of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The highest beta value is 0.562 and the lowest is 0.259.

From the table, availability of motivational systems explains 31% variation in performance. The co-efficient of 0.541 indicates that performance would increase by 54% as availability of motivational systems increase by 1% and the newspapers would be able to meet their targets during the specified time. Also, this variable contributes more to the performance of these newspapers because it has the highest beta value of 0.562.

An adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.306 implies that availability of resources explains 23% variations in performance. The co-efficient of 0.570 indicates that as availability of resources increase by 1%, performance would increase by 57%. The newspapers would be able to meet their targets during the specified time since both variables have a positive relationship.

Effective planning unit scored a coefficient of 0.568 indicating as this variable increases by 1%, then performance would increase by 57% showing a positive

relationship between these variables. An adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.226 shows that effective planning unit explains 23% variation in performance. This indicates that the effective planning unit influences performance.

From the table, availability of motivational systems explains 31% variation in performance. The co-efficient of 0.541 indicates that performance would increase by 54% as availability of motivational systems increase by 1% and the organization would be able to meet its target during the specified time. Also, this variable contributes more to the performance of the selected newspapers because it has the highest beta value of 0.562.

The coefficient scored by acceptance of new policies/ changes shows a positive relationship with performance. Therefore a 1% increment in acceptance of new policies/changes would cause a 45% increment in performance. A value of 0.174 shows that acceptance of new policies/ changes explain 17% variation in performance and therefore, the selected newspapers are able to meet their performance targets on time.

Effect of new policies on organizational structure would increase by 1% as performance increases by 29% and the newspapers would be able to meet their performance targets on time. A value of 0.054 adjusted  $R^2$  implies that effect of new policies on organizational structure explains 5% of variation on performance. This variable contributes less to the performance of these newspapers because it has the lowest beta value of 0.285. Results from the regression analysis showed that the independent variable had a positive impact on performance.

#### 4.4 Factors which Influence Circulation

In this section, employees were required to select some factors which, in their opinion, influence circulation in both their organizations and the newspaper industry. These were managerial, organizational and environmental factors.

**Table 4.6: Factors Influencing Circulation**

<b>Organizations</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Managerial	21	28%	28	37%
Environmental	15	20%	25	33%
Organizational	24	32%	12	16%
Multiple answers	12	16%	7	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>95%</b>
No response	4	5%	4	5%

<b>Newspaper Industry</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Environmental	22	29%	23	30%
Managerial	17	22%	23	30%
Organizational	21	28%	16	21%
Multiple answers	12	16%	8	11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>92%</b>
No response	4	5%	6	8%

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

Employees' views of factors influencing high circulation in their organizations are presented in the table above. Those who indicated organizational were (n= 24; 32%), (n= 21; 28%) managerial and (n= 15; 20%) environmental while (n= 12; 16%) gave multiple answers and (n= 4; 5%) others did not respond to the question. On the other hand, (n= 28; 37%) employees answered to managerial factors being the reason for low circulation in their organizations, (n= 25; 33%) believed it was environmental, (n= 12; 16%) indicated organizational and (n= 7; 9%) gave multiple answers. The remaining (n= 4; 5%) did not respond.

The views of employees in connection with factors influencing high/ low circulation in their industry are presented in the table above. According to (n= 22; 9%) employees, the newspaper industry has a high circulation due to environmental factors while (n= 21; 28%) stated organizational, (n= 17; 24%) managerial, (n= 12; 16%) gave multiple answers and (n= 4; 5%) did not choose any of the factors provided. Interestingly, both environmental and managerial factors were chosen by (n= 23; 30%) employees being reasons for low circulation in the newspaper industry and (n= 16; 21%) employees indicated organizational while (n= 8; 11%) gave multiple answers. The remaining (n= 6; 8%) did not give any answer to the question.

From the survey, it is evident that employees consider environmental factors to be basis of both high and low circulation in the newspaper industry as well as managerial factors. It is vital for organizations to identify these factors in order to be able to deal with the environmental changes and competition through some analytical tools developed by experts for environmental analysis. As stated before, managerial issues should also be addressed to improve upon performance in the industry.

#### 4.5 Demographic Data of Readers

The opinions of 100 readers within the area of study are presented in this section. They gave their general views on newspapers and challenges facing the industry as well as their gender, age group and occupation as illustrated below.

**Table 4.7: Demographics of Readers**

Gender	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Male	55	55%
Female	45	100%
TOTAL	<b>100</b>	

<u>Age Group</u> Years	<u>Occupation</u>			TOTAL
	Worker	Student	None of the above	
10 – 19	1	5	0	6
20 – 29	18	16	3	37
30 – 39	22	2	0	24
40 – 49	13	0	0	13
50 – 59	16	0	0	16
60 and above	2	0	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

From the table, males were (n=55%) while (n= 45%) were female indicating male dominance in the sample with a fair representation of females. Views from both sexes were important so as to have a balanced assessment of both parties in the analysis.

The table also displays readers placed in their respective age groups and occupations. Majority of readers found within the area of study were mainly youth from ages 20 – 39 constituting (n=61%) of the entire sample, older adults were (n=33%) and teenagers from 10 -19 represented (n=6%).

Readers, who were part of the survey, were categorized into workers, students and neither of both of which (n=72%) of them were workers, (n=23%) were students and (n=5%) were neither workers nor students.

#### **4.6 General Overview of Newspapers**

This section is a presentation of readers' response to questions concerning how frequent they read newspapers, reasons dispersed within the various age groups. This shows what respondents are interested in which would help in the strategic planning

process (especially in strategy formulation and implementation) of the various newspaper organizations.

Readers' responses to questions regarding their frequency of reading newspapers, types of newspapers they preferred and what attracts readers to buy newspapers are displayed in Table 4.8 dispersed in their various age groups.

**Table 4.8: Readers' Responses to Overview of Newspapers**

<b>Frequency of Reading Newspapers</b>				
	Teenagers	Youth	Older Adults	<b>TOTAL</b>
Weekly/ Bi-weekly	1	37	19	<b>57</b>
Daily	0	11	10	<b>21</b>
Monthly/ Quarterly	3	5	3	<b>15</b>
Semi-annually/ Annually	1	2	1	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Types of newspapers preferred by readers</b>				
	Teenagers	Youth	Older Adults	<b>TOTAL</b>
Entertainment	0	3	0	<b>3</b>
Educational	0	17	9	<b>26</b>
Informative	3	21	16	<b>40</b>
Political	0	3	2	<b>5</b>
Sports	0	5	1	<b>6</b>
Other	1(religious)	0	0	<b>1</b>
Multiple answers	2	12	5	<b>19</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>What attracts readers to buy newspapers</b>				
	Teenagers	Youth	Older Adults	<b>TOTAL</b>
Headlines	5	42	28	<b>75</b>
Images	0	7	1	<b>8</b>
Adverts	0	4	3	<b>7</b>
Format	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Multiple answers	1	7	1	<b>9</b>

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

From the table, (n=57%) read newspapers weekly/bi-weekly, (n=21%) read daily, (n=11%) monthly/quarterly, (n=7%) stated other whiles (n=4%) read semiannually/annually. This revealed a decline in the number of people who read newspapers daily with a high number of respondents reading weekly and bi-weekly.

Out of the options given, (n=40%) of the readers preferred informative newspapers, (n=26%) liked educational, (n=19%) gave multiple answers, (n=6%) sports, and (n=5%) political whiles (n=1%) chose religious newspapers. This indicates that most newspapers are pursuing the right course since most of them give information on current issues and also educate on some subjects in the country and around the world, aiding in developing contents to suit the needs of consumers.

Most newspapers have common features which can be found running through them. Looking at the front page of a newspaper tells the reader what to expect from purchasing the paper. Readers responded to what attracted them most to newspapers and the results are as follows: (n=75%) indicated headlines, (n=9%) gave multiple answers, (n=7%) each responded to adverts and image whiles color and format also received (n=0%1) each.

#### **4.7 Challenges facing the Newspaper Industry**

Readers were asked to give their views on some of the challenges they think the newspaper industry is facing and the medium they preferred second to newspapers.

Responses to questions regarding the alternate media they preferred to newspapers, Factors challenging the newspaper industry, whether the newspaper industry has improved and some factors which would help to improve the industry. The results are displayed in Table 4.9 dispersed in their various age groups.

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**Table 4.9: Readers' Responses to Industry Challenges**

<b>Alternate media to newspapers</b>				
	Teenagers	Youth	Older Adults	TOTAL
Radio	2	18	18	<b>38</b>
Internet	2	23	6	<b>31</b>
Television	2	20	9	<b>31</b>
TOTAL	6	61	33	<b>100</b>

<b>Factors challenging the newspaper industry</b>				
	Teenagers	Youth	Older Adults	TOTAL
Technological	2	36	9	<b>47</b>
Economic	1	11	9	<b>21</b>
Social	2	9	8	<b>19</b>
Environmental	0	2	5	<b>7</b>
Multiple answers	1	3	2	<b>6</b>
TOTAL	6	61	33	<b>100</b>

<b>Whether the newspaper industry has improved</b>				
	Teenagers	Youth	Older Adults	TOTAL
Yes	0	37	22	<b>59</b>
No	2	16	9	<b>27</b>
Do not know	4	8	2	<b>14</b>
TOTAL	6	61	33	<b>100</b>

<b>Factors which would help to improve the industry</b>				
	Teenagers	Youth	Older Adults	<b>TOTAL</b>
Quality News/Print	1	15	18	<b>34</b>
Strategic planning	2	14	9	<b>25</b>
Technology	0	16	0	<b>16</b>
Adequate resources	0	9	4	<b>13</b>
Multiple answers	3	7	2	<b>12</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Researcher's field work (2015)*

The internet, radio and television were provided as other sources of getting information aside newspapers. Whiles (n=38%) of respondents stated that they preferred radio as an alternate medium, (n=31%) each chose the internet and television as well. Many believe these substitutes give first-hand information and are up to date on current issues whereas newspapers are only circulated in the mornings with some having news from previous happenings which the public could already be informed about. These alternate media create avenues for adverts reaching a large number of consumers at the same time except for public tenders and classified which are exclusive to newspapers.

According to (n=59%) readers, the newspaper industry has improved over the years but (n=27%) think otherwise and (n=14%) do not know its state currently. This is due to the fact that some newspapers are taking advantage of social media to circulate information to their readers and many people can easily keep up with current issues or stories dating back to several years. This has increased the readership of some newspapers but made the industry tougher because of the rising number of highly competitive informative media apps on the internet.

The factors provided for respondents were environmental, economic, social and technological and (n=47%) respondents indicated technological factors as the major challenge facing the newspaper industry while (n=21%) readers stated economic, (n=19%) social, (n=7%) environmental and the remaining (n=6%) gave multiple answers to the question. Political factors was omitted from the list of answers provided to get an unbiased view from respondents and the data from the table shows that the newspaper industry should improve on their technologies in their various organizations.

The factors numerated above are linked from strategic planning, adequate resources, technology and finally quality news / print, the product of the other factors. Strategic planning would aid to allocation of adequate resources, improve on technology leading to print quality and authentic information which meets and satisfies the readers' needs.

#### **4.8 Conclusion of Analysis and Results**

Responses from the various respondents in this Chapter show the connection between strategic planning and performance of both employees and their organization, which in turn affect the industry as a whole.

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## CHAPTER 5

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Findings from the research are summarised in this chapter with conclusions and recommendations made based on these findings. These are outlined using the various variables with recommendations for future research and references.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The findings acquired from the research give a general knowledge about the issues concerning strategic planning, implementation and its impact on performance. These are relevant to the study and are the basis for future recommendations.

##### ***5.1.1 Effectiveness of Strategic Plans***

The results from the research showed that most of the newspapers selected for the study used strategic plans in their organizations. The mission, vision, strategies, core

values, goals and objectives were used to find out the effective of their strategic plans. Responses from employees revealed that these elements are clearly defined and show a consistency of agreement indicating a degree of focus and direction in the industry. This finding confirmation Olsen's (2009) claim that an effective strategic plan always supports and is in line with the organization's mission, vision, goals and objectives. Nonetheless, majority of these organizations fuse these key elements to produce a plan (not strategic) which directs their business operations within the industry.

### ***5.1.2 Implementation of Strategic Plans***

The implementation process is one important aspect of every strategic plan and needs intense participation from everyone in an organization to make it successful. Many challenges were outlined by employees from the selected newspapers regarding the factors which were used to measure this process. Many of them did not feel motivated in their organizations making it difficult for them to accept new policies or changes. Staff commitment and input is therefore low during these processes. Also, lack of communication and proper orientation, especially on new technological procedures cause delays in the process of implementation. Without the participation of individuals and units in an organization, successful implementation is not achieved.

Some other challenges found to influence the implementation process included lack of adequate and suitable resources, political interferences from both internal and external powers and sometimes time constraint leading to pressure for employees to adjust quickly to new changes. Allocation of resources is essential not only to the implementation process but also the whole planning process from formulation to evaluation. Findings revealed that most of the organizations have skilled and qualified

management and staff at the various functional levels making the process of implementation easier and effective in achieving set goals and objectives.

Despite these challenges, most of these factors were found to be highly correlated and show a significant relationship with performance and therefore used as independent variable to measure their impact on performance.

### ***5.1.3 Impact of Implementation on Performance***

The components used in measuring the relationship between strategic planning and performance showed a positive impact between these variables. These revealed that as these components increase in the organizations, performance also rises and the selected newspapers would be able to meet their performance targets on time. Also, the availability of motivational systems was found to contribute more to performance than effects of new policies on organizational structure. This shows that motivational systems are very important to the improvement of performance in the newspaper industry.

Also, an organization's structure, size, values and culture were found to be a major determinant to high circulation of newspaper(s). Managers' inability to carry through the strategic planning process affects organizational performance. Environmental factors were also found to play significant roles in low circulation of newspapers from various organizations due to the instability of the economy as well as the organizational weaknesses that have not been worked on.

Findings from factors influencing high and low circulation in the newspaper industry revealed interesting results. Environmental factors were considered to be the cause of

high circulation in the newspaper industry meaning fusing the strengths of the organizations in the industry could help push for better results at the same time if threats are not taken into account, they pose big problems and contribute to low circulation as well. These threats are in the form of other forms of media, most especially technology. Overall, strategic planning has been proved to impact positively on the performance of the newspaper industry.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Strategic planning acts as a driving force for effective planning and proper execution of policies and changes in a given entity. Many schools of thought have criticised these processes claiming that they have no direct impact on performance. The findings from this study proved otherwise. Even though some challenges are faced which hinder the effective process of implementation, thus affecting the quality of service provided, some of these newspapers have seen a transformation over the years and have relied on the strategic planning process to survive.

Currently, most readers, especially the youth prefer using social media as sources of information because they are always up to date with current issues concerning particular subjects which are of utmost interest to consumers. Nonetheless, some newspapers have taken advantage of these alternatives to reach consumers both locally and internationally using websites, blogs, etcetera.

Although most organizations (newspapers) have adapted strategic planning processes to guide their operational activities, the needed resources are not readily available to push these processes through. This affirms Quinn's (1980) claims that using unique competencies gives organizations an edge over competitors and sustainable

competitive advantage when a strategic plan is well implemented. Research by Hopkins et al (1997) indicates that organizational performance is high when equal emphasis is placed on each of the three areas of strategic management, that is, formulation, implementation and evaluation/ control. Therefore every aspect of the strategic planning process should not be undermined or overemphasized since they all have a critical effect on performance.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are outlined based on the findings from the research:

- Key elements that are unique and identify organizations such as the mission (statement), vision (statement), core values, goals and objectives should be clearly articulated to both staff and customers so that there is a shared purpose of why the organization exists, where it is heading, its unique values and culture. Goals must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) in order to have an effective strategic plan.
- Reward systems should be put in place to serve as motivation for meeting set targets and goals for individuals, units or teams to ensure commitment and participation of staff during implementation because they have proven to be major contributors to performance.
- Since it is becoming increasingly difficult for newspapers in Ghana especially private ones to keep up with fast moving technological advancement, strategic alliances could be formed between some newspapers so they could help each other.

- A professional newspaper distribution company such as an Audit Bureau of Circulation should be set up in Ghana to organize the distribution requirements of newspapers. This would reduce the losses made by some newspapers with clear accountability made by vendors (as suggested by Mr.

Harruna Attah, managing director of the *Accra Daily Mail* newspaper).

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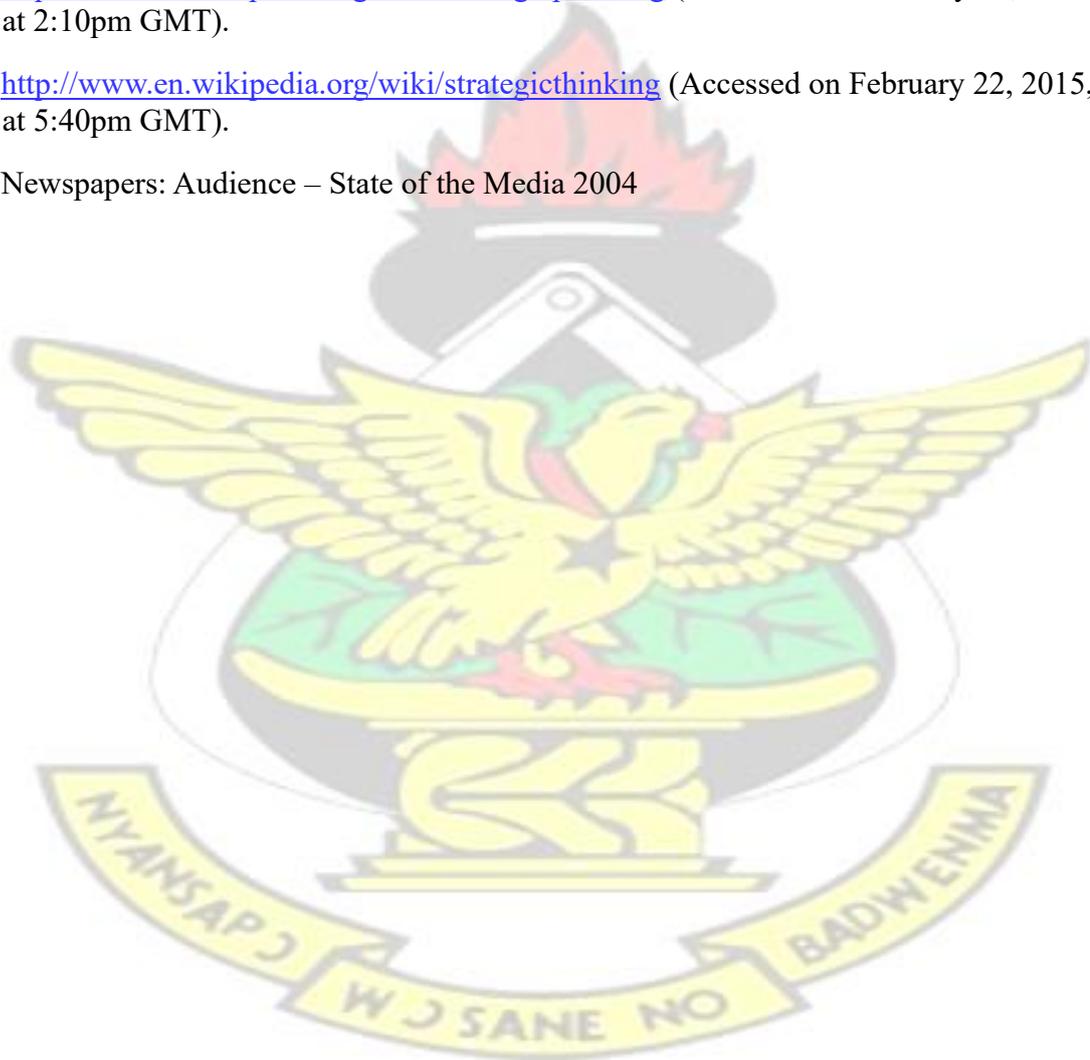
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<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/strategicthinking> (Accessed on February 22, 2015, at 5:40pm GMT).

Newspapers: Audience – State of the Media 2004



## APPENDIX I

This questionnaire is based on the topic “THE APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ITS IMPACT ON NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION/ READERSHIP”. Please answer all questions from all three sections where applicable and tick appropriate answers provided. All information retrieved from this questionnaire would be kept confidential and used for the purpose of this research only. Thank you for your cooperation.

### SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

#### 1. Gender

a. Male ( )

b. Female ( )

#### 2. Age Group

a. 20 – 29 ( )

c. 40 – 49 ( )

b. 30 – 39 ( )

d. 50 – 59 ( )

#### 3. Highest Educational Level

a. Secondary/High School ( )

d. Bachelor’s Degree ( )

b. Vocational/Technical ( )

e. Masters/PHD ( )

c. Diploma ( )

4. Current Position in organization .....

5. Department/ Unit .....

6. Number of years in organization .....



7. There are long-term activities which help sustain and improve on the organization's position.					
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**SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN**

Please indicate the rate at which you agree or disagree with the following statements, where

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neutral    4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
New policies/ changes are readily accepted and worked on within a specified period by employees.					
The new policies affect organizational structure (and culture).					
There are motivational systems put in place to serve as a drive to push policies/changes in the organization.					
Resources are available to support new policies or changes.					
There is an effective planning unit in the organization.					
Some challenges are faced during this process					

What are some of the challenges the organization faces in its implementation process?

.....

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#### SECTION 4: FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE CIRCULATION

Please tick the appropriate answers to the following questions? (Can tick multiple answers)

1. Which factor(s) influences HIGH circulation/ readership in your ORGANIZATION?

- a. Managerial Factors ( )                      c. Environmental Factors ( )  
b. Organizational Factors ( )

2. Which factor(s) influences LOW circulation/ readership in your ORGANIZATION?

- a. Managerial Factors ( )                      c. Environmental Factors ( )  
b. Organizational Factors ( )

3. Which factor(s) influences HIGH circulation/ readership in NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY? the

- a. Managerial Factors ( )                      c. Environmental Factors ( )  
b. Organizational Factors ( )

4. Which factor(s) influence LOW circulation/ readership in the NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY?

- a. Managerial Factors ( )                      c. Environmental Factors ( )  
b. Organizational Factors ( )

THANK YOU!

## APPENDIX II

This questionnaire is based on a research on readership in the newspaper industry. All information retrieved from this questionnaire would be kept confidential and used for the purpose of this research only. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please answer the following questions with a tick (✓) where applicable

### 1. Gender

- a. Male ( )                      b. Female ( )

### 2. Age Group

- a. 10 – 19 ( )                      d. 40 – 49 ( )  
b. 20 – 29 ( )                      e. 50 – 59 ( )  
c. 30 – 39 ( )                      f. 60 and above ( )

### 3. Occupation

- a. Worker ( )                      c. None of the above ( )  
b. Student ( )

### 4. How often do you read newspapers?

- a. Weekly ( )                      d. Quarterly ( )  
b. Bi-weekly ( )                      e. Semi-annually ( )  
c. Monthly ( )                      f. Annually ( )

### 5. Which type of newspaper(s) do you prefer?

- a. Entertainment ( )                      d. Informative ( )  
b. Educational ( )                      e. Political ( )  
c. Sports

### 6. What attracts you to a newspaper?

- a. Images ( )
- b. Color ( )
- c. Headlines/ Information ( )
- d. Arrangement ( )
- e. Adverts ( )

**7. Which other medium do you prefer second to a newspaper?**

- a. Radio ( )
- b. Internet ( )
- c. Television ( )

**8. What do you think are some of the challenges the newspaper industry is facing?**

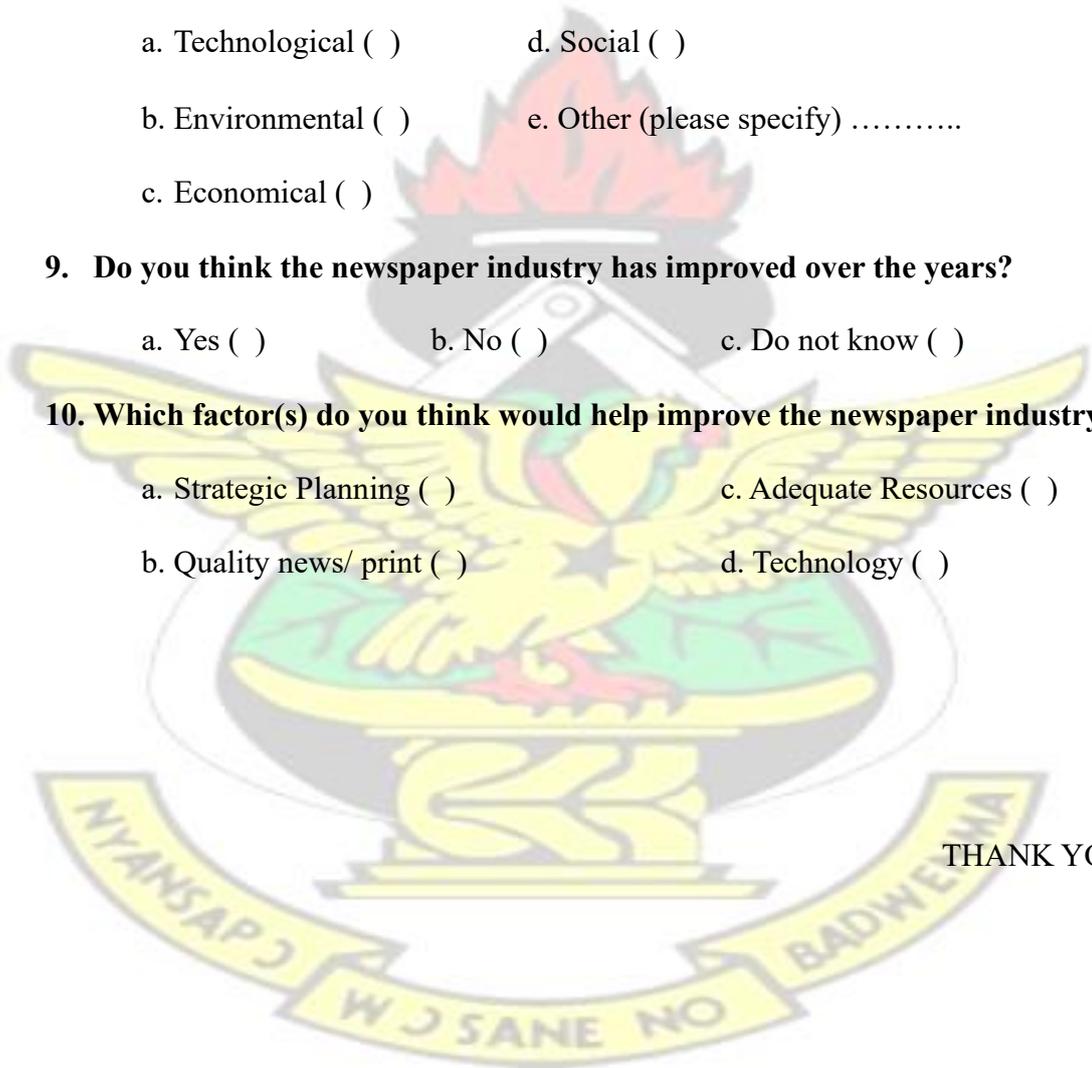
- a. Technological ( )
- b. Environmental ( )
- c. Economical ( )
- d. Social ( )
- e. Other (please specify) .....

**9. Do you think the newspaper industry has improved over the years?**

- a. Yes ( )
- b. No ( )
- c. Do not know ( )

**10. Which factor(s) do you think would help improve the newspaper industry?**

- a. Strategic Planning ( )
- b. Quality news/ print ( )
- c. Adequate Resources ( )
- d. Technology ( )



THANK YOU!